

I Want a Lifetime with You

Chapter 216

“You...you...” Shi Nuan blushed. She was lost of words, and her embarrassment intensified when Fu Chengyan remained unabashed, “You’re shameless!”

Fu Chengyan chuckled and put the file down. A tapered finger stroked his chiseled jawline as he spoke, “Am I shameless? I’m your husband and that’s a normal thing for me to say. May, we’re a married couple and it’s normal to discuss this topic. Are you feeling shy?”

Shi Nuan pursed her lips, “I never knew you were such a brazen person!” He appeared to be a stern gentleman when she first met him. Was he starting to show his true colors now that they were married?

Fu Chengyan narrowed his eyes but smiled regardless.

He made his way toward Shi Nuan and held her hand since she refused to come near him. He gave her hand a gentle squeeze, “Why are your hands so cold? It’s wintertime now, so you should keep yourself warm even when you’re at home!”

“Mm!” Shi Nuan obediently complied as her heart softened at his caring words, “I will.” She burrowed her hands deeper into Fu Chengyan’s warm hands, “My hands become warmer this way!”

Fu Chengyan’s eyes were filled with delight as he stroked the tip of Shi Nuan’s nose, “Are you hungry?”

Shi Nuan felt a tad hungry at an instant. She rubbed her tummy and nodded, “Yes, I’m hungry!”

“You must be hungry now since you didn’t eat much yesterday! There’s porridge in the kitchen, I’ll bring you some.” Fu Chengyan loosened his grip, but Shi Nuan grasped his hand and shook her head, “Never mind, I can get it myself. Weren’t you working just now? You better get back to your job!”

“It doesn’t matter!” Fu Chengyan caressed Shi Nuan’s face, “You’re much more important than my work. I’ll eat with you!”

“Oh, have you not eaten yet?” Shi Nuan exclaimed in surprise, “It’s rather late now, you should have eaten earlier!” Shi Nuan scolded, “You shouldn’t starve yourself. Next time, you should eat first if I haven’t wake up.”

“Okay!”

“Then let’s go and eat now!”

Shi Nuan held Fu Chengyan’s hand and admonished, “Yan, you should take good care of your body.”

Fu Chengyan curled his lips with his eyes fixated on Shi Nuan.

Both of them had their meals in the dining room; not only had Fu Chengyan prepared porridge, but he made steamed buns as well. Shi Nuan was astonished when she noticed that steamed buns had been shaped into different animals. The buns were a bit misshapen, but Shi Nuan found it all the more endearing.

Shi Nuan beamed and raised her brow in surprise, “Yan, did you make these all by yourself?”

Fu Chengyan cast his eyes downward, “No!”

“Hey, don’t you lie to me! This must be your handiwork! They wouldn’t be that ugly if you bought them from the stalls.” She bet no one would spend money on such ugly steamed buns.

Fu Chengyan narrowed his eyes as he glared at Shi Nuan. "Ugly?" He forced the word through gritted teeth.

Shi Nuan was picking up a steamed bun when she froze at Fu Chengyan's words, "Haha...I think they look pretty nice. Yan, your steamed buns definitely look better than those from the stalls! Those do not stand a chance against this masterpiece!"

Fu Chengyan was at a loss for words so he shook his head, "Let's dig in!"

"Mm!" Shi Nuan was wide-eyed as soon as she took her first bite of the bun, "Yan, it's delicious!"

A few days ago, she had mentioned her craving for animal-shaped steamed buns in passing. It would be tiring to queue for steamed buns since she needed to wake up early for work. Shi Nuan never expected Fu Chengyan to remember what she said. She was touched that he made the buns for her.

"Thank you, Yan!"

"Did I keep you sweet with one single meal?" Fu Chengyan raised his brow.

He was enjoying his porridge; his innate nobility and temperament was hard to ignore even though he was just having simple, homely food.

Shi Nuan was clumsy and graceless in comparison. Shi Nuan was almost starved to death. She hadn't eaten anything before going out last night and had consumed alcohol after that. In the middle of the night, she was drained of all energy from their love-making. She was so exhausted that she couldn't manage to drag herself out of bed, or else she would have had her breakfast earlier.

"Oh! Yan, are you going out today?"

"I guess not." Fu Chengyan was done with his meal, "Do you want to go out?"

Shi Nuan shook her head, “No, I’m tired!” She was worn out, and her body was reluctant to move.

Fu Chengyan smiled, “Are you full?”

Shi Nuan nodded, “Yes, I’m full.” She already ate three steamed buns and two bowls of porridge. She would be on the road to obesity if she still had room for more.

Fu Chengyan got up to clean the table after their meal and pointed at the backyard, “You should take a walk in the garden after your meal. It can help with digestion.”

“Let me help you to clean up!” Shi Nuan offered her help, but Fu Chengyan stopped her, “What if you injure your hand? Go take a walk. I’ll be right there after I’m done cleaning up.”

“Alright then!” Shi Nuan nudged Fu Chengyan’s arm, “Yan, you’re so nice to me!”

Fu Chengyan narrowed his eyes and flicked her forehead with his finger, “Move your ass, hurry!”

Shi Nuan made her way to the back garden as instructed. To tell the truth, she had an upset stomach because she had eaten too much just now. Initially, she thought of consuming a digestive enzymes, but she remembered that Fu Chengyan had reminded her to avoid taking tablets. Therefore, she listened to him and settled for a stroll in the garden.

Fu Chengyan quickly finished doing the dishes and looked out the window.

The earth had settled down in dormancy in the dead of winter. Shi Nuan radiated vitality as the sun’s rays showered on her.

Shi Nuan turned around and found Fu Chengyan standing by the window. She waved at him, “Yan, the sun is out and it’s warm out here! Come and join me!”

“Ok!” Fu Chengyan was about to go out but his handphone rang, “Wait for a while, I need to answer a call!” Fu Chengyan tapped on the screen and realized that it was a call from Pei Jingxiu, “Hey, Pei Jingxiu!”

“Are you free?” Pei Jingxiu’s deep voice was heard from the phone. Fu Chengyan shoved a hand in his pocket while observing Shi Nuan. She got bored with pacing in the garden and was now wielding a stick, as if she was writing invisible words in the air.

Fu Chengyan’s eyes darkened, “Mm, what’s up?”

“I’ve brought someone to meet aunt.” The ‘aunt’ Pei Jingxiu referred to was Ning Xin — Fu Heng’s wife and Fu Chengyan’s aunt as well.

Fu Chengyan furrowed his brow. “Aunt Ning is not feeling well recently, so uncle won’t allow her to go out,” Fu Chengyan said, “If you don’t have a solid reason, I think uncle wouldn’t permit you to meet Aunt Ning.”

“I do have a good reason,” Pei Jingxiu said, “I won’t bother you if it’s not important.”

Fu Chengyan remained silent for a while and said, “I’ll ask Aunt Ning.” He tittered and shook his head in amusement when he saw Shi Nuan making funny faces at him. “Who are you bringing along?”

“Don’t worry, it won’t affect aunt’s health,” Pei Jingxiu promised, “I believe aunt will be more than willing to meet her.”

“Fine, I’ll ask Aunt Ning first!”

Fu Chengyan ended the call; Shi Nuan noticed that his face was grave, so she entered and asked, “What’s wrong? Is something troubling you? Is it about the company?”

“It’s nothing, don’t worry!” Fu Chengyan patted Shi Nuan’s head. “It was a call from Pei Jingxiu.”

“What happened to Pei Jingxiu?” Shi Nuan raised her brow. “He was fine yesterday night, wasn’t he?”

“He’s fine, but he wishes to meet someone.” Fu Chengyan led Shi Nuan into the living room as he spoke, “Do you feel better right now?”

Shi Nuan raised her brow with a smile on her face. “How do you know I was feeling uncomfortable just now?”

“I noticed that you ate a lot in one sitting. You usually have a stomach of a tiny bird, so the large amount of food must be a burden to your stomach.” Fu Chengyan stroked Shi Nuan’s nose affectionately. “You shouldn’t binge-eat again.”

“I know, it’s just that the meal you prepared was too delicious,” Shi Nuan mumbled before saying, “Don’t you change the topic! You said Pei Jingxiu wants to meet a person – who’s that? Is that person related to you? You seem to be in a bad mood. Are you stumped by his request?”

“No, not really.” Fu Chengyan shook his head and handed a document to Shi Nuan, “Take a look at this while I make a phone call.”

“Mm.” Shi Nuan knew that there must be something troubling him, but she didn’t prod him on since Fu Chengyan said he could handle it.

Fu Chengyan dialed Ning Xin’s number, “Aunt Ning, it’s me, Yan!”

“Yan? Why are you suddenly calling me?” Ning Xin was surprised to receive a call from Fu Chengyan. Although Fu Chengyan was brought up by her and he treated her like his own mother, Song Zhenyan was back, and Fu Chengyan was a grown-up now. “Is there anything I can help you with?”

“Aunt Ning, how’s your health lately?” Fu Chengyan asked and said hesitantly, “It’s been a long time since we last met, I wish to meet you.”

Ning Xin paused; she peered up and smiled at Fu Heng, who was flanking her, “I have a lot of time to spare, but is there something going on?”

“I was hoping you could come over to my place.” Fu Chengyan paused for a while before continuing, “And there’s someone I want to introduce to you.”

“Introduce to me?” Ning Xin smiled, “Must I go to your place? Looks like it’s someone important to Yan. Fine, I’ll go since I’m bored at home. Should I go today?”

“Yes, I’ll send someone to fetch you in the afternoon.” Fu Chengyan smiled, “Aunt Ning, since you haven’t seen me in a while, we should have dinner together!”

“Alright.” Ning Xin ended the call and turned toward Fu Heng, “Yan called to ask me to visit his place. He said there’s someone I should meet.” Ning Xin caressed Fu Heng’s furrowed brows, “Heng, you need not worry about me. I have lived long enough and it’s my fate if I can’t make it. I feel depressed staying at home all day.”

Fu Heng’s eyes darkened, but he agreed anyway. “You may go if you wish to! But why is he meeting you privately?”

“I’m not sure, but we’ll find out when we get there. Maybe Yan found a girlfriend and wants me to meet her?”

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“A girlfriend? Yan?” Fu Heng shook his head in disbelief, “You know Yan’s character. He doesn’t even take a fancy to Song Jingyu, I bet he’s still not over that girl yet!”

However, Ning Xin disagreed with Fu Heng, “Heng, you know Yan as well, what do you think he abhors the most? Those two women did the exact thing that Yan hates the most. It’s no wonder he’s determined to cut ties with them.”

Ning Xin had brought up Fu Chengyan and she knew his disposition. “I have confidence in Yan. Since he called me over, I think he doesn’t want other people in this house to know about it. I shall go to his place then.”

“I’m his uncle, but he’s more intimate to you than he’s with me,” Fu Heng said with a sense of jealousy, though it was unsure whether he was jealous of Fu Chengyan or Ning Xin.

Ning Xin smiled, “You’ll hurt Yan’s feelings if he knows you think of him like that.”

“He’s a tough cookie, he’ll be fine!” Fu Heng said and then sighed, “Since we’re going, I’d better pack some clothes!” Fu Heng knew Ning Xin must be bored out of her mind since they had stayed in the Fu clan mansion for a long time. There was no harm for Ning Xin to stay for two days at Yan’s Wutong Residence, which had a nice environment.

“There is no need, since I’m just paying a visit. I’m not going for a long stay.”

“It doesn’t matter. We’ll take it as a trip to take you out of yourself,” Fu Heng said before he packed up their clothes. Ning Xin, who was leaning against the headboard, sighed faintly, “Thank you, Heng!”

They met each other in their younger days. Initially, they had no feelings for each other, but they gradually fell for each other after sharing much weal and woe. However, Ning Xin's was in poor health and her body further deteriorated after giving birth to Pei Huan. Fu Heng was so worried about her health condition that he relinquished his responsibility of the company to his brother, Fu Sheng, in order to take care of Ning Xin.

For all these years, Fu Heng and Ning Xin had more or less felt indebted to Fu Sheng and Fu Chengyan. Fu Sheng had always looked after them and Fu Chengyan was a sensible and intelligent kid.

Fu Heng packed their luggage, and they were about to leave. They were in the living room when they saw Song Zhenyan walking down the stairs. Song Zhenyan's glared at them when she noticed their luggage, "Fu Heng, where are you bringing sister-in-law?"

Both Fu Heng and Ning Xin paused. "We've stayed home for quite a while and it's time to get some fresh air. Sister-in-law, do we need your permission for that?"

Song Zhenyan was displeased by Fu Heng's defiant manner. "What do you mean? I'm just concerned with my sister-in-law's health condition. You shouldn't go out in this weather in case Ning Xin's health worsens."

"Ning and I can take care of our own business. Time is running late, so we shall be going now." Fu Heng held Ning Xin's arm and walked her out of the Fu clan mansion, leaving Song Zhenyan clutching the door frame, her face distorted with rage.

How dare you!

With his astute eyes, Fu Zhengyun had taken in their exchange from upstairs.

Next to him, the butler couldn't help but sigh, "Old Master, we should do something. Young master..."

“Let them be. We shall just leave it up to them. After all, there’s no harm for Fu Heng and Ning Xin to leave for a while.” Fu Zhengyun, just like any other man who had lived over half of his life, was sagacious enough and had learnt to turn a blind eye sometimes.

“You’re right, but Madam Ning’s health has become worse. Madam Song didn’t direct her hostility at Madam Ning, but she didn’t treat Madam Ning nicely either,” The butler concurred Fu Zhengyun. He, too, thought that a short trip will do both of them good. “But will it be unsafe with only Second Master Fu by Madam Ning’s side?”

“Don’t worry, Fu Heng is capable of taking care of his wife’s safety,” Fu Zhengyun smiled. Actually, Fu Heng was the one he favored as the heir, but he never insisted since Fu Heng had no interest in it. In addition, Fu Zhengyun had felt the weight lift off his chest when Fu Chengyan appeared.

The car sent by Fu Chengyan stopped a short ways away from the Fu clan mansion. It was out of sight of the Fu family members, but the distance was short enough so that Fu Heng and Ning Xin would not need to walk too far.

Zhou Zheng and Jiang Hu got out of the car, “Second Master Fu, Madam Ning.”

Zhou Zheng and Jiang Hu took their luggage and helped them into the car before they took off.

Fu Heng settled his gaze on Zhou Zheng and Jiang Hu. He recognized Zhou Zheng as Fu Chengyan’s assistant while he found Jiang Hu to be a sturdy man with an intimidating aura, yet there’s not a trace of hostility from him.

Fu Heng had seen much of life and he immediately realized Jiang Hu knew Kung Fu. Fu Chengyan was attentive and thoughtful in making this arrangement.

“Second Master Fu, Mr. Fu is awaiting your arrival in Wutong Residence. Is Madam Ning feeling better recently? Mr. Fu has invited specialists who have expertise in this area from abroad to check on Madam Ning.”

“Mm!” Fu Heng nodded his assent and poured Ning Xin a cup of warm water, “Take a sip!”

Zhou Zheng couldn't help but roll his eyes when he saw the way Fu Heng treated his wife like a glass doll.

Zhou Zheng felt like everyone was rubbing his singleness in his face – His boss had taken to public displays of affection ever since he met Shi Nuan, and now even Fu Heng, in his old age, was openly doting on his wife.

When they arrived at Wutong Residence, Zhou Zheng led Fu Heng and Ning Xin into the house while Jiang Hu carried in the luggage.

Arnold started barking in the yard as soon as it sensed the invasion of strangers into its territory.

Shi Nuan was on the swing in the yard. She instantly got off the swing when she heard Arnold's barks, “Arnold, shush!”

Shi Nuan's voice was soft yet firm enough to shush Arnold. Shi Nuan smiled as she hugged Arnold and smoothed its fur to pacify Arnold, “Don't bark at them, they're our guests!”

Shi Nuan carried Arnold in her arms and lifted her head. Fu Heng and Ning Xin were stunned as soon as they saw her face, “Shen...” Ning Xin bit her tongue when Fu Heng gave her hand a light squeeze and shook his head in disapproval. Ning Xin pursed her lips and let out a soft sigh.

With a sweet smile on her face, Shi Nuan approached Fu Heng and Ning Xin and greeted them politely, “I suppose you two must be uncle and aunt Ning! I'm Shi Nuan, nice to meet you!” Shi Nuan smiled as she introduced herself, “I'm Yan's wife.”

Fu Heng and Ning Xin were slightly bewildered, and they turned around to look at Zhou Zheng inquisitively.

Zhou Zheng smiled awkwardly, "Second Master Fu, Madam Ning, Shi Nuan is indeed Mr. Fu's wife."

Fu Heng believed in the truthfulness of Shi Nuan's statements upon Zhou Zheng's acknowledgment. However, Fu Heng had mixed feelings when he saw Shi Nuan's face.

Shi Nuan had no idea what was going on in Fu Heng and Ning Xin's minds. She noticed their bewildered expression but assumed they were surprised by the news of Fu Chengyan's marriage.

"Uncle, Aunt Ning, come in and have a seat! Yan is in his study and I'll ask him to come downstairs."

Shi Nuan let go of Arnold and led them into the Wutong Residence. Fu Heng and Ning Xin followed suit, their facial expressions giving away their perplexity, "Heng, she..."

"They look alike, but it's not her," Fu Heng said and sighed faintly, "She seems to be a nice lady." Fu Heng turned to face Zhou Zheng, "When did Yan get married? Why don't we know about it?"

"Well... Mr. Fu got married about five months ago. Actually, you're not the only ones that were unaware, a lot of people still don't know about this," Zhou Zheng replied truthfully. Zhou Zheng figured Fu Chengyan didn't intend to hide his marriage since he had invited them over and Shi Nuan had frankly admitted their marriage.

Both Fu Heng and Ning Xin were shocked that Fu Chengyan had rushed into marriage. Yan got married five months ago... That meant he got married as soon as Fu Renjiang got kicked out of the company and arrested by the police.

He was such a tight-lipped bloke that he hid his marriage from everyone. They would still be kept in the dark about his marriage if he never voluntarily invited them over.

“This girl...”

“Don’t worry, Second Master Fu. She’s an amiable lady. She and Mr. Fu love each other very much,” Zhou Zheng said. He had observed them for quite a while and concluded that they were in a loving relationship.

Fu Heng nodded, “Since they’re married, what’s done is done and we can’t say anything about it. Did Yan invite us over to introduce her to us?”

Zhou Zheng flashed a mysterious smile, “Second Master Fu, do come in! You’ll find out when it’s time.”

Fu Heng nodded at his words and led Ning Xin by the arm into the house.

Shi Nuan had gone upstairs to the study. Actually, Fu Chengyan had noticed Fu Heng and Ning Xin’s arrival as soon as the car pulled up at Wutong Residence. He put his book down and pinched the bridge of his nose.

Shi Nuan rushed to his side; she placed her fingers on Fu Chengyan’s temples and applied pressure, “Are you ok? Do you feel better now?”

Fu Chengyan nodded, “Mm, much better!”

“Then let’s head downstairs, uncle and Aunt Ning have arrived.”

“Have you met just now?”

Shi Nuan nodded, “But they seemed surprised when they saw me, especially when they heard that we’re married. Have I frightened them?”

“You’re such a silly girl.” Fu Chengyan took Shi Nuan’s hand. “We will need to tell them eventually. Uncle and Aunt Ning are the most open-minded people in the Fu family. They are the most important ones to me because I was brought up by them.”

Shi Nuan nodded, "I understand, and I think I behaved with sufficient courtesy."

"I trust you!" Fu Chengyan smiled as he stroked the tip of Shi Nuan's nose, "Let's go!"

Fu Chengyan took Shi Nuan's hand and led her downstairs. Fu Heng and Ning Xin had just entered the house; Ning Xin smiled at the affectionate couple and there was not a trace of worry on her face.

"Uncle, Aunt Ning!"

Fu Chengyan strode down the stairs, "Long time no see!"

"Yes, it's been a long time." Ning Xin discreetly eyed Shi Nuan up and down before saying, "I see you have a mind of your own now. Why didn't you announce your marriage to the Fu Clan?"

Ning Xin's question was probing, but she did not look stern. With Shi Nuan's hand still in his, Fu Chengyan chuckled, "I'm planning to tell you guys right now. Uncle, Aunt Ning, I promise you are the first to know about our marriage."

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“What about your parents?” Ning Xin peered up at Fu Chengyan, who remained silent. Instead, he looked unconcerned, as if he couldn’t care less.

Ning Xin understood his stance against telling his parents, so she didn’t prod him for answers. “You gave us a slapdash call without mentioning your marriage on the phone. Your uncle and I didn’t bring anything for your wife and this is the first time we meet...”

“Aunt Ning, my name is Shi Nuan. You can call me Nuan.” Shi Nuan flashed a warm smile.

“Oh, alright, Nuan.” Ning Xin was pleased by Shi Nuan’s decency, especially her unpretentious demeanor toward them. Ning Xin could tell that Shi Nuan cared a lot about Fu Chengyan with her gaze constantly fixated on him. “Yan, it’s inappropriate for us to show up empty-handed since this our first meet-up with Shi Nuan.”

“Never mind, Aunt Ning.” Shi Nuan couldn’t care less about those unnecessary formalities, “Actually, Yan has always wanted to introduce me to his uncle and aunt, but I rejected it previously because I felt it was not the right timing. I hope you won’t mind.”

“Nuan is right. We’re a family, so there’s no need to adhere to formalities like meetup gifts. Aunt Ning, you must be tired of standing, have a seat.” Fu Chengyan helped Ning Xin to the couch. Fu Heng had remained silent the whole time as he observed Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan with a shrewd gaze. Then, his eyes explored the surrounding of the Wutong Residence before nodding in satisfaction.

“Uncle, Aunt Ning, have some tea!”

Shi Nuan appeared from the kitchen with the tea she brewed, “I’m not sure what tea you normally enjoy so I prepared uncle’s tea according to Yan’s preference. As for Aunt Ning, since you’re not feeling well, I made you some mild honeysuckle tea. Aunt Ning, have a taste.”

“You’re too kind,” Ning Xin said before taking a sip. Then, she placed her teacup down and patted Shi Nuan’s hand gently, “You’re a beautiful and pure-hearted lady.”

“Aunt, you’re flattering me.” Shi Nuan was glad to receive such a high compliment from Ning Xin.

“Did you decorate the Wutong Residence by yourself?” Fu Heng glanced at Shi Nuan and then at the surroundings.

Fu Heng and Ning Xin rarely visited the Wutong Residence. They had only stepped foot a few times when Fu Chengyan first bought it a few years ago. It was mostly the same cold, modern interior design that was tell-tale of Fu Chengyan’s personal style. Although there was not much of a change, Fu Heng could sense a homely atmosphere in the Wutong residence.

Shi Nuan paused for a while, “Uncle, you noticed it?” A sheepish expression appeared on Shi Nuan’s face, “Actually, I only contributed to a small part of the decoration since Yan’s previous interior design was immaculate. But I found the white curtains too blinding so I substituted them with darker shades of white. It’s embroidered with a trace of traditional Chinese paintings, which Yan is fond of.”

Fu Heng nodded, “It seems like you know him pretty well.”

“Actually I don’t know him well enough. It has not a long time since we met each other, which keep the marriage on the down-low. Uncle, I hope you won’t blame me and Yan for that!”

Fu Heng chuckled, "Although marriage is between the two of you, it involves the engagement of two families. Ning and I have no right to blame you, but you should at least inform your families, to do otherwise would be dishonorable."

"Uncle, you're right. Yan and I are inconsiderate in this matter." Shi Nuan owned up at once, "So this time we invited you and aunt to set right our mistakes." Shi Nuan paused and then continued, "My relationship with my family is complicated, so I'm unwilling to let them know about our marriage because that will only bring Yan trouble. However, my granddad and grandpa are aware of it, and they are pleased with Yan."

"Oh?" Fu Heng raised his brow and looked at Fu Chengyan. Fu Chengyan nodded in response to Shi Nuan's words, pleased by her eloquence. "Yes, uncle."

"If that's so, then I have nothing more to say." Fu Heng nodded, "Chengyan, I know you're a prudent adult. I won't question your decisions because you must have your own reason for not telling us beforehand. But your parents and your granddad..."

"I will tell them when it's time, but not now. I hope you would keep it from them," Fu Chengyan said as his face grew serious.

It's rare to see Fu Chengyan taking a matter so seriously. Fu Heng nodded after a moment of silence, "It's not my business to interfere, but you should at least notify your father."

Fu Heng glanced at Shi Nuan, looking hesitant. Eventually, he sighed and said, "Your parents are indeed tough nuts to crack, especially with Song Jingyu standing in the way. What are you going to do with them?"

Fu Heng took another glance at Shi Nuan and found that Shi Nuan was unruffled by his words. He guessed Shi Nuan must have been aware of Song Jingyu's existence, "You guys are grown-ups now. You have your own opinions and you can deal with your own issues, so I'll leave it up to you, but don't forget Song

Jingyu is from your mother's side of the family and the Song family is protective toward her."

"It's no big deal, I can take care of it." Fu Chengyan paused for a while and continued, "Uncle, aunt, you can stay here for two days since you've come over. The air here is fresher and it is secluded, so there's less disturbance."

Fu Heng curled his lips, "You smarty pants!" He got off the couch, "Come with me, you and I are going to have a talk."

Fu Chengyan followed Fu Heng to the study on the second floor while Shi Nuan accompanied Ning Xin. The two women chatted away in the living room.

Ning Xin was feeling suffocated from being cooped up in the Fu clan mansion, so she was delighted to meet Shi Nuan. She enthusiastically chatted with Shi Nuan and asked about Shi Nuan's family from time to time. She got a vague picture of the complexity of Shi Nuan's family relationship and understood their choice of getting married in secret.

"I watched Yan grow up and I can guarantee that he's a good kid. Nuan, you're a nice lady, and I'm happy that you and Yan found each other!" Ning Xin patted Shi Nuan's hand, "But you can't keep your marriage in the dark forever. You should find an opportunity to tell them."

"Aunt Ning, you're right. It's just that Yan and I think it's not the perfect timing to tell them now." Shi Nuan paused, "We don't mean to avoid it forever; we'll tell them sooner or later."

"That's great." Ning Xin nodded, "You're perceptive despite your young age."

"Aunt Ning, you're flattering me."

"Just now you mentioned that you're working at Shengyuan?" Ning Xin asked as a thought crossed her mind. "Then Song Jingyu..."

“Aunt Ning, don’t worry. Yan and I maintain a strictly professional relationship in the office. He is my superior, and I’m his subordinate – nothing more than that. In fact, I’m in the project management department, so I don’t get to meet him often. I’m mindful of separating work from personal life.” Shi Nuan left no doubt on this matter, “Aunt Ning, Yan actually invited you over because there’s someone he wants you to meet.”

“To meet someone? Isn’t that you?” Ning Xin was slightly confused and furrowed her brows, “Then who is it?”

“I’m not sure either, but Yan said it’s someone important to you.” Shi Nuan took a glance upstairs as she spoke, “Yan hopes to keep it from uncle, so...”

Ning Xin slightly frowned, “You want me to put Heng off?”

Shi Nuan nodded, “But of course, if aunt is unwilling to meet this person, we can definitely call it off. Yan said it’s entirely up to you.”

Ning Xin smiled as she shook her head, “I raised Yan since he was a child and I know him pretty well. Since you guys invited me, I might as well meet that person.”

Ning Xin took out her handphone and gave Fu Heng a call, “Fu Heng, I’m craving for the Osmanthus cake from Bingji. Can you go get them for me?”

“Now?” Fu Heng slightly frowned, “Ok, I’ll go get them soon.”

Fu Heng ended the call and turned to meet Fu Chengyan’s gaze, “Since you’ve chosen to get married, you should settle down from now on. She seems to be a nice lady. You better treat her nicely.”

“I will.” Fu Chengyan curved his lips into a gentle smile. “She’s my wife and I’ll take care of her for the rest of my life.”

Fu Heng was satisfied with his response, “It appears that we’re on the same page.” Then, he alluded, “But her face... She looks like...”

Fu Chengyan’s brows creased, “She’s Nuan, not anyone else. Uncle, I do know who I’m in love with.”

“There’s no need for me to worry, then.” Fu Heng patted Fu Chengyan on the shoulder, “You guys help look after your aunt whilst I’m off to buy her some Osmanthus cake.”

“Osmanthus cake? Aunt Ning still has a special liking for it after all these years, huh?” Fu Chengyan jested.

Fu Heng smiled helplessly with a sense of indulgence, “I guess it’s a good thing to have a penchant for something.”

As soon as Fu Heng was gone, Ning Xin turned toward Fu Chengyan with a stern face, “I know you never do things without a reason.”

“Aunt Ning, don’t worry, it’s no other than Pei Jingxiu. Do you still remember him?” Fu Chengyan fetched Ning Xin a cashmere blanket, placed it atop her lap, and patted her consolingly on the shoulder. “The adopted son of the Ning family.”

“Xiu?” Ning Xin fell into a long silence before speaking again, “I thought Xiu is studying abroad? I rarely saw him since I got married and came to Jiang City.” Ning Xin had only a vague memory of Pei Jingxiu, and it took her by surprise to hear about him, “Has Xiu come to Jiang City?”

“Yes, Aunt Ning.” Fu Chengyan nodded, “Pei Jingxiu wants to meet you, so...”

“Then let’s meet. I still remember the day I first saw him – he was still a little squirt. I think he must be about your age now!” Ning Xin chuckled, “I can’t recall clearly.”

“He’s three years older than me.” Fu Chengyan took Ning Xin’s hand. “He will be arriving soon. Aunt Ning, I suppose you already know why I decided to keep it from uncle. Uncle and the Ning family...”

“I understand.” Ning Xin patted Fu Chengyan’s hand, “It’s very thoughtful of you. Let me meet Xiu first and we’ll tell your uncle later.”

The doorbell rang, interrupting their conversation. Shi Nuan smiled and got off the couch, “I suppose it’s Pei Jingxiu. I’ll get the door.”

Shi Nuan unlatched the door and found Pei Jingxiu with a beige coat in his hand. A young girl was standing beside him. It was hard to estimate the girl’s age as she was baby-faced, which added to her youthfulness.

Dressed in a pink dress, she looked like a delicate doll. The girl was none other than Ning Xi.

I Want a Lifetime with You

Chapter 219

Shi Nuan was startled, but she quickly recovered. “Pei Jingxiu!”

Pei Jingxiu returned Shi Nuan’s greeting with a slight nod, “Sister-in-law, where’s Yan?”

“Yan’s inside and Aunt Ning has arrived as well.” Shi Nuan smiled and nodded politely in the girl’s direction, “Pei Jingxiu, this is...?”

“Xi, you can call her sister-in-law.”

“Sister-in-law.” Ning Xi had a honeyed voice — it was likeable, which was a stark opposite from the cold voice from yesterday night.

Shi Nuan smiled as she nodded, “Hi, I’m Shi Nuan. Please come in!”

Shi Nuan led Pei Jingxiu and Ning Xi into the house and had them change into home slippers, “Pei Jingxiu, Xi, come on in!”

Shi Nuan guided them to the living room and then entered the kitchen to prepare some tea. Pei Jingxiu squinted and saw Ning Xin, who was sitting on the couch. Her figure seemed to overlap with his memory of her. “Aunt.”

The man’s voice penetrated the room with a hint of respect. Ning Xin was at a loss as she studied the man in front of her.

The man had a lean figure and a charming face which somewhat reminded her of the child from her memory. The child who was stubborn as a mule had now turned into a tender gentleman.

“Are you Xiu?” Ning Xin beckoned him over with a wave of the hand, “Come, let aunt have a look at you. It’s been years since I last saw you and you’re all grown up now.”

“Aunt, I’m Xiu!” Pei Jingxiu approached Ning Xin and knelt by her side while he gripped her hand, “It’s been a long time, how’s your health recently?”

“I’m fine! Same old, same old. I’m no better than I was, but at least it can’t get any worse, and I’m contented.” Ning Xin let out a sigh as she observed Pei Jingxiu closely and remarked, “I never thought we would see each other again. How many years have passed since we last met? I couldn’t believe it when Yan told me that you’re back. Xiu, how have you been doing abroad all these years?”

“I’m good, thanks, aunt.” Pei Jingxiu respected Ning Xin greatly and let Ning Xin grasp his hand, “Aunt, how have you been for the past few years?”

“All is well.” Ning Xin smiled, “I never thought I could see you again, did you laboriously come to Jiang City?”

Pei Jingxiu nodded. Ning Xin furrowed her brows, “Why didn’t you go back to Sheen City? And this is...?” Ning Xin glanced over Pei Jingxiu’s shoulder and noticed the young girl. The girl looked familiar to Ning Xin, but she couldn’t put her finger on her identity, “Xiu, is this your girlfriend?”

Pei Jingxiu chuckled and shook his head, “Aunt, have a closer look.” Pei Jingxiu stood to his feet as he spoke, “Xi, come closer, let aunt take a look at you.”

Ning Xi slightly frowned with traces of impatience on her babyface. She seemed discouraged, but eventually gave in and shuffled toward Ning Xin. Ning Xin’s eyes grew wide in astonishment as she pointed Ning Xi, “You... you...”

“Xi, greet her,” Pei Jingxiu urged in a cold tone.

Ning Xi clenched her fists, “Aunt.”

“Xiu, is she Xi?” Ning Xin was still in disbelief, “She’s Xi?”

“Yes, aunt!” Pei Jingxiu’s answer confirmed Ning Xin’s suspicions. Ning Xin’s face grew pale and she asked dubiously after a long silence, “How are you so sure that she’s Xi?” After all, Ning Xi was only about four or five years old when she went missing. No one could prove that this girl was truly Ning Xi.

For all these years, the Ning family had tried to search for Ning Xi, but their efforts were to no avail. Ning Xin was thunderstruck that this girl had suddenly appeared before her, claiming to be Ning Xi.

“I know it’s hard to believe it because I couldn’t believe it either when I first saw her. At that time, I even thought that it was incredible that two people could look so alike,” Pei Jingxiu said and asked Ning Xi to show her arm, “I have not brought Ning Xi back to the Ning family yet, but I decided to let aunt meet Xi first. You carried Xi when she was young, and she has a birthmark on her arm. I’m not sure if you still remember it.”

“Yes, I remember it,” Ning Xin nodded; the birthmark was very obvious and impossible to overlook.

Pei Jingxiu rolled up Ning Xi’s sleeves and revealed her slender upper arm. It was full of wounds and bruises, which had gradually turned into cicatrizes over time. Ning Xin was horrified by the sight but she confirmed Ning Xi’s identity once she saw the heart-shaped birthmark on her arm. “Yes, Xi has the exact birthmark on her arm, though it was much smaller when she was little. Are you really Xi?”

“I don’t know.” Ning Xi shook her head and turned toward Pei Jingxiu, “My name is Nine. Brother said I’m from the Ning family when he found me.”

Ning Xi's attitude was cold and aloof, which didn't complement her babyface, but this made Ning Xin even more certain that the girl in front of her was indeed Ning Xi who went missing years ago. "Xiu, how did you find Xi? It's been years..."

"I found her by coincidence," Pei Jingxiu said. At the same time, Shi Nuan came out of the kitchen with two cups of tea, "Please have a seat." She looked at Fu Chengyan, "Yan, I want to have a walk, can you come with me?"

Fu Chengyan narrowed his eyes and nodded. "Alright." He got up and spoke to Ning Xin, "Aunt, I'll leave you to talk with Pei Jingxiu. May and I are going for a walk."

After Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan left, Ning Xin gestured for Ning Xi to sit next to her, "Relax, I won't bite."

"I'm not nervous!" Ning Xi smiled, "I'm just not used to it."

"All these years, we have been searching within the country, but we never thought of expanding the scope of search overseas. I was abroad for the past few years and saw Xi by coincidence. I learned that she was adopted by a Chinese-American couple, and had been living abroad all this while, which was why we couldn't trace Xi's whereabouts."

Pei Jingxiu handed an adoption certificate over to Ning Xin. "I didn't want to mess this up, so I conducted a thorough investigation. Xi was abducted at a young age, so she doesn't recall the incident. She had been tossed around a few times before she was eventually adopted by this Chinese American couple from an orphanage."

Ning Xin unfolded the adoption certificate with her trembling hands and was shocked as she skimmed its content. She took Ning Xi's arm and tears rolled down her cheek as she took in the scars at a glance, "Oh, poor child, they..."

“I’m okay.” Ning Xi felt uncomfortable and avoided Ning Xin’s touch. “I got these when I was little and I don’t really remember it. My life was great when I was in the United States and my foster parents are nice to me.”

“Really?”

“Yes!” Ning Xi nodded, “Actually, I might not have come back if brother never found me.” Ning Xi remained silent for a while, “I don’t plan to stay for long. I just want to meet my biological parents, and I’ll leave after that. I won’t disrupt their life.”

“That’s nonsense. You’re part of the Ning family. Since Xiu found you, there’s no doubt that you’ll return to the Ning family. But why did you guys come to me?” Ning Xin was dubious, “Xiu, you know I have grievances with the Ning family when I married your uncle. Since then, I’ve had little to no contact with them.”

“Aunt, I understand what you mean. I was just hoping that Xi and aunt can do an avuncular DNA test. As you can see, even though Xi and her biological mother are very much alike, and she has a birthmark on her arm, these will prove nothing without a DNA test. The current situation of the Ning family is rather complicated, so it’s better not to involve,” Pei Jingxiu explained his intentions.

Ning Xin nodded with understanding, “You want me to do an avuncular DNA test with Xi since I’m her aunt. If we really have blood ties, there’s a high possibility that our blood types will match. If the result turns out negative, you won’t bring her back to the Ning family?”

Ning Xin once again nodded in agreement, “You’re very thoughtful, and I understand what you mean. I have no objection to it. But if Xi is really from the Ning family, she would eventually need to return to the Ning family, no matter how complicated the situation becomes.”

“You took the words right out of my mouth.” Pei Jingxiu smiled, “Even though I’m not a biological child of the Ning family, I grew up in the Ning family, and it’s time for me to do something to repay them.”

“Thanks for all that you’ve done.” Ning Xin smiled and held Ning Xi’s hand. “You look exactly like your mother, but...” Ning Xin was hesitant and she swallowed back her words, “So, when are we going to take the blood test?”

“There’s no hurry since I’ll be staying in Jiang City for some time due to my business arrangements. Aunt, you’re still in poor health, so we’ll do it when you feel better.”

“You’re not leaving anytime soon?” Ning Xin was delighted, “That’s great. I will stay at Yan’s for the time being. You should visit often since you’re a friend of Yan. Also, it’s been years since we last saw each other. Yan’s wife, Nuan, is a nice lady, and I think Xi will definitely get along with her.”

“Alright, aunt.” Ning Xi withdrew her hand and sat primly; she was still not used to the closeness.

Ning Xin felt dejected when she saw Ning Xi acting timorous.

Ning Xi must have suffered a lot from being away from home for such a long time.

At this moment, the door swung open and Fu Heng entered with the Osmanthus cake in his hand. He furrowed his brows and his eyes glinted with hostility as he locked his gaze on Pei Jingxiu. Fu Heng’s fury sprang to life when he noticed Ning Xin’s low spirits.

“Who are you guys?”

Fu Heng walked toward Pei Jingxiu. He loomed over the man who was much younger than him.

The young man held his ground and never lost his composure despite Fu Heng’s intimidation.

Both Fu Heng and Pei Jingxiu traded glances. Finally, Pei Jingxiu curled his lips and got to his feet, “Hi, uncle. I’m Pei Jingxiu.”

“Pei Jingxiu?” Fu Heng turned toward Ning Xin, “You said you wanted to eat Osmanthus cake, but it’s just your excuse to send me away to meet someone from the Ning family, isn’t it?”

“Heng, it’s not what you think. This has nothing to do with the Ning family.” Ning Xin immediately clarified, “Xiu had left the Ning family a few years ago and he came to visit me this time.”

I Want a Lifetime with You

Chapter 220

“So Yan knows about this too? I’m the only one that’s clueless?”

Ning Xin immediately knew that Fu Heng was heading into the blind alley with his bull-headed thoughts. She felt the beginnings of a throbbing headache as she tried to placate her husband, “Heng, don’t be mad. I’ve done nothing, and Xiu was just coming for a visit.”

“Is that so?”

Ning Xin was an artless person, but Fu Heng was too clever to let her pull the wool over his eyes. He narrowed his eyes and glared at Pei Jingxiu. Pei Jingxiu was poised as calmly met Fu Heng’s gaze.

“Heng, Xiu is our guest. On top of that, he is Yan’s friend!”

Fu Heng glanced at Ning Xin and finally dropped the hostility. Then, he shifted his gaze towards Ning Xi, “This is...”

“Xi, come and meet your uncle!”

“Uncle!” Ning Xi maintained her distant demeanor as she greeted Fu Heng politely. Oddly, her faint aloofness made a good impression on Fu Heng. At least she was not a calculating girl that would scheme against Ning Xin. “Where are Yan and Nuan?”

“The little couple went for a walk.” Ning Xin smiled, “That’s it, stop pulling the long face. Don’t you know me? Do you think anyone can force me into doing something that I’m unwilling to?”

Her words soothed Fu Heng’s nerves, but he still gave Pei Jingxiu the cold shoulder.

Fu Heng had no prejudice against Pei Jingxiu, but he was concerned about Pei Jingxiu’s reputation and the fact that he was fostered by the Ning family. He was mindful that Pei Jingxiu was a man of high aspiration — a true go-getter.

Meanwhile, Ning Xin and Fu Chengyan were strolling around the neighborhood, “Yan, you said Pei Jingxiu was adopted by the Ning family. How come I never heard about this?”

“That’s normal, since only a handful of people know about this.” Fu Chengyan reflected, “In fact, I need to thank aunt, otherwise I wouldn’t have even met Pei Jingxiu. His relationship with the Ning family is complicated, so you need not treat him as a member of the Ning family.”

“Alright, got it. And about the girl that Pei Jingxiu brought along today, Ning Xi, she seems to be a meek person. She’s a child of the Ning family, but Pei Jingxiu came to Jiang City to meet Aunt Ning instead of bringing her back to the Ning family in Sheen City. Isn’t it weird? I don’t understand!”

“Pei Jingxiu knows what he’s doing. Bringing Ning Xi to visit Aunt Ning is a safe bet. Actually, Pei Jingxiu spent his childhood alongside Aunt Ning, just like me.”

“Really?” Shi Nuan was surprised, “Then aunt Ning must be a very nice person because you and Pei Jingxiu respect her a lot.”

Fu Chengyan nodded in agreement, “Aunt Ning is a wise woman. Uncle had gone through a whole lot of twists and turns to marry her.”

“I think it’s time we head back!” Shi Nuan pointed at her watch, “What should we have for lunch today? There are six of us – uncle, Aunt Ning, Pei Jingxiu, Ning Xi, you, and me.”

“Don’t worry, I’ve instructed Zhou Zheng to prepare some fresh ingredients. It’s all set!”

“Yan, you always have everything planned out.” Shi Nuan clung to Fu Chengyan’s arm and peered up at him, “I want to eat braised fish head.”

“Check!”

“What about Sichuan boiled beef?”

“Check!”

“And braised eggplant?”

“Yes, your wishes are granted!”

“Yan, you’re the best!”

Fu Heng had already returned when the couple got back. Surprisingly, the atmosphere in the living room was harmonious.

Pei Jingxiu and Fu Heng were playing chess with Fu Chengyan precious chess set.

Fu Chengyan raised his brow as he walked toward them with Shi Nuan, “Where did you find it?”

Pei Jingxiu narrowed his eyes, “Chengyan, how could keep such a nice chess set to yourself?” The origin of the chessboard could be traced back to the Ming

Dynasty. It was well preserved because it was made out of fine wood coupled with anticorrosive materials.

Fu Chengyan had bid it with a sky-high price from an auction in the capital. It had been kept in his collection all this while, but thanks to Pei Jingxiu and Fu Heng, it finally saw the light of day.

Fu Chengyan was not a miser; he simply glanced at the heated game and the two chess players. It seemed like Pei Jingxiu had met his match; it was a diamond cut diamond.

Both of them demonstrated different chess styles; Fu Heng was an aggressive player while Pei Jingxiu was more of a forbearing player. There was a touch of tension in the air; every move on the chessboard was perfectly calculated, and both players were trading off pieces over a multitude of other possibilities.

On the other hand, a relaxed and easy-going atmosphere surrounded Ning Xin and Ning Xi.

Ning Xin had always been a calm person, and she enjoyed taking her time.

She was sieving through the tea leaves while warming her tea ware. Then, she infused the tea leaves and swirled them with a teaspoon in a slow circular motion. She was pleased when she saw Ning Xi imitating her motions. "Xiu said you received western education when you were abroad. I find that you have a strong grip on your composure."

"Thank you for the compliment, aunt."

Ning Xi paused and greeted Shi Nuan as she approached them, "Sister-in-law."

"Relax, you can call me Shi Nuan. Xi, how old are you?"

"Twenty-three," Ning Xi replied. Shi Nuan raised her brow, "I'm two years older than you, you can call me Nuan if you prefer."

“Nuan!” Ning Xi had open up and became more talkative as compared to when she just arrived at the house. Shi Nuan responded with smile and joined their tea-brewing.

“Nuan, you’re skilled in brewing tea. Have you learnt it before?”

“Yes, I learned it from my grandpa when I was little.” Shi Nuan smiled and handed Fu Heng and Pei Jingxiu the freshly brewed tea, “Uncle, Pei Jingxiu, do have some tea!”

“Thank you!” Fu Heng took a sip and nodded in satisfaction. “Yan indeed has a lovely wife.”

Shi Nuan smiled, “It’s quite late now. Uncle and Pei Jingxiu, you guys should stay for dinner! I’ll prepare it right now.”

“I’ll give you a helping hand!” Fu Chengyan followed Shi Nuan into the kitchen. Fu Heng smiled with delight as he gazed at the lovely couple. “Seems like Yan finally got a taste of love.” It was Fu Heng’s turn to make a move; he moved his piece intuitively and was no longer taking aggressive steps.

Pei Jingxiu paused for a second. His eyes bore into Fu Heng’s and chuckled, “Yes, he’s a different man when compared to his old self a few years ago. He’s become more compassionate.”

“Yes, he seems to be more caring!” Fu Heng said. He smiled when he noticed the game ended up in stalemate after Pei Jingxiu made his move,. “Oh, you turned the tide! I’m beginning to regain hope for the younger generation. Shall we have one more game?”

“Of course!” Pei Jingxiu nodded and started setting up the chessboard.

In the meantime, Shi Nuan and Fu Chengyan were busy preparing dinner in the kitchen. An hour later, dinner was ready. Shi Nuan came out of the kitchen in her

apron to serve the last dish — spicy chicken. “All of you, wash your hands and get ready for dinner.”

“Alright!” Ning Xin placed her teacup down, “It smells so good! I didn’t know that you are so good at cooking!”

“Actually, Yan is the head chef and I’m just his sous-chef. Uncle, Aunt Ning, you can wash your hands here.”

All six of them enjoyed the meal as well as the joyous moments. Although Shi Nuan claimed that Fu Chengyan was the one preparing the meal, Fu Heng and Ning Xin knew that Shi Nuan was just being humble. She was a likable lady and the perfect match for Fu Chengyan. They were relieved and felt as if a huge weight had lifted off their chests.

After dinner, Pei Jingxiu left with Ning Xi while Shi Nuan and Fu Chengyan took a stroll outside. Fu Heng and Ning Xin headed upstairs to the guestrooms, which had been cleaned and prepared by Shi Nuan beforehand.

Ning Xin finished showering and was holding her towel. Fu Heng helped Ning Xin rub her hair dry, “Shi Nuan is a nice lady and it seems like Yan’s feeling for her are genuine.”

“Yan takes all of his relationships seriously. I think he has a clear-sighted sense of when he should move on. Unlike some of you who constantly hold on to the past.” Regardless of the trace of similarity of Shi Nuan’s features with that woman, Ning Xin was pleased to acknowledge Shi Nuan as her nephew’s wife.

Fu Heng smiled and nodded, “I might have worried too much. In that case, we’ll temporarily keep it from the Fu family. We all know my father’s temper, and only Yan knows how to deal with him. Whereas Yan’s parents...” Fu Heng was perturbed whenever he thought of Fu Sheng and Song Zhenyan.

Ning Xin was well aware of Fu Heng's worries, "Years have passed since that incident, so you shouldn't keep dwelling on the past. In fact, you have nothing to do with it."

"You're right. We'll cross the bridge when we get there! We'll stay here for the time being since you're unwilling to face Song Zhenyan in the Fu clan mansion."

"I couldn't agree more. And I can meet Xi more often. Xiu promised that he would visit us every once in a while during his stay in Jiang City." Ning Xin glanced furtively at Fu Heng and continued, "Xiu is a poor kid – he lost his parents and the Pei family overnight. Fortunately, he survived against all odds. Heng, don't worry, Xiu won't harm me."

"Mm!" Fu Heng could tell that Pei Jingxiu respected Ning Xin a lot. He didn't care if Pei Jingxiu ruined the Ning family. All he cared about were Ning Xin and their child — Pei Huan.

A dead silence blanketed the car on their journey back home. Ning Xi could no longer maintain her façade as a timorous girl. As if a switch had been flipped, she regained her usual coolness, "So this is why you brought me here? To meet her?"

Pei Jingxiu glanced at her out of the corner of his eyes and remained mute. However, the answer to her question was plain to see.

Ning Xin was slightly annoyed, "She's a kind woman, and I can see that you respect her very much. But now you're taking advantage of her kindness, don't you think it's cruel to her?"