Chapter 44 - Returning home for the Spring Festival

December 21. Chen Qianqing sat for his last exam.

After the exam, Zhu Mao asked him how it went. Chen Qianqing paused for a while to then distort the truth, “I should pass.”
In reality, he wasn’t sure about that. Nevertheless, even if he didn’t pass, it wouldn’t matter: Lu Zhengfei would help him graduate anyways.

Chen Qianqing remembered that when everyone was studying at the Zhongben university, they could not pass the exam in one specific class. The old professor who taught that subject was stubborn and refused to let the matter go, so the school had no choice but to cancel that class.

This world cannot be without justice, but when you have a certain amount of power the only thing left to control you is your own morals.

After Chen Qianqing finished his exams, he went to Lu Zhengfei’s place. Of course, when doing that, he made sure to bring Xiao Hua with him.

Lu Zhengfei knew of his arrival, and waited at home especially for him. He didn’t expect that when Chen Qianqing came in, a cat was hidden in the pockets of his clothes. He was a bit flabbergasted, “Qianqing, I thought you disliked small animals-?”

Chen Qianqing took Xiao Hua out of his pockets only when he entered, “I was bored, so I raised him for fun.”

Xiao Hua was small; when he saw Lu Zhengfei, his ears flattened and he went to crouch next to Chen Qianqing’s feet. Seeing Lu Zhengfei draw his hand near, he hissed.

At first, Lu Zhengfei wanted to pick him up, but since Xiao Hua had this reaction he just enthusiastically asked, “What's his name?”

Chen Qianqing, “Xiao Hua”

Lu Zhengfei almost laughed. “Aye, Xiao Hua, you can live here from now on, you’re so small that you can forget about paying rent!”

Chen Qianqing hummed in agreement. He positioned the cat litter in the bathroom and the cat nest in the living room, next to the couch.

Even if Lu Zhengfei wanted to be the one to carry Xiao Hua, the cat would follow Chen Qianqing to the bitter end. When reaching out to him, he’d just be clawed in return. Although he wasn’t really injured, Lu Zhengfei’s back of the hand still received a few scratches.

Lu Zhengfei felt wronged. “Qianqing, he won’t let me carry him.”

It just so happened that Chen Qianqing was playing with the cat. He didn't turn his head and responded, "Don't tease him. Whether you're crack-brained or not is none of my business."

Lu Zhengfei, "..."
He felt this was a bad omen, and that with Xiao Hua being here, he would be demoted in his own house.

Chen Qianqing took care of Xiao Hua's living conditions and served him cat food. Lu Zhengfei took advantage of this: he petted the cat a few times while he was busy gulping food down and returned to the couch perfectly content.

Lu Zhengfei, "Qianqing, how do you plan to spend your winter vacation?"

Since Chen Qianqing knew that Lu Zhengfei wouldn't come out of the closet, he didn't have anything planned for his winter vacation. He said, "Didn't think about it."

Lu Zhengfei, "Didn't we agree to go to City D together? Choose when, then I'll buy the plane tickets."

Actually, Lu Zhengfei would prefer bringing Chen Qianqing abroad to undergo a complete medical check-up. However, he knew that Chen Qianqing wasn't of the same mind, so he could only settle for the second best option: bringing Chen Qianqing on a trip elsewhere and strolling about.

Chen Qianqing really tended to be worn-out; however, when he wasn't sick, he felt more normal than Lu Zhengfei, so he didn't take it too seriously.

Chen Qianqing considered, "I'll go home, then have a tour around with you."

In his past life, he indirectly caused the deaths of Chen Qianqing's parents; this led him and Chen Qianqing towards a deadlock. Since he was now Chen Qianqing, naturally he had to fulfill his duty towards his parents.

Lu Zhengfei agreed. The time he could take off to go on vacation wasn't a lot. This time he couldn't join Chen Qianqing, but since Chen Qianqing accepted his proposal, it was good enough.

In interpersonal relations, only when one person begins to compromise, the other softens their attitude. This way, people get along easily. It was a pity: neither Lu Zhengfei nor Chen Qianqing acted according to this principle in the past.

In December, it started snowing in City A. Chen Qianqing wanted to avoid the stream of people coming for the Spring Festival holidays, so several days before his break he had already bought tickets to go home.

Although Lu Zhengfei wasn't willing to part with him, he didn't try to stop him. He just repeatedly urged Chen Qianqing to take care of his health and mind their future plans.

The two of them agreed on going out after the Spring Festival. Chen Qianqing silently listened to Lu Zhengfei's nagging for a long time, then pleaded, “Take good care of Xiao Hua.” After that, he just turned and left.

Lu Zhengfei didn't even have a chance to respond, as Chen Qianqing was already near the security check. The last words he and Chen Qianqing exchanged…unexpectedly, had nothing to do with him. Lu Zhengfei mulled this over. He simply wished that he could buy a ticket to rush after Chen Qianqing and say something more.

However, Lu Zhengfei held this urge back and went back, a glum expression on his face.

The flight wasn’t delayed; after a few hours, Chen Qianqing landed in City B.

Chen Qianqing’s mother, Liu Huamei, already knew that Chen Qianqing would come back home. She attended to the dishes on the table and even requested Chen Qianqing’s father, Chen Qingyang, to take a day off and pick Chen Qianqing up from the airport.

The love of a parent - Chen Qianqing didn't deserve it.

After he got into Chen Qingyang’s car, Lu Zhengfei called. Chen Qianqing picked up. Lu Zhengfei’s voice, “Are you already there?”

Chen Qianqing, “En.”

After incessantly nagging him, Lu Zhengfei turned silent for a while. Then he added, “If that Chen Xiaohui targets your house again, call me.” Last time he thought that it was entertaining to watch those events unfold, but now he just feared that Chen Qianqing might get bullied by Chen Xiaohui.

Chen Qianqing knew Lu Zhengfei’s faults, so he laughed and again replied with a simple, “En.”

Lu Zhengfei, “Anyways, if you get bullied, remember to tell me.”

Chen Qianqing’s eyelashes lowered as he laughed at himself. That’s right, he would sue. The original Chen Qianqing would be scared to death, and yet he wouldn’t ask a single thing from Lu Zhengfei.

Chen Qianqing, “I got it, I’ll hang up first.”

Lu Zhengfei didn’t want to be long-winded either and promptly hung up the phone.

Chen Qingyang overheard the conversation from the driver's seat. He opened his mouth to comment, “Boy, you have a girlfriend already?”

Chen Qianqing was dumbfounded, but soon after he promptly corrected Chen Qingyang, “No, it’s a classmate.”

Chen Qingyang thought that he was being shy and laughed. “You are at a quite suitable age, so when you run into a potential candidate, do bring them home to let us see them.”

Chen Qianqing nodded, but didn’t reply.

The Spring Festival was early this year. Chen Qianqing went home in early January, and after only about a dozen days it started.

The hand injuries from the mirror shards had pretty much healed. Since they had been treated so carefully, there was no scar. In addition to that, he kept rehabilitating his leg: compared to when he visited during National Day, he now looked a lot better.

There wasn’t a single mother who didn’t want to see her children feel better. Liu Huamei pushed food towards Chen Qianqing from the side of the dining table and asked him, “Qianqing, your father and aunt want to go on a trip for the Spring Festival, do you want to join them?”

He didn’t expect that they would have the same idea as Lu Zhengfei.

Chen Qianqing, “No thanks, I have already planned something with my classmate. We’re going to City D for fun. Mom, why don’t you and dad go together?”

Liu Huamei shook her head. “I get easily carsick, coming along wouldn’t be convenient. Anyways, this time your dad has a paid trip and he can bring two family members with him. I wish you could go together…”

Chen Qingyang helplessly said, “Huamei, there are two plane seats. Qianqing is not coming. If you don’t join, that ticket will be wasted.”

Liu Huamei hesitated for a while. “Why don’t you let your sister bring Xiaohui along?”

Liu Huamei was being very considerate towards Chen Qingyang’s family. If it weren’t for how acrimonious the matter concerning the house was, she would assume that her husband would immediately have Chen Xiaohui come along.

There were no men in the house. That pair of mother and daughter, Chen Qingyu and Chen Xiaohui, would also definitely not feel good about that.

Chen Qianqing felt that Liu Huamei’s temperament was too polite. If he dealt with Chen Xiaohui, he probably wouldn’t need to see her again in his lifetime.

Chen Qingyang listened to Liu Huamei’s proposal, but he was a bit reluctant. He couldn't let go of that time Chen Xiaohui had slandered Chen Qianqing. No matter how much Chen Qingyu had apologized, it was impossible to ignore Chen Xiaohui’s compromised reputation.

Liu Huamei, “Qianqing, what do you think?”

Chen Qianqing was eating. When he heard Liu Huamei addressing him, he put down his chopsticks and smiled. “Mom, is our house still safe?”

Liu Huamei was bewildered. “Still there.”
She then glared at Chen Qingyang. “If your father dares to sell that house, I’ll put everything concerning my life with him at stake!”

Chen Qianqing listened, amused. “Isn’t Chen Xiaohui going to sit for university entrance exams? Does she still have time to travel?”

He wasn’t certain of this, but this question worked on both Chen Qingyang and Liu Huamei.

Liu Huamei, “If you hadn't mentioned it I would’ve forgotten…she’s going to take entrance exams and travelling with her…if her grades are affected, what would I do! I remember when your entrance exams were approaching, you spent that winter break on lessons!”

Chen Qianqing continued to eat.

Chen Qingyang agreed with Liu Huamei, so this matter was temporarily put aside.

That night, Chen Qingyang looked for Chen Qianqing to have a private chat and inquire about his opinions on Chen Qingyu and the likes.

Chen Qianqing was watching TV. When Chen Qingyang asked those things, he laughed. “Dad, she’s my aunt, what kind of opinions can I have about her? It’s just that Xiaohui is ignorant. We’re all family, not newly found foes.”

Chen Qingyang wanted to pat Chen Qianqing’s head, but for some reason he was unable to reach his hand out and he could only say, “Qianqing, don’t be mad at your dad anymore.”

Chen Qianqing, “You're my dad, how could I be mad at you?”
Indeed, he wasn’t mad at Chen Qingyang, because he originally didn’t have any plans for that apartment. However, he was fed up with the Chen Qingyu mother-daughter pair. He didn’t know if the original Chen Qianqing had to deal with this situation, he just knew that he wouldn’t let off people who had evil intentions or coveted his belongings.

Chen Qingyang, “Qianqing, why don’t you cancel that trip with your classmate and come with me instead. We, father and son, haven’t spoken to each other in so long.”

Chen Qianqing, “I have already arranged it.” If he didn’t go, Lu Zhengfei would definitely be furious.

Seeing that he was unwilling, Chen Qingyang could only give up. He exchanged a few more words with Chen Qianqing, then left the balcony and went back inside.

Chen Qianqing looked at Chen Qingyang’s back. He narrowed his eyes slightly; he also didn’t know what was going on in his head.

(1.) ‘Spring festival’ - also referred to as Lunar/Chinese New Year. This chapter alternates the two; just keep in mind that when it says ‘New Year’ it is referring to the Lunar New Year, which can happen any time between late January and early March.

(2.) ‘Since Chen Qianqing [...]’ - our interpretation is that he could have planned something if Lu Zhengfei hadn’t been around (meaning, locked up by his family because of his coming out); since he knows this is not the case, he didn’t even try to make plans.