

Lady Gu 701

Chapter 701: Expert Appraisal

Gu Zheng glanced at Lu Yan. What was his motive for asking the works to be appraised?

Lu Yan said indifferently, "I heard that there's a calligraphy expert among the guests attending the banquet today. Why don't we invite him to appraise whose calligraphy piece is the real one? What do you think?"

Tang Ruge said generously, "Is the expert you're talking about Mr. Wu?"

Lu Yan nodded. "Yes."

As soon as he finished speaking, someone had already invited the old gentleman over. He walked in arrogantly and scanned the crowd. He met Tang Ruge's eyes and smiled.

"Miss Tang."

Tang Ruge said gently, "Mr. Wu, both Mrs. Gu's and my gifts are Old Master Wang's last work, Thousand Words Life. Please identify which one is a fake."

Gu Yao was uneasy and said in a low voice, "Lu Yan and Tang Ruge have joined forces to deal with us? Lu Yan must have already arranged for someone to verify the authenticity of the works. Even if Tang Ruge's calligraphy piece is fake, that expert won't tell the truth."

Mr. Wu glanced at the two works, then asked, "May I ask where you got this Thousand Words Life from?"

Qiao Xi's expression changed. This Thousand Words Life was left behind by her grandfather. She could not expose her grandfather's identity in front of everyone, so she could only say ambiguously, "I bought it from an antique shop."

Tang Ruge glanced meaningfully at Qiao Xi, then smiled and said, "This Thousand Words Life is a treasure collected by my father. He heard that I was coming to Li City to celebrate Old Madam Gu's birthday, so my father gave this to me."

From the looks of it, it seemed that the truth was already decided.

The Tang family was a family of porcelain and scholars. Tang Ruge's father was even a famous collector. How could he have collected a fake? Moreover, this was a birthday gift for Old Madam Gu. How could they dare to make a mistake?

On the other hand, Qiao Xi only said that she bought it from somewhere else. Without the help of professionals, the possibility of buying a fake was extremely high.

Tang Ruge said gently, "I'll have to trouble you to do an appraisal test, Mr. Wu. Maybe Mrs. Gu's calligraphy work is real. Don't malign her."

Although she said that, Tang Ruge was very sure that her piece was the real deal. How could something from her father's collection be fake?

After she said that, not only did everyone think that Qiao Xi was giving a fake work as a gift, but it also made everyone think that Tang Ruge was kind-hearted. She was unwilling to make things difficult for Qiao Xi.

Qiao Xi slowly raised her eyes. "Appraise it."

Everyone looked at her in disbelief. She was really willing to appraise it? If she left with the calligraphy piece now, no one would say anything. After all, this was a matter concerning the Gu family, but she insisted on doing this in public. If that happened, she would be the one losing her reputation.

Tang Ruge said indifferently, "Since Qiao Xi has said so, I'll have to trouble you, Mr. Wu."

As soon as she finished speaking, Mr. Wu instructed his assistant to place the two sets of works on the table. He took out a magnifying glass from his tool bag and began to appraise them seriously.

Qiao Xi glanced indifferently at Lu Yan and sneered. "Young Master Lu, do you have a new ally?"

Lu Yan smiled at her. "I really don't understand what you're saying, Miss Qiao. However, I can tell you the answer to this appraisal in advance. No matter whose calligraphy piece is fake, the final result will be detrimental to you. Tang Ruge's reputation in the calligraphy industry far exceeds yours. Who do you think everyone will believe more?"

Qiao Xi's expression was calm.

Then, Lu Yan took a few steps closer, his eyes filled with gentleness. "But if you agree to my pursuit, I can help you. I definitely won't let you lose your reputation in front of everyone."

When Gu Zheng heard this, his eyes instantly turned cold.

Qiao Xi slowly raised her eyes. "Young Master Lu, you're really heartless. You can betray your own allies just because you want to, but I've never liked relying on others. I prefer to have my fate in my hands. Without your help, I can still turn the tables."

In the art circle, her reputation was indeed not as good as Tang Ruge's, but this calligraphy piece was the last work of Mr. Wang. Had Tang Ruge never thought that Mr. Wang was related to the Wang family, a wealthy family in Li City?

At this moment, Mr. Wu had already put down the tools in his hand. He stood up and said seriously, "Everyone, after my careful appraisal, I'm sure that Mrs. Gu's Thousand Words Life is a fake!"

Everyone sighed.

The banquet hall was in an uproar now. Everyone started discussing. "Mrs. Gu really gave a fake as a gift!"

Chapter 702: A War Without Smoke

"I heard that Old Madam Gu dotes on President Gu the most. Today is Old Madam Gu's birthday, yet Mrs. Gu actually gave him a fake. This is too perfunctory! She's indeed a girl who grew up in the countryside. She's just not presentable!"

“You can’t say that. Mrs. Gu doesn’t look like she lacks money. She must have been deceived. You can’t blame her for this!”

“How can we not blame her? If she really wanted to give a gift, she could’ve gotten a professional to appraise it. After confirming that it’s the real thing, she could give it to Old Madam Gu with peace of mind. She was negligent.”

Everyone looked at Qiao Xi with disdain. How was such a woman worthy of being the mistress of the Gu family?

Tang Ruge slowly walked in front of Qiao Xi and said gently, “I’m really sorry, Xi Xi. I didn’t expect us to give the same calligraphy piece. This isn’t your fault. The calligraphy and painting market is filled with good and bad people, so it’s not surprising that you ended up buying a fake.”

Although it was not Qiao Xi’s intention to give a fake, as the granddaughter-in-law of the old madam, it was her fault for being so careless.

“I’ve attended so many birthday parties, but this is the first time I’ve seen a fake!”

“That’s right! Miss Tang is so thoughtful. She rushed over from the capital and even gave her family’s treasured calligraphy to old madam. However, Mrs. Gu, her granddaughter-in-law, is inferior to an outsider! In my opinion, only a noble daughter like Miss Tang is worthy to be the mistress of the Gu family.”

Gu Zheng glanced at them coldly, and everyone immediately shut their mouths. Instantly, the banquet hall was silent.

Tang Ruge lowered her eyes and smiled proudly. Then, she walked in front of Qiao Xi and comforted her softly. “Xi Xi, don’t be sad. It’s not your fault that you don’t know much about calligraphy. Apologize to the old madam later. She’s so tolerant and magnanimous, so she naturally won’t blame you. We—”

Before she could finish, Qiao Xi interrupted her coldly. “Miss Tang, I have a question that I want you to answer for me. Your Tang and Gu families haven’t been in contact for many years. Why did you rush over from the capital to celebrate the old madam’s birthday?”

Tang Ruge’s expression did not change as she replied gently, “It was Young Master Lu Yan who told me that the old madam’s birthday was coming up. Although the Tang and Gu families have not been in contact all these years, we’ve always been thinking about the Gu family. After knowing about this, my father immediately instructed me to prepare a birthday gift for her and rush to Li City. He was afraid that I would miss the old madam’s birthday. Moreover, it was Young Master Lu Yan who told me that the old madam likes this calligraphy piece.”

Qiao Xi raised her eyebrows. “So, that’s how it is! In that case, Young Master Lu must have also seen this calligraphy piece before? Are you also sure that Miss Tang’s calligraphy piece is the real deal?”

Tang Ruge was a little uneasy, but she still said indifferently, “Of course, Mrs. Gu. Mr. Wu has appraised it. If you don’t believe his judgment, we can look for other experts, but I don’t understand what this has to do with Young Master Lu Yan.”

Qiao Xi's eyes were deep. On the surface, it seemed that she and Tang Ruge had given the same birthday gift, but she had given a fake. Tang Ruge rushed over from the capital to deliver the real one, so Qiao Xi's reputation would naturally plummet. However, in reality, this matter was not just a battle between her and Tang Ruge but also a war between Gu Zheng and Lu Yan.

Tang Ruge was a guest invited by Lu Yan. She had prepared Old Master Wang's calligraphy piece titled Thousand Words Life, while Qiao Xi represented Gu Zheng and had given a fake. This would implicate Gu Zheng's reputation. At that time, outsiders would say that Gu Zheng was not sincere toward the old madam at all. On the other hand, Lu Yan, the child who did not grow up by the old madam's side, was very filial.

It did not matter if she lost her dignity, but she could not implicate Gu Zheng, much less let Gu Zheng lose to this despicable Lu Yan.

Qiao Xi smiled meaningfully. "Young Master Lu, you're really filial! You actually took the initiative to contact Miss Tang and asked her to attend Grandma's birthday banquet. Miss Tang rushed over from the capital and even gave the old madam Thousand Words Life. In order to obtain Grandma's love, you're really considerate in your actions!"

Lu Yan's eyes burned. "What exactly do you want to say, Miss Qiao?"

Qiao Xi chuckled. "Young Master Lu, you can interpret my words any way you want. It's not important to me."

At this moment, footsteps came from outside. Lu Yan realized that something was wrong and immediately shot Mr. Wu a look. Mr. Wu immediately put away the two pieces of calligraphy and explained, "Looks like Old Madam Gu is here. Quickly put away this fake, lest she gets unhappy!"

The door of the banquet hall slowly opened. The dignified Old Madam Gu walked in with a couple and a young woman.

Chapter 703: I Believe My Eyes More

The guests quickly recognized that the couple was the head of the Li family and Madam Li. The young woman beside them was the daughter of the Li family, Li Xing'er.

Tang Ruge looked at Old Madam Gu uneasily. Didn't they say that Old Madam Gu was not in good health? Why did she look fine?

Mr. Wu had already put away the two pieces of calligraphy. Only then did Lu Yan go forward with relief. "Grandma."

Old Madam Gu did not even bother to look at him. She waved warmly at Gu Zheng and Qiao Xi. "Gu Zheng, Xi Xi, come to my side."

Lu Yan's expression froze, but it quickly returned to normal.

Everyone was defending him. "What's the point of Old Madam Gu doting on her grandson and granddaughter-in-law? The granddaughter-in-law actually gave her a fake at this important birthday banquet. On the other hand, Young Master Lu put in a lot of effort, but Old Madam Gu doesn't take him seriously."

“The gift was given by Mrs. Gu, but President Gu must have seen it before he left. He must have casually taken out a piece of calligraphy from the storeroom and didn’t put in any sincere thoughts. To be honest, President Gu isn’t as filial as Young Master Lu.”

Old Madam Gu had just sat down when she heard everyone’s gossip. She frowned unhappily. “Since you want to talk, speak louder. Why are you muttering?!”

No one dared to make a sound, but Tang Lingyun mustered up her courage and said, “Old Madam Gu, we heard that you like Old Master Wang’s work. Hence, my sister gave you Thousand Words Life as a gift.”

Old Madam Gu was expressionless as she nodded slightly. “Mhm, you’ve spent a lot of money.”

Tang Lingyun saw that Old Madam Gu was so cold. She did not even like the calligraphy work that her sister gave her. Instead, she was full of smiles when she saw Qiao Xi, the person who gave her a fake. She was instantly infuriated and could not help but say, “Old Madam Gu, Mrs. Gu also gave you Thousand Words Life!”

The moment that was said, the old madam’s eyes suddenly turned cold. “So?”

Tang Lingyun was so scared that her entire body trembled, but she still mustered up her courage and said, “Mrs. Gu and my sister gave you the same piece. Mr. Wu has already appraised both works and confirmed that Mrs. Gu’s piece is a fake. She actually gave a fake to you on your birthday. She’s too disrespectful!”

After hearing this, Old Madam Gu’s expression remained calm without any change. After a moment of silence, she suddenly smiled, making everyone present surprised.

Lu Yan swept his gaze over Gu Zheng and the others. He could not help but frown. Gu Zheng had always been calm and composed. Even if a mountain were to collapse in front of him, his expression would not change. However, Gu Yao was someone who could not hide his emotions. If he knew that Qiao Xi had been wronged, he would definitely not be able to help but defend her. However, at this moment, Gu Yao was sitting on a chair and leisurely drinking tea as if it had nothing to do with him.

Knowing that Qiao Xi had been wronged, how could Gu Yao not be anxious? Could it be that they had evidence to prove that the calligraphy piece in Qiao Xi’s hand was the real one?

This was impossible!

He had long investigated and found out that there was only one calligraphy expert attending the birthday banquet this time. It was Mr. Wu. The others would naturally not be able to convince the masses unless Mr. Wang crawled out of his grave!

Mr. Wang?

Lu Yan suddenly thought of something, and his gaze landed on the Li couple. If he remembered correctly, Madam Li was the daughter of the Wang family. Just now, the couple had accompanied the old madam into the banquet hall.

At this moment, Old Madam Gu instructed, “Go, bring two pieces of Thousand Words Life over!”

Tang Ruge felt guilty and hurriedly said, "Old Madam, Mr. Wu has already appraised those two works. There's no need to trouble him anymore. After all, he—"

"Why? Do I need your permission to do things?" Old Madam Gu glanced at her sharply, scaring Tang Ruge so much that she lowered her head.

Old Master Gu was muddle-headed. He only knew how to eat, drink, and play. Whether it was the family or the company, everything was managed by Old Madam Gu. Hence, she was a supreme existence in the family. Even though she was sick now, no one could shake her status.

The guest hurriedly explained, "Old Madam, Miss Tang is a socialite from the capital. How could she have given a fake? The Tang family would never dare to offend you like this!"

Old Madam Gu's expression was serious. "Compared to Miss Tang, I trust my eyes more. Madam Li, please explain to everyone."

Everyone had puzzled expressions. Li Xing'er, who was in the crowd, shot Qiao Xi a look before revealing a crafty smile.

Madam Li was Li Xing'er's mother. She had a gentle temper and was elegant and noble. She was a very gentle elder. She slowly walked forward, and her gaze landed on Tang Ruge. "Miss Tang, do you think your Thousand Words Life is authentic?"

Chapter 704: She Said It Was Real, Who Dares To Refute?

Although Madam Li's tone was gentle, Tang Ruge could not help but start to feel nervous under her cold gaze. "Yes... Yes."

Madam Li smiled. "Back then, after Mrs. Gu bought this calligraphy piece, she went straight to the Li family's residence to give it to me. However, I didn't accept it. Do you know why Mrs. Gu gave it to me?"

Gu Zheng looked at the indifferent Qiao Xi beside him. She must have arranged for the Li family to come at this time. She knew that Lu Yan would definitely make things difficult for them at the birthday banquet, so she made preparations in advance.

She really loved Gu Zheng. She knew that he was asleep, so she did her best to protect his reputation.

At this moment, everyone was puzzled. Why would Qiao Xi give this calligraphy piece to Madam Li? What did this have to do with Madam Li?

"The calligrapher of Thousand Words Life is Mr. Wang Qingming, my grandfather!" Madam Li's voice suddenly rose. "Miss Qiao and Xing'er are good friends. After buying this calligraphy piece, she decided to return it to the Wang family. However, Miss Qiao didn't know that this calligraphy piece was donated by Grandpa back then. Who gets their hands on it is naturally all up to fate. Our Wang family can't accept it back.

"Back then, when Grandpa wrote these 1,000 words, I was standing beside him. I was young and naughty at that time, so I accidentally left a small ink spot on the paper. Grandpa said that even though it's incomplete, it's still a kind of beauty. Coincidentally, there's an ink spot on Mrs. Gu's calligraphy piece. Everyone in the Wang family has seen this calligraphy piece and is sure that Mrs. Gu's calligraphy piece is the real deal! How did it become a fake after being appraised by Mr. Wu?"

Mr. Wu's body trembled. It was true that he was an expert in calligraphy and paintings, but he had never seen Wang Qingming's real work. He was just making things up. Now that the Wang family had come forward to say that Qiao Xi's piece was real, how could he retort?

Everyone's expression changed drastically. What Madam Li meant was that either Miss Tang's calligraphy piece was fake to begin with, or the calligraphy piece in her hands was stolen from Mrs. Gu! In any case, Tang Ruge would lose all her dignity.

Tang Ruge clenched her fists so tightly that her fingernails dug into her palms. What should she do? If news of this got out, the good reputation she had built for herself would be ruined in an instant.

Madam Li looked at Mr. Wu and said indifferently, "I heard that you're a famous calligraphy expert, but you can't even tell if something is real or fake. It seems that you still need to improve your ability to differentiate between real and fake. Otherwise, wouldn't you be misleading others?"

"I... I was wrong." Mr. Wu's beard trembled. At this moment, he regretted his actions. He should not have agreed to help Tang Ruge for a sum of money. He was afraid that he would not be able to survive in the calligraphy industry anymore.

At this moment, Old Madam Gu suddenly said, "Lu Yan."

Lu Yan's eyes were filled with viciousness. When he heard the old madam call out to him, he immediately squeezed out a smile and said respectfully, "Grandma."

Old Madam Gu said coldly, "You're a filial child. In order to make me happy, you even specially invited Miss Tang over. Although I'm old, I can see some things very clearly. I can tell who's sincere and who's not."

These words were a slap to Lu Yan's face in public. Everyone suddenly reacted. How could there be such a coincidence in the world? Qiao Xi wanted to give the old madam Thousand Words Life, and Tang Ruge wanted to give it to her as well. Tang Ruge must have known about the news in advance and bought a fake. She then bribed Mr. Wu to deliberately embarrass Qiao Xi at the banquet.

Everyone knew very well that Lu Yan and Gu Zheng were not on good terms. He wanted to use the birthday banquet to ruin Gu Zheng's reputation and use this opportunity to obtain the old madam's favor.

At this moment, everyone from the Lu family was livid. Huang Lilan, who was at the side, also gritted her teeth and looked at Gu Zheng with resentment. If she had known that Gu Zheng would be so difficult to deal with, she would have steeled her heart and killed this little bastard back then!

The birthday banquet officially began, and no one mentioned the fake. However, everyone hurriedly distanced themselves from Tang Ruge and Lu Yan, afraid that they would be dragged down by the two.

Tang Ruge's face darkened, and her eyes were filled with unwillingness. She had seen Gu Zheng when she was young. At that time, Gu Zheng was just an abandoned child who was locked in Maple Garden. Who knew that he would become the head of the Gu family and a famous rich businessman?

If she had taken the initiative to approach Gu Zheng back then, perhaps the woman standing beside him now would be her!

Tang Ruge suppressed the anger in her heart. She had to explain things to Gu Zheng now. Otherwise, Gu Zheng would misunderstand and think that she was Lu Yan's woman.

Chapter 705: Let Her Have A Taste Of Losing

Tang Ruge was a smart person. She knew that Lu Yan could not win against Gu Zheng. If she became Gu Zheng's enemy, the entire Tang family would be implicated.

After pondering for a moment, Tang Ruge walked over to Qiao Xi with a glass of wine in her hand. "Xi Xi, I'm sorry. I apologize. I didn't know that the calligraphy piece was fake.

"I didn't expect my father to make such a mistake. I accidentally misunderstood you. Xi Xi, can you forgive me?"

Tang Lingyun said arrogantly, "As the mistress of the Gu family, you won't mind such a small matter, right?"

Qiao Xi was annoyed in her heart. Were these two idiots done? She was already showing them enough respect by not looking for them to settle the score. However, they still dared to come look for trouble?

She was about to speak when Gu Zheng slowly walked over. "Miss Tang."

Tang Ruge smiled. She was neither obsequious nor distant. Instead, she smiled appropriately. "President Gu."

Gu Zheng smirked. "Miss Tang, has anyone ever said that you're ugly?"

Gu Yao: "???" 'Brother, are you so straightforward now?' Although he also thought that Miss Tang was not good-looking, it was too much of a slap to her face to say it out loud. He was not showing her any respect at all!

The corners of Qiao Xi's mouth twitched slightly. She had almost forgotten that this Gu Zheng in front of her was the secondary personality. It was his nature to be arrogant and vicious.

Although Gu Zheng had little experience, he was not stupid. The Tang family was a porcelain family, while the head of the Tang family was a famous collector. How could he have collected a fake? Tang Ruge clearly knew that her calligraphy piece was a fake, but she pretended not to know. After the matter was exposed, she said that she was deceived and claimed to also be a victim. Did she really think everyone was stupid?

Seeing Tang Ruge's face, Gu Zheng felt annoyed and said, "Miss Tang, it's not your fault that you're ugly, but it's your fault for coming out to scare others."

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The smile on Tang Ruge's face froze abruptly, and the corners of her mouth twitched. She wanted to flare up, but she did not dare to. She forced a smile. Her crying and smiling expressions were indeed extremely ugly. After a long time, she finally controlled the expression on her face and regained her composure.

“Mrs. Gu, this is my fault. It’s natural for you not to forgive me. I’ll give you an apology gift. I hope you can accept it,” Tang Ruge said.

Gu Yao snorted. “Let’s talk about Eternal Winter Snow first! You haven’t even given it yet but you still have the cheek to say such words!”

Tang Ruge’s face was livid. She was born into a noble family and was admired by everyone. She was the most dazzling existence among the noble daughters. When had she ever been humiliated like this?

She was silent for a moment before leaving with red eyes.

Gu Yao suddenly frowned. “Gu Zheng, don’t you have a bad feeling? Why did Lu Yan leave just like that? I find it strange that he didn’t cause any trouble! My mother and Lu Yan are both unscrupulous people who will do anything to achieve their goals. How can they just let this matter go?!”

“Could it be that there’s something else going on?! You guys have already shown your faces at the birthday banquet. You and Qiao Xi should tell Grandma that you’ll be leaving now!”

Gu Zheng’s expression was indifferent. “We can’t leave. Otherwise, we’ll be blamed for not being devoted to the family.”

“Lu Yan is full of bad ideas! I don’t know what he’s thinking! He definitely won’t let this go! He’ll find a chance to deal with you!” Gu Yao’s dark eyes were filled with worry.

“Gu Yao, don’t worry. Here, eat.” Qiao Xi picked up some food for Gu Yao with the chopsticks, then asked with a smile, “Do you think Huang Lilan cares a lot about her position as Madam Gu?”

Gu Yao slammed the table and said firmly, “Of course! If she didn’t care, would she be so shameless as to become a mistress? Although she’s my mother, I still have to say that she’s really shameless!”

With that, Gu Yao’s eyes were filled with loneliness. “Qiao Xi, I’m actually quite conflicted. I know that she’s in the wrong, but she’s my mother, after all. She’s the person who gave birth to me. Sometimes, I even wish that I was a child who was adopted by the Gu family. That way, I won’t be her son anymore, and I won’t be stuck between the two sides.

“In order to get to the top, she did many wrong things and caused Eldest Miss Lu’s death. She used Gu Zheng to get to this position. Actually, she doesn’t love me either. She doesn’t treat me as her son at all. She just treats me as a tool to consolidate her position.”

Qiao Xi patted his hand with heartache, then smiled meaningfully. “Since she cares, then let’s make her have a taste of losing.”

Chapter 706: It’s Hereditary

In the end, Qiao Xi did not tell Gu Yao about her plan. It was not because she was afraid that Gu Yao would leak the secret but because Huang Lilan was Gu Yao’s biological mother. They were connected by blood. If he knew Huang Lilan’s outcome, he would definitely be sad.

The banquet lasted for half an hour. Gu Weiming started giving toasts to everyone. Finally, he walked to Gu Zheng’s side. Everyone’s eyes were on the father and son.

Gu Weiming glanced coldly at Qiao Xi, then said, "Ah Zheng, with your current identity, how can you not have anyone to serve you?"

Gu Zheng did not even raise his head as if Gu Weiming was an invisible person. Gu Weiming's expression was cold, and his voice was filled with determination. He instructed the servants beside him, "Call her over."

As soon as she finished speaking, Huang Lilan walked out with the pitiful Shen Ying. Shen Ying's face was filled with shyness and fear, like a frightened bird.

Lu Yan smiled proudly. The next scene would definitely be very exciting.

Old Madam Gu glanced over and did not say anything. In her opinion, Gu Zheng was completely capable of dealing with these people. If she made a move, it would make everyone think that Gu Zheng relied on her love to survive in the family.

At this moment, Gu Yao could not take it anymore and said with disgust, "Who asked you to come?!"

Shen Ying looked at Gu Zheng timidly, her body trembling. "President Gu..."

"Ah Zheng," Gu Weiming said coldly. "Miss Shen is your mother's relative and the only daughter of the Shen family. She can be considered a noble daughter. She's not a woman you can toy with as you please. Since you've touched her, you have to be responsible for her!"

"You were naughty and mischievous in the past. I won't bicker with you, but you're already the head of the Gu family now. You can't abandon her. Not only is it for your own reputation, but it's also for the sake of the Gu family."

Gu Zheng said casually, "It's hereditary."

What Gu Zheng meant was that Gu Weiming was a man who abandoned his wife after fooling around. Everything Gu Zheng did was because he inherited these traits from his father. Gu Weiming could not even be loyal, so what right did he have to ask his son to be loyal?

When Gu Weiming heard this, he was instantly infuriated. Huang Lilan hurriedly went forward and advised gently, "Ah Zheng, we're all doing this for your own good. You secretly got married behind our backs, so we don't blame you anymore. However, Miss Shen is willing to give up her status to stay by your side. How could you bear to refuse?"

The banquet hall instantly fell silent. The guests looked at the Gu family with interest.

Qiao Xi raised her eyebrows. "Miss Shen, you're willing to give up your status to stay by Ah Zheng's side?"

"Yes!" Huang Lilan replied without hesitation, then looked at Qiao Xi with a vicious expression. "Shen Ying is the daughter of the Shen family. She's worthy of Ah Zheng's identity. Moreover, she really likes Ah Zheng and can give up her dignity for him. You're just doing this for money and power. You only want the position of Mrs. Gu! You're not worthy to be the mistress of the Gu family at all!"

Qiao Xi nodded and said with a smile, "But I'm already married to Gu Zheng, yet you still want to push Miss Shen into the picture. Madam Gu, just because you're a successful mistress, you wish for Miss Shen to follow in your footsteps?"

The atmosphere instantly became awkward. Everyone looked at each other and pondered over Qiao Xi's words. They could not help but sigh. She was right!

Everyone called Huang Lilan 'Madam Gu', but they knew that she and Gu Weiming were not married at all. Back then, she was a mistress and accused Lu Qingyun of marrying Gu Weiming for money. She claimed to truly love Gu Weiming.

Time had passed, yet she still used the same excuse to ruin Gu Zheng's marriage. She was really a mistress. After she rose to her current position, she began to help others using the same method.

Huang Lilan was angered to the point of gnashing her teeth and roaring. "Qiao Xi! You wild girl! How dare you speak to your mother-in-law like this? You're really rude! You have no upbringing!"

Qiao Xi's expression was indifferent. "Madam Gu, remember what you said. You have to keep your word!"

'I really love Weiming. I'm not with him for money or fame. I just like him. As long as I can be with him, I'd rather not have a status.'

Back then, Lu Qingyun and Weiming's marriage was a business marriage. She did it for benefits. She did not love Weiming at all. Such a marriage was unfair to Weiming!

Because of Huang Lilan's words back then, she seduced Gu Weiming and successfully rose to power. However, it was also because of this that she had never married Gu Weiming. She did not dare to rush him either because if she took the initiative to mention this matter, everything she said back then would become a lie.

Chapter 707: If You Like Someone, You Have To Take The Initiative

Huang Lilan glared at Qiao Xi with resentment, then looked at Gu Zheng. "Ah Zheng, just listen to me this once! Shen Ying is both obedient and filial. If you're busy with work in the future and don't have time to visit me, you can even get Shen Ying to come visit me in the Gu family's old residence. Qiao Xi doesn't even come once every few months."

Shen Ying looked up at Gu Zheng in horror. The scene of Gu Zheng threatening her with a gun appeared in her mind. She knew that if she did not do as Gu Zheng instructed, she would definitely die a miserable death.

Her lips trembled as she said, "Aunt Lan, I'm willing to give up on having a status. As long as I'm with President Gu, everything else doesn't matter..."

"You're really obedient. It's really Gu Zheng's blessing to have such a woman like you! Shen Ying, I really like you. If you like someone, you have to take the initiative to fight for them!"

Gu Yao thought to himself, 'Yes! You're right. If you like someone, you have to take the initiative to fight for them. Even if the couple is married, you can still be a mistress. You can even give up your status! No wonder you like Shen Ying, Mom. Both of you are mistresses who destroy other people's families!'

Huang Lilan held Shen Ying's hand and walked in front. "Shen Ying, come to Ah Zheng's side."

Shen Ying obediently walked forward. According to Huang Lilan's original plan, Shen Ying would drug Gu Zheng when she clinked glasses with him. In reality, she had poured four glasses of wine and drugged one of them. She took a glass of wine and handed it to Huang Lilan.

Then, she picked up a glass of wine and walked in front of Gu Zheng. She said sweetly, "President Gu, can I have a toast with you? It's okay if you don't like me. After drinking this glass of wine, I won't disturb you anymore."

Gu Zheng took the glass of wine and said, "Alright."

Shen Ying picked up the last glass of wine and walked to Gu Weiming's side. Her wrist trembled slightly as she bit her lip. "Uncle... Gu, this glass of wine... is for you."

The last glass of wine was drugged. Huang Lilan and Gu Weiming did not have their guard up against Shen Ying. They thought that it was just a formality, but who would have thought that she had drugged Gu Weiming's wine?

At this moment, Gu Zheng had finished the wine in one gulp. "Xi Xi, you must be tired too. You can inform Grandma that you'll be going upstairs to rest."

Huang Lilan was surprised and delighted. Gu Zheng accepting Shen Ying's wine meant that he did not hate Shen Ying. When he had a taste of Shen Ying, he would know how boring Qiao Xi was. He would naturally fall in love with her.

Shen Ying was a woman she had personally taught. As long as Gu Zheng had a taste of this ecstasy, he would definitely not be able to let go of Shen Ying. The position of Mrs. Gu would belong to Shen Ying sooner or later.

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Seeing that their goal had been achieved, everyone left one after another. When Gu Weiming left, he kept feeling a burning sensation in his body. He thought that he was drunk and did not think too much about it.

At this moment, Shen Ying slowly walked forward and asked in a low voice, "Aunt Lan, where's President Gu's room? We—"

Huang Lilan smiled meaningfully. "I've already arranged it for you. I've also instructed the servants not to disturb you. You must do your best to serve him well. Tomorrow morning, I'll bring everyone there so they can see you two sleeping together. He has to admit it in front of everyone. When the time comes, he'll be forced to keep you by his side!"

Shen Ying was put in a difficult position. "But... I'm still a little afraid."

"What's there to be afraid of? Once he has slept with you, he won't be able to reject you. When Qiao Xi finds out about this, she'll definitely not let the matter rest. She'll quarrel with Gu Zheng. At that time, you'll take advantage of the situation and the position of Mrs. Gu will be yours."

Gu Zheng stood in the corner and looked over with his cold eyes. Shen Ying met his eyes that were filled with killing intent and instantly shuddered. If she did not do as Gu Zheng said, she would definitely not live past tomorrow.

Shen Ying took a deep breath and said helplessly, "Alright! Aunt Lan, I'll do as you say. I'll succeed this time. I'll make him marry me!"

Huang Lilan was all smiles. She did not know that the 'he' Shen Ying was talking about was not Gu Zheng but Gu Weiming.

When night fell, the guests all returned to the Gu family's guest rooms to rest. Gu Weiming also returned to the main residence while drunk. Huang Lilan was still playing cards with her friends, so she naturally did not care about him.

Gu Weiming felt hot all over and was anxious to return to his room. After going up to the second floor, he opened his red eyes and looked at the sign on the door. He pushed the door open and entered without hesitation, but he did not realize that the sign on the door had already been changed.

Chapter 708: Personalities Fusing Together

Gu Weiming entered the bedroom and had just taken off his jacket to take a shower when a pair of weak arms hugged his waist from behind.

An hour ago, Shen Ying sat on the bed nervously and looked at the cold man in front of her. "President Gu, I've already drugged him according to your instructions."

Gu Zheng sat on the sofa, playing with a sharp dagger in his hand. He asked casually, "Huang Lilan will bring people here tomorrow morning to catch you in the act?"

Shen Ying said while trembling, "That's what Aunt Lan said. She said that she'll bring many guests over tomorrow morning on the pretext of visiting the villa. Then, she'll push open the room door and let everyone see us—"

"Heh! It's been so many years, but Huang Lilan hasn't gotten smarter at all!"

Gu Zheng's face was filled with mockery. Then, his sharp gaze landed on Shen Ying. "I'll give you one last chance. After this mission is completed, I'll let you off. Otherwise..."

As soon as he finished speaking, the dagger in his hand suddenly flew out and pierced into the wall, scaring Shen Ying so much that her entire body trembled. "President Gu, don't worry. I'll complete the mission!"

Gu Zheng walked to the wall, pulled out his dagger, and left in satisfaction.

He was very curious. What would Huang Lilan's expression be when she found out that Shen Ying, whom she had painstakingly nurtured, had slept with Gu Weiming? She would definitely be very angry!

After Gu Zheng left, he returned to Maple Garden and slept well with Qiao Xi.

The next morning, the first thing Qiao Xi did when she opened her eyes was to turn on her phone to check the surveillance footage. Song Shiyu had installed a pinhole camera in the room so that Qiao Xi could see what was going on in the bedroom.

At this moment, the floor of the bedroom was filled with clothes and torn fabrics. A couple was lying on the wide bed. It was Shen Ying and Gu Weiming. Although the two of them were covered by the blanket, it was obvious that their bodies were naked under the blanket.

Qiao Xi curled her lips. She did not expect Gu Weiming to be so strong even though he was old. He was quite capable even at his age! How anxious was he? Even before taking off his own clothes, he tore her dress apart.

“You’re not allowed to look.”

The man behind her hugged her waist and covered her eyes. Gu Zheng glanced at the couple on the screen and frowned in disgust. “It’ll dirty your eyes.”

Qiao Xi raised her eyes to look at the man in front of her. She saw that his eyes were red, and he seemed to be very tired. She asked with heartache, “You didn’t sleep well last night?”

The man closed his eyes tiredly. “I didn’t sleep last night. This way, he’ll wake up in the day. I want him to see Huang Lilan’s angry face.”

Qiao Xi’s heart trembled as she looked at the man in front of her with heartache. No matter which personality of Gu Zheng it was, he was still so alluring.

“Don’t adore me. This body is his to begin with. I’m already satisfied that I got to occupy it for so long,” he said indifferently. Then, the corners of his mouth curled up. “Record the scene for me. I’ll be able to see it when I wake up.”

“Gu Zheng!” Qiao Xi looked at the man in front of her, feeling a wave of bitterness and pain in her heart. She suddenly felt a lump in her throat. “Will you...”

‘Will you disappear?’

Before she could ask this question, Gu Zheng entered the cloakroom. When he came out again, he was already dressed and looking at her gently.

Qiao Xi knew that her senior was back. Actually, the difference between the two of them was not big. Their characters and behavior were very similar. Only Qiao Xi was able to clearly sense the difference between the two of them.

Was it just as her teacher had said? The two personalities were gradually fusing together, and there was no distinction between them. This meant that the secondary personality was about to disappear.

After Gu Zheng came out, the first thing he did was turn off the image on Qiao Xi’s phone and frowned. “You’re not allowed to look. It’ll dirty your eyes.”

Qiao Xi: “...” Alright! The words these two spoke were exactly the same!

Seeing that Gu Zheng was done packing, Qiao Xi hurriedly got up to dress up, but she was pulled into Gu Zheng's embrace. His low voice sounded in her ears. "Mrs. Gu, it's still early. Wait in the room first. We'll go later."

Qiao Xi's face was filled with doubt as she said unwillingly, "Why?! How can I not be there at such an exciting moment?! I also want to see Huang Lilan's devastated expression!"

Actually, Qiao Xi knew that Gu Zheng did not want her to see that filthy scene, nor did he want her to see Huang Lilan go crazy. However, Qiao Xi really wanted to see Huang Lilan's expression. When she found out that the person she had been nurturing had slept with her husband, she would certainly be shocked and angry.

Chapter 709: I'm Not That Childish

Qiao Xi hugged Gu Zheng's waist and said sweetly, "Ah Zheng~ I want to go!"

Gu Zheng was silent for a moment before smiling. "You have to pay a price if you want to go. If you beg me, I'll bring you there!"

Qiao Xi frowned. She had already acted cute just now, yet this bastard still wanted to make things difficult for her. He was really too much, so she directly grunted coldly. "I'm not going!"

'When you leave, I'll go myself!'

When Gu Zheng heard Qiao Xi's heartfelt thoughts, he could not help but laugh out loud. He gently stroked her hair. "Mrs. Gu, we're the main characters in today's scene. How can we appear so easily? We have to wait for the matter to blow up before we go.

"I originally wanted to wait until nine, but since you don't want to go, then forget it. Have a good rest. I'll get going first."

When Qiao Xi heard this, she hurriedly grabbed his hand and looked at him obsequiously. "I'll go, I'll go!"

Gu Zheng looked at her affectionately. Then, he took out a black box from the drawer and took out a pinhole camera. He placed it on the button of his suit.

Qiao Xi looked at him with a puzzled expression. "What are you doing?"

Gu Zheng frowned. "He asked you to record Huang Lilan's collapse, didn't he? He wants to watch it after he wakes up, so I'll record it."

Qiao Xi widened her eyes. "How did you know?"

Gu Zheng's hands froze. How could he admit that he had the same thought? He wanted to record it and watch it whenever he was in a bad mood.

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After a moment of silence, Gu Zheng replied casually, "I know him."

“In order to give me this opportunity, he didn’t sleep the entire night. He won’t be able to see such an exciting scene, so he definitely asked you to record it. However, I’m not that childish. I don’t care about such boring things.”

The entire bedroom fell silent.

The corners of Qiao Xi’s mouth twitched. ‘Don’t you blush when you lie? Don’t think I don’t know that the two of you have similar personalities. Everything he does is what you truly think.’

Nine a.m.

Huang Lilan brought many guests to the front hall for breakfast before visiting the Gu family’s old residence.

“Madam Gu, the Gu family’s old residence has been built for so many years but it’s still so gorgeous. Your mood will definitely improve as long as you stay here.”

Huang Lilan smiled and said, “That’s right! I don’t usually have much to do. I just plant flowers and drink tea. Fortunately, Shen Ying spends time with me, so I’m not that bored.”

Everyone knew that Huang Lilan did not like Qiao Xi and wanted to chase Qiao Xi out of the Gu family so that Shen Ying could take over Qiao Xi’s position. Everyone smiled tacitly.

“In my opinion, Qiao Xi is indeed inferior to Miss Shen. She grew up in the countryside, while Miss Shen is the daughter of the Shen family. She’s a noble daughter who has been living in luxury. Only someone like her is worthy of President Gu.”

Huang Lilan smiled and nodded, then she furrowed her brows. “But I don’t know how Ah Zheng was bewitched into marrying Qiao Xi behind our backs. If he really likes Qiao Xi, Shen Ying will definitely feel aggrieved by his side. I can’t bear to part with her either!”

Everyone agreed and praised Huang Lilan.

Seeing that it was about time, Huang Lilan said, “There’s nothing much to see in the courtyard. Why don’t we take a look inside the villa? Weiming likes to collect some antiques, so he can bring them out for everyone to admire.”

The guests had long heard that the Gu family had many treasures, but they never had the chance to see them. Now that Huang Lilan was taking the initiative to show them around, they naturally would not refuse.

Everyone walked toward the main residence. Qiao Xi looked at the group of people and said excitedly, “They’re going! They’re going! I’m looking forward to it!”

“Huang Lilan will push open the door to your room only to discover that there’s no one inside. Then, she’ll hear ambiguous voices coming from next door. She’ll think that you and Shen Ying are next door. When she pushes the door open, she’ll realize that it’s her husband! Hahaha...”

Gu Zheng lowered his eyes and pinched her cheek. “Mrs. Gu, it’s a pity that you don’t write novels with your creativity.”

Qiao Xi looked at him with a smile, then the smile on her face suddenly froze. She was slightly troubled. "But... what about Gu Yao?"

A trace of heartache flashed past Gu Zheng's eyes. "If it weren't for Gu Yao, Huang Lilan would have long been gone from this world. However, we won't have to be afraid of her anymore."

"Why?" Qiao Xi asked.

Gu Zheng's eyes were filled with coldness. "Perhaps you can sense that Huang Lilan doesn't like Gu Yao much either."

Chapter 710: Gu Yao's Identity

Qiao Xi looked up in surprise and asked tentatively, "Could it be that... Gu Yao isn't Huang Lilan's biological son?"

Logically speaking, Gu Yao and Lu Yan were both Huang Lilan's sons, but Huang Lilan had never thought of letting Gu Yao be the heir. Instead, she wanted Lu Yan to acknowledge his ancestors.

Gu Zheng nodded and said, "You're right. Back then, that doctor faked Gu Yao's DNA to prove that Gu Yao and Huang Lilan are mother and son."

"Qiao Xi, just you wait. Today's show has just begun."

Gu Zheng was a little afraid, though. If Huang Lilan could not take the repeated blows and died from anger, it would not be fun anymore!

Not only did he have to prove that he and Huang Lilan were not mother and son, but he also had to prove that Gu Yao and she were not mother and son either. Perhaps Huang Lilan would say that with Gu Zheng's current power and wealth, it would be easy for him to forge a DNA report. However, what if it was someone from the Medical Association?

At this moment, Qiao Xi's phone rang.

[Elders Miss, Elder Lin from the Medical Association has suddenly resigned. He said that 20 years ago, he forged a few DNA reports for remuneration and indirectly affected the lives of innocent people. He has sincerely repented and will no longer practice medicine. He'll spend the rest of his life atoning for his sins.]

Elder Lin?

Qiao Xi thought for a moment. She seemed to have never seen this person before...

20 years ago! Identification report? Could it be that this Elder Lin was the doctor who helped Huang Lilan forge the report back then? It was because of this evidence that Gu Zheng became Huang Lilan's son. Hence, even if Gu Zheng retorted, no one would believe him.

Who would have thought that the witness Gu Zheng had been looking for such a long time was actually from the Medical Association? The Medical Association was known for not being afraid of power and remained firm in the face of benefits!

Qiao Xi's eyes narrowed. Such a scumbag actually appeared in the Medical Association. It seemed that the Medical Association had to go through a reshuffling to avoid their reputation being ruined.

Today, not only did Huang Lilan have to bear the blow of her husband cheating on her, but the truth that had been buried for more than 20 years would also be dug out. Just Gu Zheng's and Gu Yao's identities alone could make Huang Lilan unable to turn the situation around.

Qiao Xi gritted her teeth. "Then Lu Yan..."

"There's no rush. We'll do it one by one. Huang Lilan is just the beginning. Everyone has to pay the price for what they've done in the past!" Gu Zheng's voice was extremely cold.

...

In the Gu family's residence.

Huang Lilan brought everyone upstairs. The room on the second floor was their bedroom. Gu Yao's and Gu Zheng's rooms were also on this floor, but Gu Zheng's room was just for decoration. He had never stayed in the main residence because he knew that Huang Lilan and Gu Weiming were next door. He felt disgusted.

Huang Lilan was extremely excited and could not suppress her excitement. "Most of the items are in the master bedroom, but some are also in Ah Zheng's room. Because he doesn't come back often, the room is big enough to store things."

"Don't worry, Ah Zheng didn't sleep here last night. Let's go in and take a look at the collection. He won't mind. Come in."

The guests did not think that anything was wrong and followed Huang Lilan to Gu Zheng's room.

Huang Lilan's lips curled into an evil smile. The moment she pushed the door open, Gu Zheng and Shen Ying would appear in front of everyone naked. In front of everyone, Gu Zheng would have no excuse to deny anything. He would have to be responsible for Shen Ying!

She turned the handle. Click. The door opened.

The room was very clean, but it was not as big as Huang Lilan had said. It was really shocking that someone like Gu Zheng was staying in such a simple room.

Huang Lilan looked over with a proud expression. The room was empty, and there were no traces of anyone sleeping on the bed. There were no wrinkles on the bedsheets or even any clothes. It was as clean as if no one stayed here.

Huang Lilan's expression froze. Where were the people in the room? Why were Gu Zheng and Shen Ying not around? She had planned this for so long and spent so much effort, but in the end, there was no one in the room! How was that possible?!

"Madam Gu! Where's the collection?"

Everyone looked at her in confusion. She said that they were here to look at the collection, but the room was empty. There was no collection at all!

Huang Lilan clenched her fists. The change in events made her unable to suppress the smile on her face, but she was afraid that others would see through her. She could only squeeze out a smile. "I remembered wrongly."

Suddenly, a woman's delicate voice came from next door. "It hurts!"

That lingering and coquettish voice made everyone's imagination run wild. Everyone lowered their heads awkwardly.