

Lady Gu 351

Chapter 351: Setting Up A Trap

“Anyway, your reputation has already been ruined. It doesn’t matter if others misunderstand you. But Rou Rou is our Qiao family’s lucky star. Her reputation can’t be ruined. As long as you give Moling to Rou Rou and pretend nothing happened, everything will be settled.”

Hence, Qiao Xi wanted Xu Mei to have a taste of taking the blame for others.

“Mrs. Xu, now that your reputation has been ruined, shouldn’t you feel honored to sacrifice yourself for the Qiao family and your daughter? Or would you rather see your daughter get jailed and the Qiao family’s company face bankruptcy than sacrifice yourself?”

Xu Mei’s face was pale, and she was trembling all over. Her eyes were filled with fear. “Zhenguo, I’m your wife. I represent the Qiao family. If I bear this crime, then the Qiao family...”

Just then, Black Tide’s voice slowly rang out. “President Qiao, for Qiao Rou’s sake, you were willing to abandon your elder daughter. Xu Mei is just your lover and not the true Madam Qiao. Don’t you want to save your daughter?”

Qiao Zhenguo widened his eyes and suddenly reacted. “That’s right. Xu Mei hasn’t married me. She’s not Madam Qiao and can’t represent the Qiao family. Miss Black Tide is right! Xu Mei, only you can bear this responsibility.”

“Rou Rou is your biological daughter. Are you going to watch her reputation go down the drain?”

Black Tide imitated Xu Mei’s tone. “Yes, Qiao Rou is your own flesh and blood. As her mother, don’t you want to help her? If you don’t take the blame for her, her life will be ruined. You’re too cruel!”

Xu Mei’s pupils constricted as she exclaimed in horror, “No! No...”

No, why should she take the blame?

Qiao Xi knew that as long as Qiao Zhenguo listened to these words, it didn’t matter whether Xu Mei was willing or not. She couldn’t escape.

Back then, when her family asked her to take the blame for Qiao Rou, they were very confident. Why was Xu Mei showing such a big reaction when it was her turn?

Qiao Xi hung up the phone in a good mood.

At this moment, Gu Zheng was flipping through a document. Qiao Xi looked over curiously. “What are you looking at?”

Gu Zheng replied indifferently, “You want to read the tender document?”

Qiao Xi had a look of admiration on her face. “As expected of President Gu. You’re still so diligent after returning home. If you’re not rich, who else can be?”

“I’m sorry, you might have misunderstood.” Gu Zheng smiled and tapped his fingers on the document. His eyes narrowed slightly. “I’m not doing this for work. I want to set a trap.”

Setting up a trap?

Qiao Xi leaned closer and looked at the document before muttering to herself, “This plot of land is to develop a hot spring villa. There’s a natural hot spring surrounded by mountains and lush vegetation there. It’s far away from the clamor of the city and is a good place for the people of Li City to go on vacation. Have you taken a fancy to this plot of land?”

Gu Zheng shook his head. “The Lu family has taken a liking to it.”

Qiao Xi frowned. “But the current person in charge of the Lu family is Old Master Lu, Miss Lu Qingyun’s father. You...”

“It has nothing to do with me.” Gu Zheng’s eyes darkened.

Qiao Xi’s heart ached. “You’re right. Old Master Lu is also a fool. He was biased toward Lu Xiang back then and is still targeting you now. He clearly knows that you are...”

Qiao Xi paused and looked at Gu Zheng’s expression. She really didn’t want to hurt Gu Zheng, so she changed the topic. “Are you bidding against the Lu family this time?”

Gu Zheng nodded.

Qiao Xi continued, “Then are you confident in obtaining this plot of land?”

The man smiled meaningfully. “Mrs. Gu, I do want to bid, but I don’t intend to take this plot of land.”

Qiao Xi came to a sudden realization. Gu Zheng’s wealth was comparable to that of a country. Who would dare compete with him for the things that he took a fancy to? But the Lu family was different. As long as it was something that Gu Zheng took a fancy to, they would definitely want to interfere.

As the Lu family wanted to hide the fact that Gu Zheng was Lu Qingyun’s biological son, they had to suppress Gu Zheng. As long as Gu Zheng bid for it, the Lu family would fight him for it.

Gu Zheng did not want this plot of land at all. He only wanted to raise the price.

“However, ten billion is still worth it. After all, this plot is rich in resources and the scenery is pleasant. It’ll definitely not be a loss if it’s developed into a hot spring villa.”

“That’s right..” Gu Zheng smirked.

Chapter 352: Drive Qiao Rou Out Of The Qiao Family!

Qiao Xi’s eyes were filled with doubt.

Gu Zheng smiled faintly and said indifferently, “What if there’s a huge ancient tomb underground?”

Qiao Xi suddenly trembled.

If there was a huge ancient tomb underground, the country would take back the right to develop the land and seal off the area. They would only compensate the Lu family based on the initial valuation of the land. By then, the Lu family would lose billions.

In the end, the Lu family would not get anything and even lose a huge sum of money for nothing.

Song Shiyu sighed.

Why did this damned man tell Young Madam about this? How could a gentle woman like Young Madam like such a scheming man?

Unexpectedly, Qiao Xi suddenly looked up with little red hearts in her eyes. "Senior, you're too amazing! If that's the case, the Lu family will suffer a double loss and will definitely be angered to death! So, who will the Lu family send to compete with you this time?"

Gu Zheng smiled. "Guess?"

Needless to say, it must be Lu Yan!

The next morning.

The news of Qiao Rou accusing her sister of being a mistress and then getting humiliated after being exposed for embezzling 40 million yuan spread throughout Li City.

Last night, Qiao Xi created some evidence to prove that Qiao Rou didn't steal the money. Instead, it was her manager who transferred the money to Xu Mei. In other words, this money had nothing to do with Qiao Rou.

Hence, the police released Qiao Rou. She originally planned to sneak home, but as soon as she appeared, a group of reporters swarmed over.

When the reporters saw Qiao Rou, they rushed over and asked lots of questions. Qiao Rou's head almost exploded.

"Miss Qiao Rou, may I ask if the money has anything to do with you? Is your manager taking the blame for you? She probably doesn't have the ability to move Second Young Master Gu's assets around."

"What does this have to do with your mother? Is she the mastermind?"

"Miss Qiao Rou, how are you feeling now that your manager and your mother have helped you out of your situation?"

Being surrounded by the crowd, Qiao Rou couldn't move an inch and was extremely flustered.

A reporter stuffed a microphone in front of her. "Miss Qiao Rou, you embezzled 40 million yuan and even stepped on your sister in public. Was it your mother, Xu Mei, who ordered you to do this?"

Seeing that Qiao Rou didn't respond for a long time, the reporter stared at Qiao Zhenguo and Old Madam Qiao.

"President Qiao, Old Madam Qiao, I heard that Miss Qiao Xi was driven out of the Qiao family because she stole 1,000 yuan. Is this true or are you trying to frame her?"

Everyone immediately pointed their cameras at the two of them.

One of the reporters' words were sharp. "Everyone knows that the Qiao family's company and assets were left behind by Miss Qiao Xi's birth mother, Ms. Xia Yunqiu. Ms. Xia Yunqiu gave all her assets to Miss Qiao Xi in her will, so there shouldn't be anything wrong with her taking her family's money, right? Qiao Xi merely took her own money, yet she was chased out of the house by all of you, whereas Qiao Rou took over something that wasn't hers and even embezzled 40 million. However, you guys have nothing to say about that?"

Old Madam Qiao immediately refuted, "These two things can't be linked!"

The reporter wasn't polite with her and said indignantly, "Even if Miss Qiao Xi stole the money back then, she only took 1,000 yuan and had to pay such a huge price when you abandoned her in the countryside. A young girl who had no relatives was left to suffer so much. Now that Qiao Rou embezzled 40 million yuan, how are you going to deal with her? Are you going to chase her to the countryside and let her fend for herself?"

"That's right! President Qiao, Old Madam Qiao, both of you are so heartless toward the first wife's daughter but you haven't done anything to the illegitimate daughter who made a big mistake. You're too biased! Are you driving Miss Qiao Xi away on purpose so that you can take all her property and assets?"

Old Madam Qiao's face was ashen. "You..."

"Back then, you said that the Qiao family's rules were strict and would absolutely not tolerate thieves. You even said that you would sever ties with Qiao Xi. Now that Qiao Rou stole 40 million, the Qiao family should immediately chase her out of the house!"

Faced with everyone's questioning, Old Madam Qiao shouted angrily, "Don't talk nonsense. Rou Rou didn't steal anything. Her manager did it. It has nothing to do with her!"

The reporter snorted in disdain.. "Old Madam Qiao, do you think we're all idiots? Everyone knows who did it. Don't think that just because Qiao Rou found someone else to take the blame that everyone will think this matter has nothing to do with her!"

Chapter 353: The Situation Got Out Of Control And Qiao Rou Went Crazy!

"I repeat, Rou Rou has nothing to do with this! If you continue to spout nonsense, I'll sue you for defamation!" Old Madam Qiao's voice was sharp.

Upon hearing this, the reporters were enraged.

"I knew it! Qiao Rou is a mistress and framed Qiao Xi. Now, she's even using someone else's money. She's done so many horrendous things, yet she can't admit to any of it?"

"Children who cry have sweets to eat, but you can't keep repeating mistakes. Don't think that by just shedding a few tears everything will be over!"

Old Madam Qiao's face alternated between red and white.

The reporters were filled with righteous indignation. "Qiao Rou maligned Qiao Xi, yet all of you instantly determined that it was Qiao Xi's fault and even asked her to clear Qiao Rou's name. What kind of education is your Qiao family imposing on your children?! Not only do you not dote on the legitimate eldest daughter but you even dote on a scourge and a jinx!"

"Because of the shameless mistress, the first wife died without reason and her only daughter was abused! President Qiao, don't blame me for not reminding you. For treating a scourge like a treasure, the Qiao family will be defeated by her sooner or later!"

Then, the crowd threw a plastic bag at Qiao Rou.

Smack! It hit Qiao Rou's head and a strong stench instantly spread out.

Qiao Rou froze for a few seconds and then screamed, "Ah!!!"

The plastic bag was filled with stinky tofu and it hit Qiao Rou right on the head. The stinky tofu slowly fell down her hair.

After someone made the first move, everyone else became furious as well. They splashed milk tea and mineral water at her for as long as they could.

Qiao Rou screamed, while Old Madam Qiao quickly pulled her into the police station.

She sobbed uncontrollably. "Why?! Why are they doing this to me? I'm innocent..."

The stench filled the air, and the police covered their mouths in disdain.

Qiao Rou was innocent? Who would believe her?

Did she think that by changing the evidence, the others wouldn't know the truth? There was no way one could hide the truth!

Qiao Rou looked at the stinky tofu stuck to her body and screamed crazily, "Quick! Quickly call Black Tide! Didn't she say that everything would be settled? Why are there still people looking for trouble with me?"

As soon as they got home, they hurriedly called Black Tide.

After they got through to Black Tide, Qiao Rou's voice could be heard. "Black Tide! Didn't you say that everything would be settled? We gave you the shares you wanted, so why did things turn out like this?"

Black Tide replied indifferently, "Miss Qiao Rou, my job was to help you change the evidence and successfully release you from the police station. As for whether others believe you or not, I can't control that. After all, your vicious and wretched image has already left a deep impression on everyone. You can't control other people's thoughts, and I don't have that ability either."

Qiao Rou slammed the phone on the floor and shouted, "Useless! Get lost! Get lost!"

Just then, the assistant walked in nervously. “President Qiao, all of Miss Qiao’s contracts and endorsements have been canceled. The company’s projects have been suspended as well. Many projects have been taken away by the Li family.

“The eldest daughter of the Li family posted on Weibo, saying that... back then, Miss Qiao Rou smashed her favorite toy and made Qiao Rou take the blame. She knows about this and will definitely not let... Miss Qiao Rou off.”

Qiao Rou suddenly picked up the cup on the table and smashed it on the floor. She then stepped on the broken phone.

Why? Why was the whole world going against her?!

It was all because of that b*tch!

She wouldn’t give up just like that. Sooner or later, she would kill Qiao Xi to vent the hatred in her heart.

...

In Moling Corporation.

The shareholders were gathered together, and their eyes were filled with anger. Now, everyone knew that Gu Moling had secretly transferred 40 million, so these people were all dissatisfied with him.

“Xi Xi was the one who founded the company. After she left, the company lost more than half of its orders. It’s all thanks to Xi Xi that the company has what it has today!”

“Some people really have no self-awareness. They couldn’t possibly think that they’re very formidable, right? They abandoned an outstanding woman like Xi Xi and actually chose a piece of trash. They’re truly blind!”

Gu Moling’s expression was ugly, but he did not dare flare up.. He lowered his eyes dispiritedly.

Chapter 354: I Thought You Were Crazy!

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“President Gu, we’re all shareholders of the company. I’ll make it clear to you today. Either you invite Xi Xi back and let her take charge of the company, or we’d rather lose money by choosing to sell our shares. We’re all ready to quit!”

Everyone echoed, “Gu Moling! Qiao Rou caused the company to lose 300 million yuan of assets. How are you going to compensate us?”

Gu Moling’s face was covered in stubble, and his mind was in a mess.

Ever since he got together with Rou Rou, everything had changed.

Rou Rou said that she was not targeting Xi Xi, but everything she did was to harm Xi Xi. Could it be that he had really misjudged her?

...

Longwan Residential.

After Qiao Xi hung up the phone, the butler walked over. "Madam, the president said that President Li is holding a birthday banquet tonight. He asked if you would like to come along?"

Qiao Xi asked, "Don't we usually receive an invitation for this sort of thing? Why did you only tell me now?"

The butler quickly explained, "The president knows that you had a conflict with Miss Li previously, so... he didn't tell you. If you don't want to go, I'll go tell the president now."

So that was how it was!

Qiao Xi remembered that she didn't have any conflict with Miss Li at that time. It was only because Qiao Rou wanted her to take the blame that Miss Li attacked her. She actually didn't hate Miss Li.

However, she didn't expect that Gu Zheng would reject the Li family's invitation because of this matter. Although Gu Zheng was an indifferent person and didn't care about social interactions, Old Master Li was a famous businessman in Li City, after all. If he rejected, it would give the Lu family a chance to sow discord between the two parties.

Seeing that she did not reply, the butler thought that she was in a dilemma. Hence, he comforted her by saying, "Madam, don't think too much. It doesn't matter if you don't want to go. The president doesn't care about the Li family at all."

At this moment, Qiao Xi's phone rang. It was an unknown number.

After Qiao Xi answered the call, an unfamiliar female voice sounded out from the other side. "Is this Qiao Xi?"

Qiao Xi was stunned for a moment. She didn't seem to recognize this person. "I am. Who is this?"

"Li Xing'er." She went straight to the point. "Can you come to my grandfather's birthday party tonight? I have something to say to you."

Qiao Xi was slightly surprised.

Miss Li was the one who pushed her back then. Why was she inviting her now?

Qiao Xi couldn't help but be curious and agreed to Miss Li's request. She turned to the butler and said, "Tell Gu Zheng that I'll go."

Gu Zheng wasn't the slightest bit surprised. After he finished his work, he invited a professional makeup team to help Qiao Xi dress up.

Qiao Xi's skin was good to begin with, and light makeup was enough to show off her beauty.

Gu Zheng asked, "Are you sure you want to go?"

"Miss Li called to invite me over, so how could I not show her some respect?"

After Qiao Xi finished speaking, her face was full of confusion. "Why do you think Miss Li invited me? What happened before was that Qiao Rou set me up and pushed the blame to me in front of everyone, so I was punished by the Li family. It has already been so many years since this small matter of ours happened. Moreover, we don't have much interaction, so it feels a little strange."

"Don't be afraid. No matter what happens, I'll always be by your side." Gu Zheng's voice was calm.

Qiao Xi wasn't afraid, and she only felt curious.

She put on her gown, and the birthday banquet would start in two hours. She stood in front of the mirror and looked at herself.

Gu Zheng looked up. "Mrs. Gu, you seem to have been looking at yourself in the mirror for a long time. Is there anything wrong with the gown?"

Qiao Xi chuckled. "There's nothing wrong. It's too perfect."

Gu Zheng smirked. "I thought you were crazy!"

Qiao Xi: "..."

This bastard really had a sharp tongue. He ruined her good mood.

Gu Zheng took a sip of tea. His Adam's apple moved, and his eyes darkened. "This is not good. Change it."

Qiao Xi had a puzzled expression as she looked at herself in the mirror. She was simply too beautiful!

"There's nothing wrong with it! The gown's pretty good!"

Gu Zheng frowned and said hoarsely, "It's not good."

Qiao Xi was furious when she heard this. "What do you mean it's not good? This gown of mine is just right. It's very light, low-profile, and doesn't lose its essence. Don't cause trouble for no reason!"

She was an internationally renowned designer. How could the clothes she chose not look good? Gu Zheng was doubting her professional standards!

Chapter 355: An Apology Gift

The man was silent for a long moment before he slowly walked up to her. He touched her exposed shoulder and said with difficulty, "This exposed part makes it not good."

The gown had a tube top design. Although it covered other areas well, her round shoulders were exposed.

Qiao Xi was just about to retort when Gu Zheng's large hand tightly hugged her waist and pulled her into his embrace.

A messy kiss fell, going down her neck as he kissed her collarbone. The numbing sensation made Qiao Xi's body stiffen.

She kept retreating, but Gu Zheng continued to press her against the wall.

The man's eyes were burning as he looked at her affectionately. He panted slightly and smiled. "Do you still think this gown is good?"

Qiao Xi was stunned for a moment before she suddenly reacted. She didn't even have to look to know that there was definitely a red mark on her collarbone and shoulder at this moment. If she were to wear this gown out, then she would be too shy to see anyone.

The Li family was holding a birthday banquet. If she attended the banquet like this, they would definitely chase her out.

"Mrs. Gu, change it." Gu Zheng planted a kiss on the corner of her lips. The kiss carried a strong sense of longing and gentleness.

Qiao Xi immediately rushed to the mirror. These marks couldn't be removed in a short period of time, and it was difficult to cover them with makeup, so she could only change into a gown that didn't reveal her shoulders.

...

The Li family's mansion.

Today was Old Master Li's 70th birthday. He and his wife had established their company together a few years ago. They had been conscientious all these years and were known as a long-standing couple in the circle. The couple's relationship was very good, so they were well-respected.

After greeting some of her friends, Madam Li turned around and saw her daughter standing at the side, looking worried. She went up to comfort her, saying, "Xing'er, don't worry."

Li Xing'er held a jewelry box in her hands. She opened it and took a look before closing it again, still feeling a little uneasy.

"Mom, do you think Qiao Xi will forgive me?"

"Although the Qiao family was the one who made Qiao Xi take the blame that time, it's still a fact that I pushed her. I remember that she was in a lot of pain and her hand was injured. I'm only apologizing to her now after ten years. Will she accept it?"

There was a purple crystal bracelet in the jewelry box. It shone mysteriously under the lights, and there was a hollow pendant hanging in the middle. The craftsmanship was complicated, and one could tell that this bracelet was expensive.

Madam Li tapped her forehead lightly and rebuked, "It's all because you were too impulsive back then and pushed her without understanding the situation. If she doesn't forgive you, there's nothing you can do about it."

Li Xing'er frowned. "I feel very guilty. She wasn't the one who broke it, yet I pushed her. No matter what, I have to apologize. Besides, this gift was custom-made for her and her name is engraved on the pendant. If she doesn't accept it, I'll throw it away."

At this moment, a servant rushed in. "Eldest Miss."

"What's wrong?"

The servant was very anxious and said while trembling in fear, "I don't know what's going on, but everyone is saying that you'll be giving a present today."

Li Xing'er was a little embarrassed. "What's wrong with giving gifts? I'm just apologizing to Qiao Xi. There's nothing to be ashamed of!"

The servant shook her head. "No, that's not what I meant. It's a rumor that after the birthday party begins, the ladies of each family will put on a performance. You'll be giving a prize to whoever's performance is the most wonderful."

Li Xing'er: "!!!"

'F*ck! What f*cking nonsense is this? I'll rip that person's mouth off!'

Grandpa and Grandma loved lively activities, so they had prepared many musical instruments for the various young ladies to show their talents. However, they never said that they were giving away a prize.

Moreover, her present was for Qiao Xi, and Qiao Xi's name was engraved on it. How could she give it to someone else?

Madam Li frowned and said, "Xing'er, let's go and see who started the rumor."

...

In the banquet hall of the Li family's mansion.

Yao Mengqing was wearing a high-end gown. Her exquisite face and impressive figure instantly attracted the attention of many men.

At this moment, she was talking to a middle-aged man. The two of them were smiling happily.

Li Xing'er recognized this man to be a famous musician in the country.. He had composed many musical scores and was the disciple of an internationally renowned composer.

Chapter 356: I Can Smell The B*tch From A Mile Away!

The famous musician was standing beside Yao Mengqing. Everyone could not help but lean over. “Mr. Zhao, you’re here. We’ve been hearing a lot about your reputation. It’s really great to be able to meet you now. Have you heard about Miss Li giving away a gift?”

Madam Li narrowed her eyes.

Zhao Qinghui pretended to be calm. “I don’t care about what’s going on outside. Miss Li giving away a gift has nothing to do with me. It’s better to give the young people a chance. Miss Yao, the lady beside me, has a lot of potential.”

Everyone looked at Yao Mengqing. She was quite good-looking, but the news that the Yao family had offended Xue Liang had already spread.

Zhao Qinghui had long been dissatisfied with Xue Liang pressuring the Yao family and provoking Xue Liang time and again. However, Zhao Qinghui was a senior, after all. If Xue Liang attacked him, wouldn’t he be seen as an inhumane person?

“Miss Yao, you can’t give up on music just because of others’ opinions. I’ve seen your violin skills before. Who can compare to you in terms of performance?”

Yao Mengqing pretended to be shy. “Mr. Zhao, you’re too kind. I just like music and have never thought of getting a gift for it. Moreover, Xue Liang’s younger sister will be here today. I...”

Before she could finish, Zhao Qinghui snorted.

Everyone instantly whispered. Could it be that Xue Liang’s younger sister did not know music? Xue Liang had been in the art circle for so long. Other than having extremely high attainments in art, he was also incomparable to others in music.

Li Xing’er frowned. Yao Mengqing and Zhao Qinghui were both hypocritical people putting on a pretense. They were mocking Qiao Xi for not knowing music and even wanted to snatch the precious violin.

However, her gift was for Qiao Xi and had nothing to do with Yao Mengqing. So what if Yao Mengqing could play the violin better than Qiao Xi?

Li Xing’er was about to retort when she was stopped by Madam Li.

Madam Li reminded her in a low voice, “Let’s take a look at the situation first. Don’t be rash.”

Li Xing’er knew that her mother was considerate of the overall situation, so she calmed down and nodded obediently.

...

At the reception area.

Qiao Xi and Gu Zheng got out of the car while the butler went to deliver the birthday gift. The two of them ignored the surprised gazes of everyone and entered the hall arm in arm.

The two of them had just entered when Madam Li came forward with a smile. "Miss Qiao."

On the other side, Yao Mengqing held a glass of wine and slowly approached Li Xing'er. "Hello, Miss Li."

Li Xing'er glanced at her in disdain.

The smile on Yao Mengqing's face vanished abruptly. If the Yao family did not urgently need the Li family's help, she would not have tried to strike up a conversation with the rash and brainless eldest daughter of the Li family!

Seeing Li Xing'er look at Qiao Xi who was not far away, Yao Mengqing instantly had a plan. "Miss Li, do you know Xi Xi?"

Li Xing'er looked at her impatiently and replied angrily, "Does it have anything to do with you?"

Yao Mengqing had always been popular in high society because of her sweet appearance. This was the first time she was being treated like this. She forcefully suppressed her anger and smiled awkwardly. "Miss Li, perhaps you don't know that Xi Xi's husband and I are good friends. We've met a few times. I heard that you and Xi Xi have a conflict?"

Li Xing'er was about to leave when she heard these words. She suddenly stopped in her tracks and turned around with narrowed eyes. "Miss Yao, where did you hear this?"

Yao Mengqing looked troubled. "Actually... I was also present at your birthday party. If I remember correctly, it was Xi Xi who smashed your favorite toy. She refused to admit it and only confessed after the elders of the Qiao family persuaded her."

"Miss Li, Xi Xi was still young at that time. She lost her biological mother when she was young. No one taught her not to touch other people's things. Maybe she accidentally smashed it after she saw that you got a new toy. I'll apologize on her behalf."

Li Xing'er sneered.

If she did not know that Qiao Xi had been wrongly accused, she would have easily fallen into Yao Mengqing's trap. She would think that Qiao Xi had invited Yao Mengqing to persuade her. She would recall those unpleasant memories from back then, causing her to be dissatisfied with Qiao Xi.

What did Yao Mengqing mean? Was she trying to drive a wedge between her and Qiao Xi? Was she trying to use her to deal with Qiao Xi? She could smell this b*tch from a mile away!

She snorted. At this moment, the butler walked over. "Miss, Madam wants to invite you over.. The banquet is about to start."

Chapter 357: A Sincere Apology

Li Xing'er glanced at Yao Mengqing and said with a fake smile, "Miss Yao, you must want to know what my gift is, right?"

Yao Mengqing's face turned pale, and her heart thumped.

Li Xing'er sneered. "Well, that'll depend on whether you have the ability."

...

The banquet was about to start, so Madam Li brought Qiao Xi into a guest room.

Qiao Xi did not know what the mother and daughter of the Li family intended. One called to invite her over while the other looked mysterious. However, it seemed that the two of them did not have any ill intentions.

Just as she was thinking about it, Madam Li took out a gift box. "Miss Qiao, please accept it."

Qiao Xi had a puzzled expression as she asked unhurriedly, "Madam Li, I don't have much contact with the Li family. The Li and Gu families don't have many business dealings either. I don't accept gifts for no reason. I can't casually accept things from the Li family."

Madam Li's face turned slightly red as she explained helplessly, "It's because Xing'er misunderstood you and thought that you smashed her toy. Because of that, she pushed you down in public."

Qiao Xi frowned. To be honest, she really did not want to recall that memory. "Didn't the Li family punish Miss Li? Everything..."

"Miss Qiao, actually, I only found out the truth a few days ago. It turned out that Qiao Rou framed you and even got the Qiao family to force you to confess. Xing'er and I know that we wronged you back then and made you suffer.

"Although it has been ten years since this incident, it still concerns your reputation, so we plan to restore your reputation at today's banquet. This gift was prepared for you by Xing'er. I hope you like it. If you don't accept it, Xing'er will blame herself."

Gu Zheng, who was outside the door, heard everything clearly. Before he could say anything, Song Shiyu muttered, "Tsk! The Li family makes it sound so easy. They're just apologizing? I think they..."

Song Shijing glared at him. "Don't spout nonsense. The Li and Gu families don't have any business dealings with each other. If they didn't mean it, they wouldn't be bothered to announce this at the birthday banquet they're hosting. Wouldn't it be easier to just post it on Weibo?"

Madam Li did not know that Gu Zheng was standing outside.

"Miss Qiao, I know that it's been ten years since the incident. Perhaps you've forgotten or perhaps you have lingering resentment in your heart and don't want to forgive us. However, Xu Mei announced that you stole and damaged property, so you were chased to the countryside. If you don't clarify this matter, you'll have this stain in your life."

Qiao Xi remained silent and just sized up Madam Li.

Her eyes were clear and extremely sincere without a trace of hidden emotions. She felt guilty from the bottom of her heart and was worried that this matter would affect Qiao Xi.

Back then, even though everyone thought that Qiao Xi had smashed something, the Li family still punished Li Xing'er, who pushed someone in public. This meant that the Li family was sensible and magnanimous.

Qiao Xi said indifferently, "There's no need. Isn't it too formal to clarify things at the banquet?"

Madam Li's eyes were sincere. "Xing'er has already told her grandparents about this matter, and Old Master has agreed. Moreover, it was our Li family who made you suffer back then. You don't have to think too much. We just want to clear your name. You don't have to feel pressured."

Seeing that she was silent, Madam Li continued, "Qiao Rou hasn't gone to look for trouble with you these few days. Actually, Xing'er has already warned her. If she still dares to look for trouble with you, Xing'er won't let her off."

"There's another person. The daughter of the Yao family... seems to be a little dissatisfied with you."

Qiao Xi smiled with disdain. "Yao Mengqing? I know about that."

...

The banquet officially began. Everyone raised their glasses and wished the two elders a long life.

After a while, Madam Li chose the pipa among the instruments and casually played a piece.

Old Master Li liked all kinds of musical instruments, so his family had a lot of them in their collection. This time, for the birthday banquet, they brought out all kinds of musical instruments. There were both Chinese and foreign musical instruments, so they planned to have a talent show.

Many musicians were invited to the banquet this time. Everyone was gathered together, playing and singing. The scene was very lively. After the performance ended, someone said, "I heard that Miss Yao participated in an international violin competition?"

Everyone looked at Yao Mengqing.

Chapter 358: Who Are You?

Yao Mengqing was not shy. She smiled generously. "Yes, I participated in an international competition three years ago and won the championship as expected."

Qiao Xi hissed and whispered in Gu Zheng's ear, "If I remember correctly, I participated in the same international violin competition three years ago."

"Back then, it was Fourth Brother who registered me, but my skills were not as good and I did not enter the finals. I didn't pay attention to who was the final champion. So, Yao Mengqing was the champion that year?"

The person who brought this up continued, "May I have the honor of performing a song for you, Miss Yao?"

Qiao Xi glanced at that person indifferently. It was him... The musician, Zhao Qinghui. This person had always caused trouble for Fourth Brother.

Yao Mengqing smiled and was not shy at all. "I'm just the champion of one of the competitions. There's nothing to brag about. If Old Master Li doesn't mind, I'm willing to perform a song to celebrate his birthday. I wish the two of you health and happiness."

Old Master Li smiled affectionately and agreed.

Yao Mengqing walked over and picked up the exquisite violin. Just as she was about to play—

Suddenly, Yao Mengqing raised her eyes to look at Qiao Xi and she said meaningfully, "Xi Xi, if I remember correctly, you participated in that violin competition as well. If my standard has dropped, don't laugh at me, alright?"

Qiao Xi smiled calmly with a composed expression.

So, that was how it was. Yao Mengqing had lost her reputation at the auction, so she wanted to take this opportunity to take revenge on her and let her have a taste of being mocked.

Yao Mengqing raised her head and placed the violin properly. She raised her arm elegantly, forming a beautiful angle. In order to perform, she even wore a dress that was suitable for playing the violin. Her beautiful figure was outlined, and it did not affect her performance.

Qiao Xi sat at the side and took a sip of red wine before looking at Yao Mengqing with interest.

If Yao Mengqing could become the champion, she must be extraordinary. It was a great thing for the Yao family to be able to make Old Master Li happy. Yao Mengqing could even take the opportunity to trample on Qiao Xi. It was killing two birds with one stone.

According to Yao Mengqing's character, she would not have asked to perform. Someone had to recommend her. That person was Zhao Qinghui.

Qiao Xi looked at Zhao Qinghui. If she remembered correctly, he was the judge for the violin competition three years ago.

Yao Mengqing played a melodious and cheerful violin tune. This tune had high requirements for the performer, but she played very fluently, making everyone intoxicated in the tune.

Five minutes later, the last note sounded and there was thunderous applause.

"Awesome! The daughter of the Yao family is really talented and good-looking!"

"I didn't expect Yao Mengqing to be so accomplished in music. I'm fascinated by her. If she can enter the music industry and develop her career there, she'll definitely have some achievements!"

"It's just that Miss Yao and Miss Qiao had a conflict. I'm afraid she won't be able to enter the music industry anymore."

Yao Mengqing was not dissatisfied at all and smiled elegantly. "Everyone, you've misunderstood. I'm very close to Xi Xi, so I won't become enemies with her over a violin. I don't think she'll use Mr. Xue to deal with me either."

As soon as she finished speaking, Zhao Qinghui snorted. “Mengqing, some people are just jealous of you because you’re talented and good-looking. That’s why they keep targeting you. Don’t ruin your future because of outsiders’ comments.”

In an instant, everyone present could hear a pin drop.

Everyone looked at Zhao Qinghui, then at Qiao Xi. They were clearly aware in their hearts that the person Zhao Qinghui was talking about was Qiao Xi, and there was no doubt about this.

Yao Mengqing was in a dilemma. “Mr. Zhao, don’t say that...”

“What can’t I say?” Zhao Qinghui looked at Qiao Xi and asked sarcastically, “Miss Qiao, what do you think?”

Qiao Xi put down the cup in her hand and slowly raised her eyes to meet Zhao Qinghui’s eyes.

Zhao Qinghui said disdainfully, “Why aren’t you commenting on Mengqing’s performance today? Isn’t it very exciting? I wonder if you can play this song with your skills?”

The air seemed to have frozen over.

After a while, Qiao Xi slowly raised her eyes and said word after word like a bolt from the blue, “May I know who you are?”

!!!

Zhao Qinghui’s expression froze..

Chapter 359: Isn’t This Considered Bullying?!

Li Xing’er could not help but burst into laughter and said with a chuckle, “Mr. Zhao has been talking for a long time but Qiao Xi doesn’t know him at all. He’s famous in the music industry, so naturally, many people have heard of him, but few ordinary people have.”

Qiao Xi’s casual words instantly crushed Zhao Qinghui’s dignity to the floor.

Mr. Zhao had always been arrogant and disdained to be associated with others. However, this young lady had never heard of him.

Zhao Qinghui’s expression was gloomy. Yao Mengqing took the opportunity to speak.

She looked surprised. “Xi Xi, why don’t you... know Mr. Zhao? He was also a judge back then!”

Judge?

Zhao Qinghui was the judge for the violin competition three years ago. It was no wonder he admired Yao Mengqing so much. She was the champion!

Seeing everyone’s adoring gazes, Zhao Qinghui’s expression softened a little. He suddenly thought of something and snorted.

“It’s normal that you haven’t seen me before, Miss Qiao. After all, only those who entered the finals could see me. If I remember correctly... you didn’t enter the finals back then.”

Everyone gasped.

It turned out... Back then, Qiao Xi and Yao Mengqing had participated in the violin competition together. One won the championship while the other did not even enter the finals.

This was simply the difference between heaven and earth!

Yao Mengqing smiled smugly, then looked at Gu Zheng. However, Gu Zheng did not even bother looking at her.

Yao Mengqing clenched her fists and gritted her teeth.

Ah Zheng would find out sooner or later how outstanding she was, while Qiao Xi was just a piece of trash. She was not even worthy of carrying her shoes.

Violin was a musical instrument that required talent. Many daughters of rich families spent a lot of money to learn it, but they were still useless. It was even rarer for them to obtain results in competitions. Since she became the champion of such a prestigious competition, it would be equivalent to her winning a ticket to the upper class society.

Zhao Qinghui looked at her disdainfully. “Miss Qiao, you’re also a violinist. Why don’t you comment on Miss Yao’s performance?”

Qiao Xi’s gaze was indifferent. “Mr. Zhao, I didn’t even enter the finals and didn’t manage to see you. What right do I have to comment on the performance of a champion?”

Back then, she did not enter the finals and did not care whether or not she could win the championship. However, it was absolutely impossible for Yao Mengqing to use this matter to trample on her.

Moreover, what was the reason she did not enter the finals back then? This might not be a matter of skills at all. Perhaps there were still some secrets that had not been unearthed.

She had learned how to play the violin from Fourth Brother. Many of her picky brothers gave her a thumbs up and thought that if she entered the music industry, her future would definitely be bright.

If Yao Mengqing was only at this standard, then there was certainly something amiss with her being the champion.

Hearing her words, Zhao Qinghui instantly raised his head arrogantly. “Miss Qiao, you don’t have to belittle yourself. I’m sorry that I didn’t get to hear you perform. No matter what, you were competing against Mengqing, after all. Now that three years have passed, why don’t we compete again and see who has improved more?”

Old Master Li frowned unhappily.

Today was his birthday. He only took out his treasured musical instrument for everyone to enjoy themselves, but this Zhao Qinghui kept mocking Miss Qiao. Wasn’t he taking this too seriously?

Anyone with discerning eyes could tell that he was making things difficult for Miss Qiao. Old Master Li was about to help Qiao Xi out of this predicament when he saw his granddaughter shake her head at him.

Looking at Qiao Xi's calm appearance, Li Xing'er had a feeling that Qiao Xi's violin skills would definitely be better than Yao Mengqing's.

Qiao Xi was silent for a moment before she suddenly sneered. "Mr. Zhao, you've already said that Miss Yao is the champion and I didn't even enter the finals. Now that you're asking me to compete with Miss Yao, isn't it... a little too much?"

Everyone remained silent.

Everyone present knew that Qiao Xi was Gu Zheng's woman. Whether the Gu family acknowledged her or not, she had Gu Zheng as her backer.

Zhao Qinghui was humiliating Qiao Xi. Was he not afraid of offending Gu Zheng?

Chapter 360: Prove The Rumors Wrong

Zhao Qinghui sneered. "Miss Qiao, there's no need to be humble. You were young back then, but you had already displayed your talent in playing the violin. Three years is enough for you to learn something. Your standard might not be as good as Mengqing's, but even if you can't play well, we won't laugh at you. We'll even help you improve. Or are you looking down on me, Miss Qiao?"

Everyone had different expressions after hearing this.

The greatest taboo in the music industry was disrespecting one's seniors. Zhao Qinghui was a famous musician in the country. He could be seen on all major programs. If others found out that Qiao Xi looked down on this senior, they would definitely curse her to death!

Qiao Xi smiled indifferently and turned to look at Gu Zheng. "Ah Zheng, should I perform?"

Everyone's gaze landed on Gu Zheng.

Yao Mengqing's heart pounded violently as her body trembled.

Gu Zheng slowly looked up, his cold eyes scanning the crowd before finally landing on Yao Mengqing. "You want to compete with my wife?"

Everyone gasped and looked at Yao Mengqing.

Yao Mengqing choked and suppressed the trembling of her body. She revealed a smile that she thought was beautiful and said gently, "President Gu, this isn't a competition. It's just that I've never heard Xi Xi play before and want to see it for myself. Although Xi Xi is your wife, everyone is saying that she's useless. I just want everyone to see that Xi Xi is not completely clueless. She knows how to play the violin.

"I also heard that Old Madam Li likes the violin very much. If Xi Xi can play it well, she can also perform well in front of Old Madam Li. That's a good thing."

Her words were very appropriate and there was nothing wrong with them.

Everyone discussed softly.

When they came to attend the birthday banquet, they had heard that Gu Zheng would be attending the banquet with his wife. They had never heard of Gu Zheng's marriage, so they were all very curious about who this Mrs. Gu was. Who knew that she was actually the legendary country bumpkin, Qiao Xi?

"Miss Yao is right. Qiao Xi's reputation is indeed bad. Even though it's all the Qiao family's fault for abandoning her in the countryside and not nurturing her according to the standards of a noble daughter, it's a fact she grew up in the countryside."

"Maybe it's because of Qiao Xi's identity that President Gu is hiding his marriage. Otherwise, why didn't he announce it?"

Gu Zheng's expression was cold.

He had never thought of hiding it from anyone. Qiao Xi was the one who did not want to announce it.

However, it was a good thing that things had come to this. He could not force Mrs. Gu, so he took this opportunity to get her to take the initiative to announce it.

Qiao Xi blinked. "Miss Yao, you're really gossipy! You keep hearing rumors. I'm very curious about what you've heard?"

Yao Mengqing lowered her head awkwardly. "Uh..."

"That you don't have the manners and talent of a socialite!" the woman beside Yao Mengqing blurted out.

"The women here are all daughters of rich families. We've been living in luxury since we were young and learned how to play musical instruments. You grew up in the countryside, so it's inevitable that you smell like dirt. Mengqing is also doing all this for your sake. She knows that you're ignorant and incompetent, so she wants to help you prove the rumors wrong!"

Qiao Xi smiled. "Oh... I see! Then I really have to thank Miss Yao!"

Yao Mengqing heaved a sigh of relief. "Xi Xi, you're Ah Zheng's wife and I'm his friend. It's only right that I help you. There's nothing to thank me for."

Zhao Qinghui said sarcastically, "Mengqing has already given you a chance. Miss Qiao, if you don't dare to perform on stage, that'll really be too disappointing. No wonder you didn't even enter the finals back then.

"Mengqing, why don't we forget about it? I think Miss Qiao doesn't seem too willing..."

"Mr. Zhao, it won't happen. Xi Xi is very outstanding..." Yao Mengqing pretended to be worried and hurriedly spoke up to defend her, but it was just a few casual words.

If Qiao Xi did not perform on stage, then it would solidify her reputation of being ignorant and incompetent. Moreover, she would never be able to raise her head in front of Yao Mengqing again.

Under the tense atmosphere, Qiao Xi finally nodded. "Alright.."

