

## Chapter 431: Jealousy

Jiang Yao could follow the story better now that it was explained to her.

The Zhou family and Du family were codependent on each other. If the Du family fell into Du Shixian's hand, Mrs. Zhou's status in the Zhou family would fall as a result. She was afraid of that happening, Mr. Zhou would have nothing holding him back to finally treat Zhou Weiqi well.

Or one could say that Mrs. Zhou was afraid that losing her natal family's support meant that Mr. Zhou would follow suit in Old Man Du's ways and hand the family fortune to Zhou Weiqi. She knew very well that Mr. Zhou always felt that he owed Zhou Weiqi.

"If that is the case, why don't you guys help Du Shixian, not obviously of course. With Du Shixian in power, wouldn't Weiqi's life in the Zhou family improve?" Jiang Yao looked at Chen Xuyao and asked.

"Du Shixian is not as simple as you think he is. It's better not to involve ourselves with someone like him." Zhou Weiqi shook his head, he was not bothered at all. "Plus, I am doing pretty well if I may say so myself."

"What a bunch of bollocks!" Chen Xuyao rebuked.

Zhou Weiqi made a good point though. Du Shixian was someone they should distance themselves from. He was young, yet malicious, and a very greedy person.

If Zhou Weiqi wanted to leave the Zhou family completely, his buddies could come up with ways to help him achieve that. Yet, he did not want to do it.

Zhou Weiqi cooked lunch for everyone. After the meal, they went their separate ways. Both Zhou Weiqi and Chen Xuyao returned home to get changed, while Lu Xingzhi brought Jiang Yao to a designer studio for some new clothes.

They met up in front of the hotel where the charity ball was to be held at three o'clock sharp.

Jiang Yao could feel the cold wind blowing the moment she stepped out of the car. She fumbled around, struggling to cover her body with her coat and moved behind Lu Xingzhi, trying to avoid the chills using his huge frame.

"Are you cold?" Lu Xingzhi pulled her into his arms. She was shivering.

"Weiqi, bring Jiang Yao in," Lu Xingzhi called out to Zhou Weiqi before gently speaking to Jiang Yao, "I will be here at the entrance waiting for the others with Xuyao. Go ahead inside with Weiqi, don't you go wandering alone."

Jiang Yao nodded, and followed Zhou Weiqi into the hotel, feeling much better once she had entered the banquet hall.

Warm air circulated the banquet hall; upon reaching the entrance, a cheery steward was there to pick up Jiang Yao's coat. She looked at her coat, a little unwilling to give it up.

Zhou Weiqi laughed seeing Jiang Yao's expression. "You shouldn't do that, Jiang Yao. Brother Lu may get jealous!"

"Cut it out, will you? It's cold here! It's not even November yet, how did Jindo City get so cold? In the South, we can still wear shorts outdoors!" Jiang Yao rebutted, before asking, "Who are they waiting for at the entrance?"

"Should be Old General Liang and General Chen. I heard that they would attend the charity auction today. This event is a big affair, lots of people are keeping an eye on it. Didn't you see the mass of reporters on our way in?"

She was shivering all the way in; how could she have noticed?

### **Chapter 432: Busybody**

"Let me make this clear, Jiang Yao. In case someone sees me and makes unsavory comments toward me, please pretend that you hear nothing." Zhou Weiqi whispered to Jiang Yao after seeing the Zhou family and Du family around. "Especially these guys."

Jiang Yao nodded and looked at the group. Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning were standing with another couple. Zhou Ning was very proud of her long legs; she was wearing a short skirt in the morning, and now an evening gown that exposed her legs as well. She was on heels that were ten inches tall, with make up on her face. She looked restless however, her eyes darting around the banquet hall.

It seemed like she had seen someone when her eyes suddenly lit up. She whispered something to her mother before running off in the direction.

Meanwhile, the couple was talking to Mrs. Zhou. The lady started tearing up as the conversation went on. Jiang Yao was not interested in the contents of the conversation and wandered around with Zhou Weiqi.

She turned back to see Zhou Ning standing at the entrance, talking to someone familiar. The person quickly brushed off Zhou Ning before entering the banquet hall.

It was Chen Feibai. Jiang Yao remembered seeing him back at Lu Xingzhi's platoon.

Chen Feitang followed right behind, with Lu Xingzhi next to her. Old General Liang, together with an old man that looked to be the same age as him, walked beside Lu Xingzhi. The old man was General Chen. Chen Xuyao followed tightly behind.

Everyone in the banquet hall turned their attention toward this procession of people. Jiang Yao could hear murmurs around her.

"I heard that Old General Liang and General Chen would come, I didn't think it was actually going to happen! Who is that guy beside Chen Feitang? Are they together?"

"What on earth?! That's Sergeant Lu, Lu Xingzhi, don't you know him?"

"I have heard of him, that's all. Sergeant Lu is always in his platoon, I don't think many people have ever met him. Unlike the Liang family, Sergeant Lu did not show up to any of the events here at Jindo City.

Apparently, he was instrumental in the rescue of Old General Liang and General Chen. Who would have thought he looked this good? Chen Feitang over there, she likes Sergeant Lu?”

“A lot of people know about it. However, it has been years since, and nothing has come out of it. If I am to guess, Sergeant Lu probably does not feel the same toward Chen Feitang, if not they would have been together years ago.”

“That’s a pity. After all, Chen Feitang is a female soldier. They look like the perfect pair, standing together.”

Jiang Yao’s face darkened hearing all these. What a load of nonsense! Lu Xingzhi was looking for a spouse, not a comrade!

Zhou Weiqi, noticing Jiang Yao’s irritation, turned toward the lady that spoke and glared at her. “He’s married already, don’t be such a busybody!”

He grabbed Jiang Yao and left the spot.

Lu Xingzhi saw them too. He held Jiang Yao’s hand after they had walked toward him, and seeing her chilly expression, assumed she was still feeling cold. “If you are bored, I’ll have Weiqi bring you to a room to rest. Give me some time and we’ll leave after an hour.”

### **Chapter 433: Are You Happy Now?**

“I’m fine.” Jiang Yao shook her head, firmly planting her hand in Lu Xingzhi’s palm and lowering her voice before adding, “I just don’t feel good hearing others commenting about how Chen Feitang and you look good as a couple.”

Lu Xingzhi broke into a smile. He was very pleased to see Jiang Yao’s increasing possessiveness and jealousy.

Chen Feitang, noticing Jiang Yao’s presence at the charity ball, subconsciously turned her attention toward the nineteen-year-old girl. Coincidentally, they both had a white evening gown on tonight.

She was always confident with her looks, but standing next to Jiang Yao, she had to admit how beautiful Jiang Yao was.

Jiang Yao’s beauty was as pleasant as the winter sun shining, radiating warmth, and spreading light to all. Her graceful demeanor only served to enhance her already charming looks. Chen Feitang had absolutely no idea that a strong and dominant person like Lu Xingzhi would fall for a woman like Jiang Yao.

Chen Feitang always thought that Lu Xingzhi preferred women like her, strong, imposing, and dominant. She never attempted to suppress her identity from the public eye, on the contrary, she wanted everyone to know how attractive and how capable she was.

Yet, reality was different. The woman that made Lu Xingzhi smile so happily, was Jiang Yao.

Compared to Jiang Yao, Chen Feitang was, quite frankly, pathetic. She tried so hard to attract Lu Xingzhi, only to receive his cold shoulder.

They had known each other for years but Lu Xingzhi did not smile at her, not even once.

Lu Xingzhi moved his hand and rested it on Jiang Yao's waist, as if to declare his sovereignty, to the astonishment of the people around them.

"Are you happy now?" Lu Xingzhi whispered in Jiang Yao's ears.

Jiang Yao felt the attention of the hall and her face turned a crimson red. How could she not be happy? Now, everyone knew that Lu Xingzhi was her beau.

She looked at Chen Feitang, whose face had turned pale, and nodded. Yep, she was even happier now.

Lu Xingzhi briefly conversed with Old General Liang in a low voice before calling out to Zhou Weiqi and entered the hall with Jiang Yao in his arms.

"What's Xuyao and the Chen family's relationship?" Jiang Yao was suddenly reminded that both Chen Xuyao and General Chen shared the same surname. "Could it be that Xuyao is actually cousins with Chen Feitang?"

"Technically speaking, yes. However, they are not as of now; they belong only to the same clan," Lu Xingzhi explained casually. "Xuyao's great-grandfather was the actual brother of General Chen's father. Since he was given up to an uncle from the same clan for adoption by his birth parents, Xuyao's great-grandfather had always resented them and did not allow his descendants to rejoin the family line. It has been a few generations since, only till now have interactions started between the two families."

Jiang Yao nodded. She was relieved to hear that Chen Xuyao and Chen Feitang were not closely related. After all, she did not like Chen Feitang—the woman who longed for her husband—at all.

"Director Lee is here too?" Jiang Yao tugged on Lu Xingzhi's sleeve, motioning him to look at where Director Lee, who was in a conversation with Mrs. Zhou, stood.

They stood mere feet apart. Thus, Jiang Yao and Lu Xingzhi could easily listen in on Director Lee's conversation with Mrs. Zhou and the Du family. Even Zhou Weiqi was keen to eavesdrop on the exchange.

Mrs. Zhou, Mr. and Mrs. Du were here today specifically to meet Director Lee. They were at the hospital earlier and found him missing. Knowing that he would attend today's charity auction, they immediately came.

#### **Chapter 434: Hearsay**

"Director Lee, may we ask for your favor in helping us to find out who the Divine Doctor is? Do you mind connecting us to him? Perhaps he can mend Du Chen's leg." Mrs. Zhou was as courteous as she could be. They were the ones asking for favors, they dared not, even in the slightest bit, irk Director Lee.

Du Shihua was a little desperate. "I heard that the two patients sent here from the platoon at Jin City were operated on by the Divine Doctor. Even Colonel Lin, with his ghastly injury, was able to keep his leg. Surely the Divine Doctor can do the same for my son?"

"Director Lee, we beg you, please connect us with the Divine Doctor! We, the Du family, will fulfill any of his demands, all for the sake of our son's leg!" Mrs. Du looked at Director Lee earnestly.

“Jiang Yao, they are asking about you!” Zhou Weiqi quietly approached Jiang Yao and lightly tapped her elbow.

“Mm.” Jiang Yao acknowledged Zhou Weiqi. She was curious to see what Director Lee’s reply would be. Previously at the hospital, in a bid to prevent knowledge of Jiang Yao’s endeavor from spreading around, he deliberately described her as a fierce and mean character. What would Director Lee say in the presence of the Zhou family and Du family?

Director Lee looked at the rapidly approaching people and hastily took a step back. “As the Divine Doctor does not work for us, I don’t know who she is. That favor of yours is tough on me.”

“Didn’t the Divine Doctor participate in both Colonel Lin’s and Lu Xingzhi’s operation; along with another soldier that was urgently transferred from Jin City hospital?” Mrs. Zhou frowned, unhappy at Director Lee’s deliberate reluctance to tell them who the Divine Doctor was.

“They seem to know a lot.” Lu Xingzhi’s voice dropped; it was frightening to hear. That was all Zhou Weiqi needed to know how angry Lu Xingzhi was right now.

Although the identity of the Divine Doctor was kept secret, everything that Jiang Yao did was brought to light. It was a precarious situation, what if the people responsible could not keep their mouths shut?

“Brother Lu, I think it’s time for Director Lee to have a meeting with his staff.” Zhou Weiqi rubbed his chin and continued, “Those lips are getting loose.”

Director Lee was unaware of Lu Xingzhi and the others observing him from mere steps away. He furrowed his brows and said, “The Divine Doctor did participate in all three operations, but she was initially here for Sergeant Lu. Perhaps Master Gu was the one that invited her from abroad. Or what if she was called upon by one of their buddies? Which reminds me, why don’t you ask Zhou Weiqi, since he’s part of the gang. It’s funny how you have an actual family member to ask, but chose to approach me, a stranger, instead.”

At the end of his sentence, he turned and started to walk away. Mrs. Zhou, Mr. and Mrs. Du were shocked to hear Director Lee’s reply; even more distraught at hearing the mention of Zhou Weiqi.

They had always regarded Zhou Weiqi with contempt, an illegitimate son born out of an extramarital affair. Yet, Director Lee wanted them to ask for a favor from Zhou Weiqi, the person they despised the most.

Du Shihua ran up to Director Lee, who was already walking away, and asked reluctantly, “Director Lee, you know my son’s condition. Can you tell me if the Divine Doctor is able to mend his leg? Can the Divine Doctor make my son stand again?”

### **Chapter 435: Where Are We Going?**

“You seem to know the ongoings of the hospital well, why don’t you visit Colonel Lin and see how he’s doing now for yourself?” With that, Director Lee withdrew himself from the conversation with a look of irritation.

Zhou Weiqi snickered. “It does feel good seeing their misfortunes.”

“Don’t get too far ahead of yourself.” Lu Xingzhi replied, raining on Zhou Weiqi’s parade. He continued, “If you want to have some peace and quiet, look for an excuse and leave Jindo City for a few days.”

Zhou Weiqi understood immediately. At the end of the day, no matter how much he was hated, they would still come to him for the favor.

“Where are we going?” Having heard what Lu Xingzhi said when he came over, Chen Xuyao was a little thrilled.

Zhou Weiqi pondered for a bit before looking at Jiang Yao, widening his lips to a grin. “Aren’t you going back to Nanjiang City the day after tomorrow? It does sound like a neat place to hang out. I will arrive a day before Jiang Yao. Plus, I can look after her for Brother Lu.”

“Thanks.” Jiang Yao rolled her eyes and thanked him dryly.

Chen Xuyao could not stop but laugh after witnessing their interaction. Interesting, he thought, an intriguing character Jiang Yao was. Even a three-year old toddler could discern her feigned gratitude. To his surprise, he saw Lu Xingzhi’s lips curled upward into a smile too.

Interesting.

Suddenly remembering he was here to see Lu Xingzhi, Chen Xuyao said, “Brother Lu, can you come with me? Old General Liang wants to introduce someone else to you.”

Lu Xingzhi looked at Jiang Yao, seeing her nod of approval, he gave her head a rub. “Keep up with Weiqi, don’t you go wandering around again. I’ll be back soon.”

He turned as he finished speaking and walked toward where Old General Liang was currently standing, along with Chen Xuyao.

“Jiang Yao, let’s have a seat over there, the auction is starting soon.” Zhou Weiqi grabbed Jiang Yao and walked to the right.

The banquet hall was set up merely as a registration site for the charity auction. To the right of the banquet hall was the auction venue, connected via a short walkway. The auction items were all brought in by guests. All proceeds would be donated to school children in rural mountainous areas of the country.

The auction had not yet officially begun, but seats were already filled up by people. Zhou Weiqi, lugging Jiang Yao along, took their seat numbers and started searching for them. Jiang Yao managed to get a glimpse of the number in Zhou Weiqi’s hand. ‘Number six,’ she thought, ‘lucky number.’

Jiang Yao had never been to an event like this, this was her first. Before her rebirth, she helped organize donations received by the school back when she was living in the mountains. It was the happiest time for the teachers at the school.

The donation of winter clothing meant that the students were protected from the frigid cold, and the donation of new stationeries meant that the students did not have to practice their writing using twigs on dirt.

The great amount of monetary donations also meant that the school clinic did not have to worry about medications running out of stock.

“People do recognize the fact that most of the items presented here are not going to be auctioned off, save for a selected few.” Zhou Weiqi sat down and handed Jiang Yao a bottle of water. “Although I’m pretty sure Brother Lu’s item will be one of the few exceptions. Calligraphy art like his does command a lot of attention and is quite popular with the people here, even more so than jewelries.”

Jiang Yao smiled at Zhou Weiqi appreciatively. She glanced around aimlessly and rested her gaze on Chen Feibai and Zhou Ning.

Perhaps irked by Zhou Ning, Chen Feibai shoved her and howled, “Dammit, get lost!”

### **Chapter 436: Battle of The Seats**

Disregarding Zhou Ning’s tear-filled eyes, Chen Feibai was scowling when he obtained his seat number given by the auction staff.

Coincidentally, Chen Feibai’s seat was right in front of Jiang Yao’s. A little surprised to see them there, he looked at Jiang Yao and Zhou Weiqi in silence and plopped onto the chair, slamming his number card onto the table.

Zhou Weiqi tried his best but could not contain his laughter. Between fits of laughter, he told Jiang Yao, “Zhou Ning has had a crush on Chen Feibai for the longest time, but he never did give her even a sliver of his attention. It’s so funny!”

Owing to Chen Feibai’s seat, Zhou Ning noticed the presence of Zhou Weiqi. She left quickly before returning with Mrs. Zhou, carrying a number card in her hand. They made a beeline for Zhou Weiqi and Jiang Yao, slamming the number card right in front of the confused duo and said, “We’re changing seats, you’re moving to number eleven.”

Zhou Weiqi reacted fast and snatched the number six card away. He raised his eyebrows and looked at Zhou Ning in silence.

“Zhou Weiqi! Didn’t you hear Ning’s request? Are you deaf?” Incensed, Mrs. Zhou looked at Jiang Yao and said condescendingly, “Oh, what do we have here? Another day, another woman? She doesn’t look as pretty as the one you had before.”

“You!” Zhou Weiqi had no qualms receiving abuse, but he could not allow Jiang Yao to be insulted. Infuriated, he stood up wanting to fight back but was immediately held down by Jiang Yao, who was shaking her head.

Mrs. Zhou and both Mr. and Mrs. Du were busy talking to Director Lee just now and did not notice Lu Xingzhi hugging Jiang Yao.

Hearing the commotion behind him, Chen Feibai turned around and looked at Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning in astonishment. His expression changed, his lips curled into a sly grin, and sat there as if he was watching a show.

“Zhou Weiqi, what’s an indigent fellow like you doing at an auction? Auctioning your new car off? Or yourself?” Zhou Ning noticed Chen Feibai’s fixated gaze and thought to herself how he was still paying attention to her. Therefore, she could not embarrass herself, not in front of Chen Feibai.

To Zhou Ning, losing to Zhou Weiqi and not getting the seat she wanted was humiliating.

“You are pretty good at seducing girls, it seems. If not, why would she get together with a person like you?” Zhou Ning looked condescendingly at the lady in white sitting next to Zhou Weiqi.

She felt a pang of jealousy seeing Jiang Yao’s face. Zhou Ning looked like her mother, plain and unremarkable, and despised women who were attractive. She got even more upset seeing the woman sitting in silence, expression unchanged.

Was she dumb? Why did she not talk back?

“Zhou Weiqi, won’t your father take back your new car if he knows how much trouble you caused here? Also, when are you moving back?” Mrs. Zhou had no respect for women who got together with a man just for his wealth. To her, this woman today was no different than the other women Zhou Weiqi had gotten himself involved with, a shameless gold-digger.

#### **Chapter 437: Not Angry?**

If she had to say, the girl today seemed a little weird, not responding to any insults.

Zhou Weiqi’s previous dates would have reacted or shown their displeasure receiving such abuse, instead of sitting there apathetically. This angered Mrs. Zhou very much.

Those women were not dumb; they knew it was just a fling, and that Zhou Weiqi only saw them as playthings. According to Zhou Ning, Zhou Weiqi could not provide up to the women’s expectations, but what could they do? With his buddies backing him up, they could not afford to offend Zhou Weiqi. Likewise, they also dared not antagonize Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning for fear of backlash from the Zhou family.

And yet this woman had the audacity to sit there in silence, stealing only glances occasionally. They could see a hint of disdain and superiority in her eyes.

Zhou Weiqi sat unmoved, holding the number card firmly in his hand. On the other hand, Zhou Ning was upset at herself; as the princess of the Zhou family, she could not even retrieve what was rightfully hers from the little mutt, Zhou Weiqi. Infuriated and having humiliated herself in front of Chen Feibai, she shoved Jiang Yao whilst trying to snatch their number card.

Pushed away from her seat, Jiang Yao decided to stand aside and watch the drama unfold.

Surprised at her indifference, Chen Feibai could not help but ask, “You’re not angry?”

“Should I be?” Jiang Yao raised her eyebrows and asked. After giving it some thought, she chuckled and nodded her head. “Maybe I should.”

Under Chen Feibai’s astonished expression, she grabbed hold of Zhou Ning and pushed her toward Mrs. Zhou. Before everyone could react, she turned and called out for the staff manning the entrance.



The moment she was about to speak, she was held by someone else and heard Mrs. Zhou's sharp squeal as a deep voice boomed, "Get out!"

Lu Xingzhi shielded Jiang Yao with one hand, separating her from Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning. His other hand was hanging in mid-air; he turned his attention toward Zhou Ning, who was frightened solid.

Jiang Yao looked at Lu Xingzhi, patted his arm and motioned to him that she was alright.

She then called out for the staff, pointed at Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning and said, "These two are trying to cause trouble here. Please escort them out."

The staff looked at Lu Xingzhi, and thought to himself, 'Can't risk my life offending Hades Lu.'

Without even looking at the troublemakers, the staff called for security to escort the ladies out while apologizing to Lu Xingzhi, whose expression was as grim as death itself, "We are very sorry, it is our mistake."

Zhou Ning and Mrs. Zhou shouted profanities as they were dragged away. Every expletive known to man was present that moment, to the uneasiness of the crowd around.

Were they crazy? Having humiliated themselves in public, they took it a step further and obnoxiously cursed out the entire room, was it necessary?

It was common knowledge that Zhou Weiqi was the illegitimate son of the Zhou family, yet they did not know how badly treated he was, until now.

#### **Chapter 438: Show Yourself Some Respect**

It is no surprise that the people of high society were constantly found embroiled in scandals and affairs of similar nature. Having illegitimate children in the family was not an issue exclusive to the Zhou family, but as far as the saying "do not wash your dirty linen in the public" went, the Zhou family was only dragging its name through the mud with Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning's actions.

Did the mother and daughter duo not realize that Lu Xingzhi was right there?

It was obvious that the woman in Lu Xingzhi's embrace was very important to him. Nobody had ever heard of a woman getting intimate with Lu Xingzhi, not even Chen Feitang had managed to do it. And yet Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning were brazen enough to include the unknown woman in their abuse of Zhou Weiqi.

The Zhou family had fallen out of prominence some years ago. Provoking Lu Xingzhi was just senseless; he had all the means to crush them. The only issue being when.

"What is going on here?" asked Old General Liang. He, along with General Chen, was just passing by when they witnessed the commotion.

"They snagged Master Zhou's number card and tried to cause a scene." The staff explained on the spot.

General Chen immediately knew that Zhou Ning was in on the chaos when he saw his own grandson, Chen Feibai, right there. He looked at the number card Zhou Ning was holding and snickered.

“Funny how you want the best seats without putting in an effort to contribute to the auction. Taking something that is not yours is not nice.” General Chen suggested earnestly, before turning toward Chen Feibai and barking, “Get yourself over here right now! Go and sit with your cousin; why are you fooling around with this little rascal girl?”

“I have got nothing to do with her!” Chen Feibai fervently denied his grandfather’s claims. “Your grandson right here has standards!”

With that, he walked away indignantly.

Everyone within earshot knew who General Chen was referring to as the ‘little rascal girl’. It was Zhou Ning, who was presently reduced to tears.

Lu Xingzhi participated in the rescue mission on National Day and was instrumental in bringing both Old General Liang and General Chen back safely. They had always treated Lu Xingzhi well; with this incident however, Lu Xingzhi was now held in even higher regard.

Mr. and Mrs. Du finally arrived but were met with the mess made by Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning. They kept apologizing, and were trying to look for excuses, before pushing for Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning to leave.

Du Shihua looked at Zhou Weiqi with the most vicious expression after the departure of the Zhous and even scolded, “Zhou Weiqi, they are your mother and sister!”

“So, what if they are? Do I have to play along with their foolish antics? They were demanding Brother Lu’s seat; should I have given them away without even asking for permission from the seat holder himself? I dared not!”

He moved toward seat number seven; it was Chen Xuyao’s spot. Lu Xingzhi most probably did not want anyone else sitting between himself and his wife. Coincidentally, Chen Xuyao came alone and did not have a companion.

‘Perfect,’ thought Zhou Weiqi. ‘I’ll sit beside Xuyao.’

### **Chapter 439: To Help or Not to Help?**

“Weiqi’s right, show yourself some respect.” Old General Liang cheerily chimed in, leaving the Du family red-faced.

Nevertheless, General Chen and Old General Liang were the most distinguished guests in the charity auction.

Guests started filling the hall after the drama subsided. Lu Xingzhi had the staff combine both the seats of number six and seven together. Naturally, Old General Liang and General Chen sat in the first row—reserved only for the distinguished guests.

Once seated, Zhou Weiqi looked at Lu Xingzhi and Jiang Yao with a twinkle in his eye and said, “I thought you didn’t want people third-wheeling?”

“Hush!” Chen Xuyao kicked Zhou Weiqi in the shins. Brother Lu was not the person to publicly display his affections.

A while later, the auction started. Instead of paying attention to the auction itself, Zhou Weiqi turned toward Jiang Yao and apologized, "Jiang Yao, I'm so sorry for what happened just now."

Seeing Jiang Yao's laidback reaction, Zhou Weiqi scratched his head in confusion. "Aren't you angry? They were so rude to you!"

Zhou Weiqi was used to the verbal abuse; however, Jiang Yao was just a girl!

"Of course not." Jiang Yao laughed. "They wanted my help after all. We will see how far their tyrannical attitude takes them; especially when they have to come to me for the favor. Isn't it fun?"

Zhou Weiqi sat in silence. Jiang Yao was definitely an interesting character!

Lu Xingzhi said nothing. Instead, he gave Jiang Yao a profound look.

"Jiang Yao, are you planning to operate on Du Chen? If I may add, I'd say they do not deserve your help. After all, the Du and Zhou family still have the means to pay for a wheelchair." Chen Xuyao laughed wickedly.

After sending a text message, Lu Xingzhi received a reply a few seconds later. It was from Liang Yuezhe. He swiftly read the text message and put his cell phone back into his pocket with a satisfied look on his face.

The Zhou family needed a lesson.

"It depends on Weiqi. If he gives me the greenlight, I have no issue mending Du Chen's leg," Jiang Yao said nonchalantly.

Zhou Weiqi and Chen Xuyao could not believe their ears! Jiang Yao had the guts to say such a thing.

Lu Xingzhi placed her palms under his. Giving it a little squeeze, he sighed, "My wife's a grown woman now."

"What do you mean?" Chen Xuyao promptly switched places with Zhou Weiqi, pushing him toward the sidelines.

Warm air filled the auction hall, warming Jiang Yao's frigid hands into little stove-top warmers. Lu Xingzhi took her tiny hands and grasped it firmly in his; he was content at the present moment.

Seeing Chen Xuyao and Zhou Weiqi's puzzled expressions, Lu Xingzhi explained, "Jiang Yao meant to say that if Weiqi wants to leave the Zhou family, this is the time to do so. If they want to cure Du Chen, they will have to let Weiqi go. Plus, we can see if Mr. Zhou actually wants his son."

It was an understanding, unspoken yet straightforward. One look was all it took to understand what she was thinking

#### **Chapter 440: Stimulant**

Zhou Weiqi took some time to return to his senses only to be stunned by Lu Xingzhi's words.

He had an inkling as to what was happening when Jiang Yao asked him to decide for Du Chen's operation; with Lu Xingzhi's explanation, Zhou Weiqi was presently feeling tears form in his eyes.

Even Jiang Yao, who only knew him for a month or so, treated him better than the Zhou family did.

Zhou Weiqi had always thought that he was not an emotional man but right now his heart was bursting with gratitude toward Jiang Yao and Lu Xingzhi for their effort and kindness.

“Weiqi, you’re not young anymore. We have nothing on you if you want to spend the rest of your life in the Zhou family. Otherwise, you have to cut them off completely.” Chen Xuyao patted Zhou Weiqi’s shoulder and continued, “Even Jiang Yao knows it; the Zhou family is only going to bring you down.”

Noticing Zhou Weiqi’s hesitation, Jiang Yao was reminded of the fact that he made a pact with his late mother before her passing. It was easy to see that she was very important to him.

He was a filial son and respected his mother’s decision. With that, he wasted his time away in the Zhou family, leading to outsiders’ perception that he was a lazy good-for-nothing.

“Weiqi, do you remember Zhang Lanxiang?” Jiang Yao decided that Zhou Weiqi needed something far stronger. “Do you know why Mrs. Zhou wants you to marry Zhang Lanxiang all of a sudden?”

“You know?” Zhou Weiqi and Chen Xuyao asked together.

“Just found out today.” Jiang Yao nodded. “I overheard Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning’s conversation at the hospital earlier today. Zhang Lanxiang is pregnant, and the father is none other than your brother. He has to marry a woman with good social standing though, yet he could not bear to live separated from Zhang Lanxiang and their child. They decided that marrying Zhang Lanxiang off to you was the best solution to their predicament.”

“Damn it! Disgusting!” Chen Xuyao almost shouted in anger only to realize at the last moment that it was a little inappropriate and lowered his voice instead.

Disgusting could not even cut it; it was just pure evil.

Zhou Weiqi’s face showed signs of surprise. He previously came up with many theories, but he did not expect it to be this.

“Killing two birds with one stone, wonderful strategy!” Lu Xingzhi was very tempted to praise Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning for their brilliance. “They have you marry Zhang Lanxiang so that your dad cannot look for a woman with a higher social standing to be your wife. It is a pretty good idea if you ask me; Zhang Lanxiang and Zhou Changkang can get intimate whenever they want. With this, Weiqi will not have his own offspring. It really is a good plan.”

If Zhou Weiqi believed the child in Zhang Lanxiang’s tummy to be his own child, when he inherited the family fortune, the inheritance would ultimately get passed down to Zhou Changkang’s child instead.

To ensure that Zhou Weiqi would unquestionably regard Zhang Lanxiang’s fetus as his own child, Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning would surely come up with a plan for Zhou Weiqi to have relations with Zhang Lanxiang.

Yet, for it to actually happen was impossible knowing Zhou Changkang’s character. They would possibly have a random woman replace Zhang Lanxiang in the process, duping Zhou Weiqi into believing that the woman was Zhang Lanxiang herself.

The mother-daughter duo, Mrs. Zhou and Zhou Ning, was a potent one, coming up with so many devious tricks and schemes.

“I’ll have people monitor the Zhou family.” Chen Xuyao’s expression darkened and immediately left the hall for a phone call.

“Weiqi, think long and hard for yourself. Is the Zhou family worth all the struggles you have to go through?” Lu Xingzhi asked and allowed his eyes to wander onto the stage.