

A Cold Day

"Li, I bring my seasoning and rice cooker for you. Open the door."

Li answers, "Coming." Li opens the door.

"Oh, the cooker is so heavy. Take it." Zhao gives it to Li, takes off her scarf and sits down, "

You really don't go back this new year? I am going home on Friday."

"No, I applied for an internship. The company asks me to work there on holiday." Li offers her a cup of jasmine tea.

"Your parents don't ask you to go home? It's the Spring Festival." Zhao takes a sip.

Li says, " They do, but I tell them it would be better to have an internship. The company might hire me after the intern."

"Wow, really?"

"Hell no." Li rolls his eyes, "Who's gonna hire a foreign student at the current environment?"

"Then just go home."

"I can't. At least the internship gives me a better profile."

"You can get an internship in China. It would be much easier and you can have your vacation."

"I prefer to stay here after graduation."

"Fine, but I think nothing is important than Spring Festival, especially we have left home for a year. OK. I have to go home to pack my luggage. See you."

"You don't have lunch here? I have prepared many dishes." Li points to the kitchen.

"Sorry. I have a lot of things to do. Bye, cousin."

"You little bastard." Li bitterly smiles and walks her to the door, "Bye."

Li walks back and looks at the chicken soup, roast duck, and fried tomato and eggs he cooked, suddenly loses his appetite.

He walks back to his bedroom and drops himself on the bed. Staring at the ceiling for a while, he feels a little cold. Coming from a tropic island, he can not get accustomed to the cold weather here. Suddenly, his phone vibrates twice.

Unlocking the phone, he sees two notification. One is from his parents, the other is a message from a dating app with a handsome guy. His thumb is about to touch his parents' message but stops. He sighs and turns to the second one.

"Hi."

"Are U Chinese or Japanese?"

"Chinese. Why are you talking to me? It seems Asians are not welcome on the app."

"Well. Stereotypes, you know. So, you wanna hang out?"

Li feels his stomach burns. When he gets an offer from the university he thought he would get a new life. Unfortunately, the dreaming boyfriend never comes. Even some guys want to hook up with him, they just see he is a "new flavor", which makes him lose his interests.

A notification drags him from his thinking again.

"I can also go to ur place if U want."

Li thinks for a while, and tells him, "Actually, I cooked some dishes. You like Chinese food?"

"Yeah. I love it. Send me ur address." Li sends it to him, "I can be there for half an hour."

"OK."

Li stands up to put the dishes on the oven to prevent them from being cold and cooks the rice.

The guy called Sam comes in time. He is not as good-looking as his photo. That is normal, Li said to himself.

"Oh, chicken soup. I love it. Yummy. You are really a great cook." Sam smiles.

"Thank you. I always cook, even when I was at home." Li gives him a bowl of rice.

"Are you still a student? I see some textbooks on the table."

"Yes, but it's my final year. I am going to intern in a company this month."

" You don't go home in the Asian New Year?"

Asian New Year. Li stops for a second. Right, Spring Festival is called Asian New Year here,

"As I said, I have an intern, and my family don't know I am gay."

"Oh. You come here for a free life?"

"The freedom seems not enough to have a boyfriend, but I guess maybe I should just know more people ..."

Sam's phone rings, "Excuse me." Sam answers the phone, " Yeah, honey. I will go back at night."

"Honey? "

"Oh, it is my boyfriend. It's OK. We are in an open relationship."

Li feels his fingers are frozen, "It's so cold here."

He looks out of the window. It is snowing.