

Chapter 751: Taking Back My Favored Consort! (1)

“He promised me that he just wanted to know if you were alright. Actually, I did ask him why he didn’t just tell you how he felt. Do you know what he said to me?”

“He was silent, staring at the coffee mug in front of him. He stared for a long, long time before saying that he didn’t hope for you to treat him well, but he had to treat you well.”

That one line made Ji Yi purse her lips as a hint of red surfaced in her eyes.

Tang Huahua remained silent for a while then she continued with a significantly calmer voice because she was afraid Ji Yi would be mad. “At the beginning, I really never thought about agreeing to He Xuezhang’s request. I thought it was too crazy, but in the end, he really persuaded me.”

“Xiao Yi, I know that no matter how I explain, I was wrong to tell He Xuezhang about your business. After He Xuezhang left, I’ve actually always wanted to tell you but I didn’t know how. I was afraid you’d ignore me and was afraid you would think that I wasn’t a true friend. I was afraid our friendship would be over...”

As Tang Huahua said this, she revealed a slight smile. “But it’s good you found out today. Saves my heart from feeling uneasy sometimes at night...”

Ji Yi didn’t say anything.

Tang Huahua already said her piece, so she also stayed silent.

The car door opened, blowing in a cold gust of wind into the car and clearing out the warmth.

As the warmth dissipated, Tang Huahua was so cold that she lost all feeling in her ears. That was when Ji Yi blinked and came back to her senses. Then she handed the phone back to Tang Huahua. “It happened already, so leave the past in the past.”

Does this mean Xiao Yi isn’t mad anymore?

A light flashed across Tang Huahua’s eyes. “Xiao Yi, I was wrong...”

Before Tang Huahua could express her words of regret, Ji Yi spoke again: “It’s getting late. Don’t we have work tomorrow? Hurry up and go back to get some rest.”

Tang Huahua understood what Ji Yi meant by interrupting her. She wasn’t angry, so she didn’t need her to apologize endlessly. Tang Huahua knew well to keep her mouth shut and let it go. After Ji Yi got out of the car and said goodbye to Tang Huahua, Tang Huahua got back into the car and drove off.

Ji Yi stood in front of her apartment building, waiting for Tang Huahua’s car to disappear from sight. Then she turned around and glanced at the building behind her. Ji Yi stood in place for a while but didn’t go upstairs. Instead, she walked over to the gates of the residential area.

There was still about forty minutes until midnight and the new year.

Ji Yi waited by the sidewalk and hailed a cab to go to YC's office building.

Ji Yi remembered that two years ago today, she was sending new year blessings at home when she found out from Fatty that He Jichen didn't go back home to celebrate. Just like now, she hurriedly ran out and hailed a cab. Back then, when she saw that the lights at his apartment were out, she went to the office.

Two years later, she stopped outside the YC building. She looked through the car window, up at the pitch-black office building.

The taxi driver saw Ji Yi hesitating to get out of the car and couldn't help but prompt her, "Miss? Miss?"

Ji Yi turned her head and looked over at the taxi driver.

"Miss, that's a total of thirty-two yuan," said the taxi driver.

Ji Yi wasn't stupid. She understood that the taxi driver was rushing her out of the car, but she still didn't say anything. She just turned her head and looked out at the YC building again through the window.

Chapter 752: Taking Back My Favored Consort! (2)

The taxi driver waited for a while then said a little impatiently, "Miss, I still have business to make! I can't waste my time here..."

Ji Yi wasn't in a hurry to bother with the taxi driver. Her eyes blinked as she stared at the YC building and looked for about ten minutes. Then she withdrew her gaze and said to the taxi driver, "Go to Houhai."

There were many people at Houhai, so the taxi couldn't get through. All he could do was stop by the Drum Tower.

Ji Yi paid her cab fare, got out of the car then walked down the alley for about ten minutes. At Houhai, she raised her wrist and glanced at the time. There was about ten minutes before midnight.

She wasn't looking for the best viewing spot like everyone else who was there to watch the fireworks. Instead, she headed for the area with the least people.

She stopped at the spot where she and He Jichen stood two years ago and looked out at the landscape like before. However, this time, the person who watched the fireworks with her back then was no longer standing beside her.

The moment the drum tower rang, everyone by Lake Houhai counted along with the countdown.

"Ten, Nine, Eight, Seven..."

Just like two years ago, Ji Yi counted down silently in her heart.

The moment they cried "One!", Ji Yi looked over at the empty space beside her. "Happy new year, He Jichen."

As her voice fell, the sky in front of her erupted with endless dazzling firework displays, just like the magnificent show two years ago.

The fireworks continued to soar and lit up the entire night sky. Ji Yi raised her head up at the skyline and waited for the fireworks to simmer down. She waited like before but didn't get to hear the words He Jichen said to her two years ago: "Ji Yi, Happy new year."

After the fireworks were over, the group of people at Houhai quickly erupted in an outburst.

Soon after, people filed out of the lakeside.

Ji Yi didn't leave. She pulled out her phone, which she barely charged in the car. She clicked AliPay and found He Jichen's name. She found the records of their red envelopes from two years ago which hadn't been deleted yet. There it was: 8888 in Yuan, with the three words beneath it: New Year's Money.

Two years ago, she dreamed of this whole picture with a smile on her face, but two years later, her eyes were slightly wet when she saw the red envelope.

Another year has gone by. The drum tower rang again and fireworks shot into the sky again, but you still haven't come back.

The final words you told me were: "I wish you all the best."

But how's a "me" without you going to be well?

Ji Yi didn't leave until there was practically no one else at Houhai.

She took a different route from how she got there. This time, she walked down the street of the bars.

Because it was Chinese new year, most bars weren't open. There were only a few scattered bars that were still open, but they only had a few customers inside.

Just as Ji Yi was about to emerge from the street of bars, she heard music coming out from one of the bars still open for business.

Actually, all the open bars were playing music, but she heard a voice which sounded quite similar to He Jichen coming from one of them.

She instinctively stopped walking. Ji Yi knew she had work the next day, but her feet couldn't help walking into that bar.

In the bar, besides the singer and the boss behind the counter playing on their phone, there was no one else around.

The boss saw her come in and immediately greeted her, but the singer held the microphone and continued to sing like he hadn't noticed her.

Chapter 753: Taking Back My Favored Consort! (3)

Ji Yi picked a random seat to sit on then she took the drinks menu the boss handed her. She skimmed through it then chose a simple set.

After the live singer finished his song, Ji Yi picked up a pen from the table and wrote a few words on the song request form. When the boss came over with the set, he took her request.

The live singer glanced at the form and nodded. Thereafter, he headed back to the stage and continued to play on his phone while Ji Yi started drinking.

The live singer was probably searching for background music as he was on his phone for a while. Then a familiar tune played in the bar.

When she was outside, she thought the live singer sounded similar to He Jichen. After selecting her song, she realized that when he sang peak parts of the song, he really did sound like He Jichen.

“If you aren’t in this world, then why not swiftly forget you? Everyone understands that principle. It’s easy to say, but you’re stubborn in love.”

Instantly, time turned back to the image of her birthday celebration while she was filming “Three Thousand Lunatics.”

Does he know that he’s infiltrated my world far too deeply? After he left, Ji Yi didn’t even dare celebrate her own birthday because she was afraid to reminisce, afraid to endure the pain, and afraid to cry to the point of losing her voice...

In actuality, she had been controlling herself all along and tried her best not to think about him. However, tonight, too many things reminded her of him.

The interview, Tang Huahua’s phone, the fireworks at Houhai... She trapped herself once again in a world where she missed him and couldn’t bring herself out of it.

“I would rather keep you within my radius. All I want is to feel your sadness and joy and be with you when you need me.”

Although Ji Yi chose the set, she didn’t touch the drinks.

However, when she heard the live singer’s voice, she thought back to every little thing that happened between her and He Jichen then her heart started to ache. The pain made it hard to sit up straight. She wanted to make herself feel a little more comfortable, so she instinctively grabbed the wine from the table and started to drink with the bottle held up high.

After she finished the bottle, the song Ji Yi picked happened to finish.

She didn’t wait for the singer to pick his own song and she selected these three words off the menu again: “Within your radius.”

Even though she already heard the song once, Ji Yi still thought it was hard to bear and endure upon hearing it a second time. Her eyes reddened and she continued to down the alcohol.

Because she had an interview in the evening, she ate dinner early, so she was now a little hungry. Having drunk so much, her stomach started to vaguely ache, but Ji Yi showed no signs of stopping at all. She selected “Within your radius” over and over again and drank glass after glass of wine.

Ji Yi didn’t know just how many times she selected “Within your radius” and she didn’t know just how much she drank, but she knew that in the end, she couldn’t hold it together and collapsed on the table.

It was probably really late as the boss and live singer were about to wrap up work and head home.

The boss ran over to Ji Yi and asked for her to settle her bill.

Ji Yi was still a little conscious, but it wasn't easy for her to move around. It took a lot of energy to find her purse, pull out a stack of notes and hand it to the boss.

She didn't care if it was enough, but she got up and swayed out of the bar.

The cold winter's breeze blew in and sobered her up a lot more.

She stood by the side of the road, staring in all four directions and taking in her empty surroundings. She searched for a while then slowly slumped to the ground. Hugging her knees, she started to cry.

Chapter 754: Taking Back My Favored Consort! (4)

The streets were very quiet. The sound of her cries wasn't loud, but they traveled far.

Standing at a nearby tree, He Jichen heard the endless sound of crying. His fists were tightly clenched by his side.

Ji Yi cried for a long, long time until eventually, her voice became hoarse, yet her tears continued to flow.

She wasn't sure if it was the alcohol or if she cried too hard, but her head was lacking oxygen. When she reached out to wipe her tears away while trying to get up, she completely fainted to the ground all of sudden.

He Jichen, who had been staring at her all along, rushed out from behind the tree without the slightest hesitation.

He took big strides, daring to go over to her then he stopped just half a meter away from her.

He stared at the woman lying on the ice-cold streets as the sudden fear of having romantic feelings crept into his heart. He wanted to draw closer, but he didn't dare to. He contemplated it for a while before he edged closer to her, inch by inch.

The closer he got, the harder it was to breathe. When his feet were about ten centimeters away from her fingers, he stopped.

His lips trembled slightly as he stared at her for a long time with the feeling that this proximity to her was the stuff of his dreams. He pinched the palm of his hand hard, allowing the piercing pain to rouse his senses a little. That was when he snapped back to reality and quickly crouched down to pull Ji Yi's phone out from her bag.

He called "120" for an ambulance.

After he hung up, he put the phone back into her bag then averted her gaze and looked over at her face.

She cried for so long, so both her eyes were incredibly red and swollen. There were even tears on her eyelashes.

He Jichen watched with a tightened throat. He took a gulp then his fingers shivered and gently fell on her eyelids, carefully wiping her tears away.

The feeling made He Jichen's heart pound uncontrollably.

Having been separated for over a year now, the emotions he tried to force down instantly exploded. A warm, intense lingering feeling... rushed at him as all he wanted to do was immediately pull her into a tight embrace.

But he didn't dare and he couldn't do it because now, he was most afraid of himself. He was afraid of hurting her with his immense selfishness.

He Jichen really liked the feeling of reaching his fingers out and stroking her. However, he only lingered on her face for a few seconds before he forced himself to pull away.

He was afraid to touch her for too long in case he couldn't bear to leave her later...

The moment He Jichen's fingers left Ji Yi's face, he glimpsed the necklace around her fair neck.

It was the present he gave her for her birthday. Before he left Beijing, she never wore it... but now that he'd been gone for over a year, it seemed like she always wore it to public events.

He knew he shouldn't overthink too much, but He Jichen couldn't help but do just that.

During the time I was gone, has she been thinking about me all along?

Back at the bar, did she select "Within your radius" twelve times because of me?

In the past, he would wake up smiling after dreaming about something like this.

But it was too late. Their love in their past lives wasn't strong enough. When he wanted to be with her, she didn't want to be with him. Now, she probably wanted to be with him, but he didn't have the heart to be with her.

Chapter 755: Taking Back My Favored Consort! (5)

Because he was willing to stay with her at her lowest point in life, he didn't want her to bear the responsibility of taking care of him at his lowest point in life.

The ambulance arrived quickly.

Before the ambulance reached Ji Yi, He Jichen already left her side and stood behind the same tree from before.

He personally saw the nurse raising Ji Yi up into the ambulance and leaving. Only then did he emerge from behind the tree and hail a cab to follow the ambulance.

Once he was at the hospital, He Jichen also personally saw Ji Yi being taken into a hospital room. After he was sure she was safe and sound, he walked out of the hospital.

He Jichen stood under an old tree and lit a cigarette. After leisurely finishing it, he raised his head to glance up at the room Ji Yi was in before finally putting his cigarette out. He tossed the cigarette butt into the trash can then turned to leave.

It was already three in the morning when He Jichen headed back to the hotel he was staying in.

After he got into the elevator and reached his floor, He Jichen emerged from the elevator and searched for his key card while walking over to his hotel room. He only managed to make it two steps when he saw a woman standing in front of his door.

He Jichen's footsteps instinctively slowed down. "Why aren't you asleep?"

When the woman heard He Jichen's voice, she turned and looked over at him without any intention of saying anything.

He Jichen realized that she wasn't saying anything, so he didn't say anything either. After he walked over to his room, he swiped the key card as the woman suddenly rushed over to him.

He Jichen reflexively took two steps back. "Ning Ning, what are you doing?!"

The woman He Jichen called "Ning Ning" didn't say anything but swiftly put her hands on He Jichen's jacket. She put her face to him and took a hard sniff then found a scent on his right sleeve.

The sweet scent was faint and warm and made her feel relaxed.

So... He Jichen only just got back now after leaving the hotel yesterday. Did he go see a woman?

In just a second, Ning Ning guessed who He Jichen saw. "You went to see her?"

He Jichen realized what Ning Ning smelled when she drew in close. He didn't give her a reply but swiped his room key and walked into the room.

When he reached out his hand to shut the door, Ning Ning beat him to it by pushing against the door. Through the crack in the door, she quickly slid into He Jichen's room. "Did you guys talk? Did you guys have dinner together? Or maybe you spent last night together?"

He Jichen pretended as though he hadn't heard Ning Ning at all as he took off his trenchcoat and casually threw it onto the sofa. Then he took a seat and lit up a cigarette.

"Then did you give her the new year's present you bought for her?"

Ning Ning seemed to be unbothered by He Jichen ignoring her and continued to ask endless questions.

"Did she really like it? Was she thrilled?"

He Jichen slowly blew out the cigarette smoke. After hearing what Ning Ning said, his eyes fell on his trenchcoat pocket.

Noticing his reaction, Ning Ning immediately jumped to the sofa. From his pocket, she pulled out a sky blue gift box.

"You didn't give her the new year's present?"

“You went to see her, so why didn’t you give it to her?”

With an impatient look on her face, Ning Ning asked several questions. However, seeing as He Jichen was silently smoking non-stop, Ning Ning had a rough idea of what happened. “You went to see her, but just like how you’ve watched her for the past year or so, you stood from afar and didn’t get close to her, right?”

Chapter 756: Taking Back My Favored Consort! (6)

As He Jichen was about to put the cigarette to his mouth, he paused when he heard what Ning Ning said.

Like before, he didn’t reply to Ning Ning, and his gaze fell to his right hand instead.

Even though it had been a while since he touched “her,” the warmth he felt was still incredibly clear.

Ning Ning saw He Jichen’s reaction and knew she guessed correctly. “Is there any point in this? Either just completely forget about her and start a new life or get her back, but right now you’re not going after her and not forgetting her. How long do you think you can trap yourself in this world where you think about her while not having her?”

Ning Ning was so noisy that it made He Jichen furrow his brows slightly. He Jichen glanced emotionlessly at her like she didn’t exist then continued to smoke absent-mindedly.

“He Jichen, why do you ignore me everytime I talk to you about this?”

“This is all about you. It has nothing to do with me. If I hadn’t met you when I was a cashier in France and if you hadn’t helped me out once, why the hell would I worry about you?!”

As Ning Ning said a long string of words, He Jichen had an unconcerned look on his face. Ning Ning couldn’t help but stamp her foot in anger. “You might not be in a hurry, but I am! I really couldn’t care less about you and your stinking attitude!”

After she said this, Ning Ning angrily turned around and headed for the door. She took just two steps when she came to a stop. “Oh yeah, there’s something I want to ask you to help me with.”

He Jichen saw Ning Ning changing the subject. Even though he didn’t say anything, he turned and looked at her.

“It’s like this...” Ning Ning strode back over to He Jichen. “...The money you gave me last time wasn’t really enough for my dad’s surgery. Even a needle costs a couple thousand, so could you lend me some more money?”

“How much?” He Jichen finally spoke for the first time since entering his hotel room.

Ning Ning tilted her head and thought about it for a moment then reached all five fingers out towards He Jichen.

Fifty thousand doesn’t seem like much... Ning Ning didn’t wait for He Jichen to react then reached two more fingers out.

Is seventy thousand enough? What if it's not enough?

After a few seconds, Ning Ning added two more fingers.

Ninety thousand seems a little too much... Ning Ning thought about it for a moment then pulled back one finger.

He Jichen stared at Ning Ning's shifting fingers. He impatiently reached into his pocket for his card then threw it at Ning Ning. "This card doesn't have a passcode, so take out as much as you need."

"Alright..." Ning Ning took the card and added, "...Tomorrow, I'll see how much I need then return the card to you with an IOU."

He Jichen was too lazy to even speak as he waved his hand and signaled for her to quickly leave.

Ning Ning had no intention of sticking around and replied "goodbye." Then she turned around and headed out the door.

After about two steps, Ning Ning suddenly thought of something and stopped again for a moment. She turned her head and said to He Jichen, "Oh yeah, didn't you tell me that treating you to dinner is a way of saying thanks? I'll give you a time and place in the next two days..."

He Jichen didn't look at Ning Ning but flatly responded with "Mhm."

Ning Ning didn't say anything. Taking the card, she leaped out of He Jichen's room and into her own room next door. The slamming of her door was so loud that He Jichen heard the *Bang!* as he sat on the sofa in his own room.

Chapter 757: Taking Back My Favored Consort! (7)

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Never in her dreams did she imagine that she'd meet He Jichen, who she hadn't seen in a long time.

In her dreams, He Jichen didn't say a word but sat next to her. His long, slender, beautiful fingertips gently brushed her brows and face. The warm sensation which lingered on her skin felt real, unlike a dream.

Because she dreamed of He Jichen, Ji Yi wasn't willing to wake up from her deep sleep.

That simple scene played repeatedly in Ji Yi's mind and circled an infinite number of times. It wasn't until the loud ringtone of her phone went off, hurting her temples, that she reluctantly opened her eyes.

A white room entered her line of sight.

The unfamiliar surroundings made Ji Yi's brows start to tighten up. She rolled her pupils and scanned her surroundings before she realized she was in a hospital room.

Why am I in a hospital room?

Ji Yi's brows tightened as her senses gradually became clearer. She remembered fragments of what happened to her before she fainted then it all started to come back to her.

She had too much to drink and felt incredibly stifled. She hadn't cried in such a long time, so on the empty streets, she let herself go and started to cry. After she cried enough, she lost consciousness...

So, I fainted on the big streets of Houhai.

But I'm in a hospital room now. Who brought me here?

The phone rang again, breaking Ji Yi's train of thought. She picked up her phone and glanced at the screen to see that it was Tang Huahua calling.

She swiped the screen and took the call. Just as she raised the phone to her ear, Tang Huahua's worried voice erupted from the phone. "Xiao Yi, where are you right now? I couldn't find you at your apartment and you didn't pick up when I called. You have an event this afternoon. Don't be late!"

Ji Yi put her head down and glanced at the time. It was already late in the afternoon and the event started at four. She had to get her makeup done, so she had no time to go home. "Huahua, I'm in the hospital, come pick me up."

"Hospital? Why are you at the hospital all of a sudden? Is it serious? Do you want me to give Zhuang Yi a call? I can ask her to give Chen Bai a heads up that you won't be going tonight..."

"It's fine. Come pick me up now. When you get here, I should be just about done handling my discharge papers."

After Ji Yi hung up, she pressed the button to call a nurse to help handle her discharge papers.

A second after she pressed the call button and glanced briefly at her phone, she noticed that beneath Tang Huahua's name in her call logs was "120."

The call was placed with her phone at three in the morning...

She vaguely remembered that she fainted after crying. Before she fainted, she glanced at the time, which was ten to three...

Which means that after she fainted, someone didn't take her to the hospital. Instead, they used her phone to help her call an ambulance?

Just as Ji Yi's mind was deep in thought, the hospital room door was pushed open. A nurse, wearing a white gown, walked in. "Miss Ji, you're up?"

As she said this, the nurse sat by her bed and helped Ji Yi take her blood pressure.

"Blood pressure is normal. You can be discharged now." The nurse smiled while she put the blood pressure equipment away.

"Thanks," said Ji Yi politely. Then she added, "Do you know who helped me call the ambulance yesterday?"

Chapter 758: Taking Back My Favored Consort! (8)

"I'm not too sure, but the person who called was a gentleman. I happened to take the call at the time, and I remember his voice sounded pretty good..." described the nurse, explaining what happened last night to Ji Yi. "...But when we rushed to the location he gave us, it was just you."

A gentleman... After some time, Ji Yi let out an "Oh" as she thanked the nurse.

"Then Miss Ji, get some rest first. I'll go help you with your discharge papers."

Ji Yi didn't say anything but smiled and gave a gentle nod.

After the nurse left, Ji Yi picked up the phone and stared at the call log number "120." She stared and stared when Ji Yi suddenly remembered the dream she had when she was unconscious.

She instinctively raised her hand and touched her brows. She wasn't sure if it was just an illusion, but she felt like the skin by her eyebrows still lingered with the warmth of He Jichen's touch.

Not long after, Tang Huahua arrived at the hospital.

She noticed the odd expression on Ji Yi's face. She surrounded Ji Yi and asked her non-stop questions out of concern.

Ji Yi didn't really speak as she absent-mindedly left the hospital with Tang Huahua and got in the minivan.

The weather was unusually good. The sun shone brightly and illuminated the entire city, making it look especially stunning.

Ji Yi sat in the car and stared out at the city from the car window. As the car swayed, her dream from last night popped into her head. The 120 call on her phone and the familiar figure who brushed across her periphery at the cafe entrance after the TE interview...

Those images repeatedly flashed before her eyes. For some reason, a thought suddenly came to mind: He Jichen's back in Beijing...

Even though she had no evidence and it was just her intuition, she felt like it was true.

At that moment, Ji Yi stared out at the endlessly retreating streets outside the car window. All of a sudden, the city became incredibly beautiful.

Tang Huahua stared ahead as she drove. When she reached a red light, she glanced at Ji Yi through the rearview mirror to find that she was actually smiling as she looked out the window. Tang Huahua's eyes widened in surprise then she hurriedly accelerated after seeing the red light change to green. She said, "Xiao Yi, what are you thinking about that's making you so happy?"

Hearing this, Ji Yi averted her eyes from the window and looked towards Tang Huahua. "Nothing."

Seeing as Ji Yi wasn't going to say, Tang Huahua didn't force it and changed the subject. "Oh right! Just before the new year, do you remember that the company set you up for an event? The deadline's today at twelve in the afternoon. The fan who pays the most will be able to have a dinner with you."

Every artist held events to interact with their fans. At Tang Huahua's reminder, Ji Yi immediately remembered it. "Oh, I remember. Have the results come out?"

"Yeah, just before I came to pick you up. Chen Bai sent me the info about the winner. Do you know how much they offered?"

Ji Yi shook her head.

"A hundred and ten thousand!" After Tang Huahua read that figure, she continued, "In the history of these kinds of events, that's the most a fan has ever offered. Also, you won't believe me when I say it, but the fan's a girl!"

Female fans usually paid for male artists, and male fans usually did the same for female artists, so when Ji Yi heard this, she was slightly stunned.

Chapter 759: Taking Back My Favored Consort! (9)

"Oh, I forgot to tell you the woman's name is Ning Shuang." Tang Huahua peered at Ji Yi in the back seat from the rearview mirror as she drove. "She studied abroad in France for five years. She's graduated now and she's older than you by three months."

"Mhm." Ji Yi nodded.

The car was silent for a short while before Ji Yi added, "Last year when I went to the American Movie Festival, didn't we buy a lot of things while shopping with Zhuang Yi? I suddenly remember that I had a lot of unused and unopened products. Where did you and Zhuang Yi put them?"

"Oh, they're at the office." With that, Tang Huahua then asked with confusion, "What's up?"

"When is the dinner date with the fan?" asked Ji Yi leisurely.

"The eighteenth. It's three nights from now at the revolving restaurant, Lilac. Room No.1."

"Mm..." replied Ji Yi softly. Then she continued with what she was saying earlier: "...So tomorrow or the day after, whenever you have time, head back to the office and choose one of the decent unopened boxes as a present. Get it wrapped up then put it in the car in advance."

After Tang Huahua heard this, she understood why Ji Yi asked her about their shopping trip. She wanted to gift one to the fan who she was having dinner with. Tang Huahua quickly nodded and replied, "Got it!"

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On the evening of the seventeenth, He Jichen got a video call from Ning Shuang.

In the video, Ning Shuang had just finished taking a shower, so her hair was wrapped up in a towel. She held the phone up with one hand while putting on a face mask with her other hand.

He Jichen only glanced at the phone screen for a moment then put it down on the coffee table. He picked up the book he was reading and continued to calmly and elegantly read.

“Do you have time tomorrow?” The hotel room was very quiet, so over the phone, Ning Shuang’s voice sounded quite abrupt.

After He Jichen finished the last line of the newspaper, he slowly flipped the page and replied in a dull voice, “Yes.”

“Then I’ll treat you to dinner tomorrow?” suggested Ning Shuang. She continued without waiting for He Jichen’s reply: “Is French food, alright?”

He Jichen furrowed his brows. He stopped reading his book and looked over at the video chat.

Ning Shuang saw his reaction and knew what he was thinking. He’d lived in France for so long, eating French food practically every day. Now that he was back in Beijing, French food again? But she couldn’t help it – she wasn’t the one who booked the table. It was Huan Ying Entertainment...

Ning Shuang was afraid He Jichen would notice something strange was going on, so she lowered her head to avoid He Jichen’s gaze. “The revolving restaurant, Lilac, is very famous. They say you can see a beautiful night view. I’m not going for the food. I’m going for the view...”

As she said this, Ning Shuang raised her head and snuck a glance at her phone screen. Seeing that He Jichen wasn’t in sight, she knew she was successful. She immediately started to giggle and said, “Remember, it’s the revolving restaurant, Lilac. Tomorrow night at half past six. Room No.1.”

He Jichen didn’t say anything but mindfully let out an “Mhm.” Then he gently turned the page again.

“I have to catch my TV series in a min, so I’m hanging up!”

Ning Shuang had gotten used to He Jichen’s unresponsive attitude a long time ago. When she finished speaking, she was about to hang up the phone. All of a sudden, she remembered something important as her finger hovered over the screen. “Tomorrow, give them my name and phone number at the restaurant. I only left my details with the restaurant.”

Chapter 760: Taking Back My Favored Consort! (10)

This time, He Jichen didn’t even give Ning Shuang a response.

When Ning Shuang heard the soft sound of pages turning, her lips twitched and she mumbled, “Mute Stone Face” then continued to hang up the phone.

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On the afternoon of the eighteenth, Chen Bai made lunch plans to meet Ji Yi and a reputable and virtuous senior director on the sixth floor of a steakhouse.

The lunch went smoothly, and they could tell that the senior director was satisfied with Ji Yi and was interested in working with her for their next major movie.

The senior director had an afternoon meeting at two, so the business lunch ended after no more than ninety minutes.

Chen Bai also had an appointment to discuss a collaboration, so he had to head back to Huan Ying Entertainment.

The revolving restaurant, Lilac, was near SKP, so Ji Yi didn't bother rushing home. Seeing as she had no plans in the afternoon and she hadn't been shopping in a long time, she met up with Tang Huahua, who was waiting at a nearby cafe, to go shopping.

Because it was a weekday, there weren't many people at the shopping mall. New collections of clothing weren't released yet and there weren't many clothes and shoes to buy, so Ji Yi and Tang Huahua shopping in the cosmetics section on the first floor. Ji Yi chose a few hot colors of lipstick then headed straight for the fourth floor.

Ji Yi actually wanted to buy a pair of shoes, so she casually circled the mall, but she couldn't seem to find a pair she liked. Instead, she spotted a porcelain shop in the far southern part of the fourth floor.

Ji Yi suddenly remembered that the director, who she was filming with a few days ago, invited her to his birthday party in a few day's time. During the shoot, as they sat together and chatted, the director mentioned he was a lover of porcelain.

She had to bring a gift if she was going to the dinner party and the gift had to be something he liked. Since Ji Yi was already at the mall, she might as well give up shoe shopping and call Tang Huahua to go to the porcelain store.

"All of sudden, you wanna go shop at a porcelain store? I never knew you were interested in those kinds of things," said Tang Huahua quietly as she couldn't help but turn her head and look over at the porcelain store.

"It's Director Yilu's birthday in a few day's time. I want to pick one out for him," replied Ji Yi quietly. She then reached out to touch an azure vase.

"Oh, if you didn't mention it, I would've almost forgotten – Zhuang Yi called me last night to remind me to get Director Yilu a present." After Tang Huahua said this, she started to look at some porcelain with Ji Yi.

As they browsed, they quietly discussed the porcelain every now and then.

Their focus was on the porcelain, so they didn't notice that there were two other people also picking out porcelain when they walked in.

Ji Yi and Tang Huahua noted the porcelain they looked at and liked. After they finished browsing the porcelain store, Ji Yi pointed out the ones she liked, compared them, and chose the best one.

The porcelain store wasn't too big, so after Ji Yi and Tang Huahua finished browsing carefully, they called a customer service agent over.

Maybe it was because it was a vintage porcelain store, but the tall customer service agent was wearing a traditional Qipao dress. After she walked over to them, she asked Ji Yi and Tang Huahua in a low voice if there was anything she could help them with.

Ji Yi pointed at the ones she wanted on the shelf and said, "Could you please bring those porcelain pieces on the table and describe them to me?"

After the customer service agent heard what Ji Yi said, her expression looked a little strange.

Tang Huahua had sharp eyes and noticed something was off. She asked, "What's wrong? Is there some kind of problem?"