

Mr Han 821

Chapter 821: The Trap in the Contract

He was someone who behaved differently depending on who he's with. He was a sly person who stepped on the less powerful and sucked up to the powerful.

And because of that, he held his temper in and told himself it was for the sake of his students.

Dean He took a deep breath and swallowed his anger.

And the anger that appeared due to the assistant director, he could not throw at the students.

"This is the assistant director of *The Performer*, Xu Yaojie. Assistant Director Xu." Although Dean He had held back his anger because of the students, he still could not help but cause Xu Yaojie to feel disgusted.

The subordinates that Xu Yaojie had brought had called him "Director Xu." Obviously, Xu Yaojie really did not like the additional word, "assistant."

As expected, upon hearing Dean He's words, Xu Yaojie's face darkened.

Yang Ruitian hurriedly greeted, "Director Xu, hello."

Her mouth was quite sweet, knowing to get rid of the word "assistant."

Xu Yaojie's face now looked a lot better, and arrogantly, he told the people there, "Sit. Everyone, sit."

In his eyes, they were all just students. Even if they were a bit famous, they were still C-listers and could not even be considered to be in the B list.

He did not care much even about the famous celebrities. After all, he was a member of the production group of the show.

Everyone greeted Xu Yaojie.

Xu Yaojie had his assistant bring out the contract and handed it to them. "Take a look. If there's no problem, you can sign it."

Everyone just took a quick look, then passed it to their managers for them to take a look.

Hu Zhonghui had Lu Man make the decisions herself. Although she was called Lu Man's manager, Lu Man was still the one making decisions.

Lu Man looked at the first page of the contract. There was no problem.

But after she looked at the next page, she frowned and raised her head to ask Xu Yaojie, "The contract stipulates that everything in the show, in the end, would follow the explanation of the production group. The celebrities need to accommodate the needs of the production group in terms of the effects in the show."

"Is there a problem?" Xu Yaojie frowned, not liking a student who was so troublesome.

He knew about Lu Man who had filmed two movies, but to him, Lu Man was just that.

She did not have any other project, and she did not have a lot of opportunities to show her face. She was just someone who had recently entered the entertainment industry and was known because of one project.

If she did not take on more advertisements and promotions, she would be very quickly forgotten by people.

With that kind of fame level, she did not have the right to discuss conditions with their production group.

“I want to know, what does it mean to follow the explanation of the production group? Furthermore, the effects in the show, what are the limits of that?” Lu Man asked.

The other people were all stunned. They had all been planning on signing when they heard Lu Man’s words and stopped.

That was true. This part was a bit unclear.

Xu Yaojie frowned and said, “At the root of it, our show is one meant to entertain, and it places entertainment as its main priority, with the final goal of attracting the audience’s eyes. Since it’s a variety show, there must be effects in the show. Is that hard to understand?”

“It’s not hard to understand.” Lu Man nodded.

Xu Yaojie sneered, feeling like Lu Man was finding trouble for nothing. “If it’s not hard to understand, then sign. After I go back, I have to continue preparing for filming.”

“It’s not hard to understand, so I need to understand the limits. The effects of the show, what range does it have? The contract said ‘effects in the show,’ but what kind of details that include, the contract is not clear about it,” Lu Man said.

“The contract talks about the effects of the show. Does it include the actors pretending not to get along?”

“Does it include the celebrities having to act in the role that the production group wishes them to, whether it’s likable or not?”

“Does it include the production group already having internally decided who would win and lose and the celebrity having to perform according to the requirements?”

Chapter 822: I Withdraw

“Does it also include—”

Li Zeyu and the rest were stunned upon hearing those words.

When they were looking at the contract just now, they did not find anything particularly wrong with it.

After all, concerning something as boring as a contract, the terms could not be totally equal. Whoever had higher power would have more advantages.

And compared to the production group, they were weaker in power and would definitely need to suffer a few losses.

When they reach the status of an A-lister, that's the time when it would be them giving conditions and the production group trying their best to satisfy them.

But upon hearing Lu Man say so much at once, everyone was so shocked they broke out in a cold sweat.

If it was really such a large range, then they would be losing out by a lot.

It did not matter whether they won or lost since they were entering with the mindset that they would definitely lose.

They were just scared that the production group would have requests of them about how they would perform. If the group wrote a script for them and their character was not likable, if they were not liked by the audience and end up attacked by the netizens, then their popularity that they had obtained after such a long time would all be lost.

This was what worried people the most.

So Li Zeyu and the rest did not dare to sign either.

Xu Yaojie's face darkened instantly. This Lu Man, she was so troublesome!

"If it's like that, could it be that you won't sign?" Xu Yaojie said, smiling coldly.

Getting into the top five with much difficulty, wasn't that just to enter the production group and improve their reputation?

"Yes. This condition has too many traps in it. I can't sign the contract," Lu Man said confidently.

"I can tell you confidently that what you said just now definitely exists in the show. The show needs some problems, and it needs to create some headlines. As to winning and losing—" Xu Yaojie disdainfully smiled coldly. "You don't need to worry about that. With so many seniors who are talented in acting, you don't have much chance of winning to begin with."

"Then can I rephrase that and say, even if I can win, I would still definitely lose because my opponents are seniors who are talented in acting?" Lu Man said.

"Right." Xu Yaojie nodded assuredly. "But so what? To be on our program means to be famous and to trend. Let's put it this way: we have Wei Feng Corporation as the one sponsoring the champion, and they are paying as much as 500 million yuan to be mentioned in the show. The lineup is the biggest among the domestic variety shows, and it is making history in the variety show industry. Even the variety shows that are the most popular right now don't have a lineup as strong as ours! So many artists would do anything to get in, yet they do not have the chance to. For our program, we do not have to seek artists ourselves. It's the celebrities who seek us out."

“If you all want to enter the show, you need to follow the arrangements of the production group. With us coming up with disagreements and reasons for the show to be watched, perhaps the audience might have some opinions against you, but this would increase the chances of your popularity increasing and give you more chances to show your face. Not every kind of popularity needs to be positive. As long as more people get to know you and it’s not through some kind of negative news—as long as it doesn’t cause any losses towards your reputation—there will be no problem,” Xu Yaojie said. “Lu Man you are a professional. You should understand it very well.”

“I don’t represent my fellow students’ decisions and words, I’m just representing myself. If they feel that this is not a loss for them, they can sign. But I can’t. Cooperating with your schemes to make trending topics—if it’s in a suitable and logical range, I can accept it. But I can’t accept unfair competition. If my acting skills are not as good as others’, I’ll willingly lose. But if I’m following your rules and you all decide who wins and loses, there’s no need to compete at all. Even if you are promising that I’ll win, I won’t participate. This is making a mockery of performance.” Lu Man put the contract back on the table. “I withdraw.”

Xu Yaojie smiled coldly. “Do you think that I’ll be scared of your threats? Our production group really is not lacking one or two students.”

Chapter 823: What About You All? Are You Signing?

“When your Chinese Arts Championships’ organizers were discussing things with us, wanting to give you students a chance to make it big, our production group barely agreed after talking about it for a long time. Otherwise, do you think that you, a celebrity with so little fame, could enter our show?”

“Ha!” Xu Yaojie laughed coldly. “If you want to participate in this show, you can participate. If you don’t want to participate, no one is begging you to. Don’t think that you are very great because you’ve acted in two movies. After a while, no one would recognize you.”

Xu Yaojie was extremely angry. Small celebrities who had just started out dared to be impolite to him?

Look at Yang Ruitian, hurriedly trying to suck up to him.

Did Lu Man think that she was very good, daring to pick up problems in the contract herself, wanting to chat about the contract with their production group?

If she was an A-lister, that was one thing. They would definitely change the contract.

But a small celebrity like Lu Man—who cared about her?!

Not hurrying to beg their production group and even picking at the contract?

How could she have the right to pick?!

Lu Man ignored Xu Yaojie’s mocking. Her expression not changing, she really just sat there, not signing the contract.

When Xu Yaojie saw that, he coldly sneered.

Since she did not want to sign the contract, she could just walk away. What was she sitting there for?

Did she really think that doing that could force him to change his mind?

Based on what he saw, Lu Man did not really want to withdraw and was just trying to put up a front.

Sitting over there, was she still waiting for him to ask her to stay?

Ha!

He refused to ask her to stay!

She could sign it if she wants.

Just let her sit there!

There was no use, no matter how long she sat there.

When everyone had signed, the one who would be embarrassed was her.

At that time, even if she wanted to sign, he would not give her the chance!

Xu Yaojie ignored Lu Man and looked towards the other four. "What about you guys? Are you all signing?"

Ni Xue looked at her manager. Her manager, Wang Lijun, said, "We agree to these conditions, but you must promise that when you are creating headlines, trying to increase the show's popularity, or causing contradictions, these would not harm Ni Xue's reputation. She can have disagreements with people, but the blame definitely cannot all be placed on her. Everyone has their own logic. Letting the fans argue about it among themselves, that's no problem."

"Of course. I can promise that after you all sign, whatever drama I create, the reputation you guys have won't be one wherein you're being criticized by everyone," Xu Yaojie said.

"It's the same for the rest of you," he promised the other people.

Wang Lijun nodded at Ni Xue. "Then there's no problem. Sign it. It doesn't matter who wins or loses, the most important thing is to increase your exposure."

After Wang Lijun said that, she took a look at Lu Man and Hu Zhonghui as well.

She found it strange. Lu Man was not grabbing hold of this kind of good opportunity. Instead, she was giving it up because of her "morals."

She had seen a lot of these kinds of celebrities; it was nothing unusual.

When the celebrity was not cooperating, it was the job of the manager to convince that celebrity.

She found it strange. Normally, in this kind of situation, it was the manager who should be convincing the celebrity.

But Hu Zhonghui totally seemed like she was not controlling her. She was letting Lu Man do whatever she wanted.

Look at Hu Zhonghui now—she was still out of it.

When Yang Ruitian and Chang Yachen took a look at the contract, they also felt there was no problem.

They entered the industry early, and they were used to this kind of move, purposely making up topics to be talked about.

Yang Ruitian, especially. Ever since she entered the industry, she would use all kinds of ways to make news articles of herself be written, even sending out article drafts.

One moment, they're saying that her beauty oppressed someone, the next, they're praising her looks and acting for being good.

Anyway, she'd just send all kinds of articles everywhere praising herself. She never stopped trying to make herself relevant.

Chang Yachen was considered the one with the least fame among them. She really needed a platform to increase her fame, and so she instantly signed.

Chapter 824: Why Didn't You Try to Persuade Lu Man a Little?

Yang Ruitian signed too.

Ni Xue followed and signed the contract.

Other than Lu Man, who'd expressed that she wouldn't be signing it and would be leaving the competition, only Li Zeyu was left.

Li Zeyu looked at Lu Man, then at the other people who had already signed the contract, and said to his manager, "I won't be joking around with my reputation."

Lu Man didn't sign. Strangely, he slightly believed in Lu Man's judgment.

All along, Lu Man had never lost.

There were so many times where people belittled her, but in the end?

The one who got slapped in the face ultimately was never Lu Man.

Lu Man didn't sign. He felt that this fake program wouldn't last long either.

It was fine if no one found out, but once the inner workings were revealed, not only will the program be finished, even the celebrities who'd participated in the program would be stained badly as well.

No matter what the real reason was that Lu Man wouldn't join, he decided to believe in Lu Man.

Li Zeyu's manager, Zhang Hai, sighed deeply for a while. "Alright, then."

Li Zeyu was rather young, but he was steady and capable. He had been very grounded all along.

Zhang Hai rarely treated him like a little kid and really respected his opinion.

Zhang Hai looked at Lu Man. Lu Man was about the same age as Li Zeyu and Ni Xue. To him, she was like a kid too.

Yet, strangely, she gave off a feeling that people could trust in her. Unknowingly, he trusted her judgment too.

Zhang Hai shook his head and smiled. He was clearly still older than Lu Man by 20 years. This feeling sure was strange and weird.

Therefore, Li Zeyu said to Xu Yaojie too, "Sorry, I also won't be signing. I'll leave the competition."

Xu Yaojie scoffed in anger. "Fine, don't sign it and don't regret it. I won't give you two a second chance."

Li Zeyu's heart stuttered a little, but he turned his head and saw that Lu Man still looked firm. Hence, he stayed firm too. "I won't sign it."

"Haha, fine!" Xu Yaojie took away the contracts. He stood up and said to Ni Xue and the other two, "After this, a staff member will contact you to inform you about the date and time of the recording."

After he spoke, without even saying goodbye to Chief He, he stormed off angrily.

Dean He didn't even know what to say to Lu Man or Li Zeyu.

Lu Man was a young lady, but she was as fierce as a sharp thorn.

He pointed at Lu Man and Li Zeyu, not saying a word for a long time.

Taking in a deep breath, he said to Yang Ruitian and Chang Yachen, "I want to speak privately to the students from my school."

Yang Ruitian and Chang Yachen realized what the situation was and hurriedly stood up and left with their managers.

Dean He looked at the two of them and said, resigned, "Just wait, I will have to tell the principal about this!"

It was so rare that three students from their school had clinched the top three spots. It was such a good opportunity for them to join a variety show on Xing Ke Station, and they could even have helped to promote and publicize for the school.

They could have let people know that the National Film Academy could produce skillful actors too!

And now, things sure were amazing—these two people were quitting!

Clearly, more people from the National Film Academy had advanced through the competition, but in the end, the National Drama Academy won against them 2:1.

Ni Xue didn't move and said to Li Zeyu, "It's Lu Man's business if she wants to quit. Why are you joining her?! It was such a good opportunity!"

Li Zeyu pursed his lips and said, "Since I've already decided, I won't regret it."

Wang Lijun looked at Hu Zhonghui and said, "Nice to meet you, I'm Ni Xue's manager, Wang Lijun. You must be Lu Man's manager."

"Nice to meet you, nice to meet you," Hu Zhonghui hurriedly replied. "I'm Lu Man's manager, Hu Zhonghui."

"Why didn't you try to persuade Lu Man a little?" Wang Lijun said while smiling. "It's very common for celebrities to be temperamental and have their own opinions. They even have jobs they don't want to take on. Just like typical office workers, they too have moments wherein they don't feel like going to work or times when they have to take on work that they don't want to do."

Chapter 825: I Think It's Better to Follow You

"Actors are like that too. You can't allow them to be stubborn and willful. It clearly was a pretty good opportunity, but it's just going to waste like this. It's such a pity. At such times, the manager should try to persuade them. You can't let them be willful and miss such a good opportunity."

Hu Zhonghui blinked. Her expression entirely confused, she asked, "What good opportunity?"

"..." Wang Lijun choked a little and said, "Isn't it this program, *The Performer*? It really is pretty good. Xing Ke Station is one of the top television stations in our country. They are very good at increasing the popularity of their own programs. As long as it's a variety show from their station, it will definitely be popular. Actors who've appeared on their variety shows all become famous too. At the very least, they could reach a higher level of fame than they had before. So many people want to use Xing Ke Station's shows to stand out. It's such a good opportunity, so how could you just let Lu Man give up on it?"

Ni Xue tugged on Wang Lijun. "Sister Jun, why are you talking so much to them?"

Actually, Wang Lijun wasn't advising them. Xu Yaojie had already stated his position anyway. Even if Lu Man regretted her choice, he wouldn't accept her again.

So she was just being wise after the fact!

She could even get a rush from lecturing them and increasing her own sense of superiority.

With Hu Zhonghui as a contrast, wouldn't it bring out just how amazing she was as a manager?

More so, it made Lu Man seem like she was really unlucky to have ended up with such a useless manager like Hu Zhonghui.

"Ah, that show!" Hu Zhonghui waved her hand without a care. "So be it if she doesn't appear on it. It doesn't matter."

Would Lu Man even be lacking in show appearances?

As long as Lu Man wanted it, Han Zhuoli could especially design a show just for her.

Other managers were all fretting about finding as many resources and opportunities for their artistes.

But Hu Zhonghui didn't have to feel any stress in that area.

Han Zhuoli had said long ago, everything would be based on Lu Man's mood.

She could do whatever she wanted. There was no need to force her.

Wang Lijun was badly choked up by Hu Zhonghui's nonchalant behavior.

Great, Hu Zhonghui wasn't even anxious at all. Why did she bother so much anyway?!

Wang Lijun stood up and said, "There's nothing else going on after this. Xiao Xue still has some work. Well then, Dean, we will be taking our leave first."

Not long after Wang Lijun and Ni Xue left, Principal Liu hurriedly rushed over.

"What's the matter? I heard from Dean He that you two have rejected the contract for *The Performer*. You're not participating?" Principal Liu asked the moment he stepped in.

Right now, he was in so much pain that his teeth were aching so much.

It was fine if Lu Man rejected it; she had such a strong backing. She didn't even have to care about *The Performer*.

But why was Li Zeyu joining along too?!

Li Zeyu said, "Principal, I trust Lu Man's judgment. She isn't participating in it, so this program must have its own corrupt practices."

Principal Liu's teeth ached even more.

What corrupt practices? Lu Man completely didn't care about that. She had a strong backer, so she could be willful.

Lu Man was very surprised. Li Zeyu actually believed in her so much.

"Why didn't you join it?" Lu Man asked.

Li Zeyu shook his head. "You've never been wrong, so this time too, I trust your judgment. You aren't even participating in it, so I think it's better to follow you."

Lu Man didn't know whether to laugh or cry. She completely didn't expect that Li Zeyu would blindly trust her like that.

"Alright, then." Lu Man smiled. "You won't be wrong believing in me."

Principal Liu was anxious but he couldn't blow up at Lu Man either. "Tell me, then, what exactly are you guys thinking? It's such a good opportunity—you could improve your acting skills, battle with so many skilled seniors, and even raise your popularity. Through this show, you could let people see your acting skills. Maybe some director would even take a liking to you, and that's another opportunity too. Moreover, you can also let the audience see that students from our National Film Academy have better acting skills than those from the National Drama Academy."

Chapter 826: Really Really Couldn't Offend Him

“Three people from our National Film Academy got into *The Performer* while only two people from the National Drama Academy got in. The audience will be able to see that. There are so many benefits, but you didn’t want them.”

“Look, it had been an arduous journey for you to advance to the next stage. You finally succeeded after so much effort, yet you decided to give up at this moment. What were you two thinking?” Principal Liu was really anxious.

Not only for the school but also because they gave up on this opportunity.

Nevermind that Lu Man gave up. With Han Zhuoli around, she didn’t have to worry about any opportunities. She did have the right to be picky.

But what about Li Zeyu?

“You, tell me about it,” Principal Liu said to Li Zeyu. “You are still young, you are handsome, and it was so rare for people to give you the title of ‘rising star.’ But because you are handsome, your acting skills will often be overlooked. With people who have average looks, it is easier for people to see their good acting skills. But towards you, everyone will place most of their attention on your face and will overlook that you do indeed have pretty good acting skills and that you keep improving too.”

“Outstanding looks is an advantage for you, but at the same time, it will hold you back. It will make others place all their attention on your looks. The type of roles and characters you take on will tend to be fixed, and people will tend to feel that you are only suitable to act a certain type of character. They will look for other people if they have roles that require more acting skills or roles that are more challenging. After all, there are honestly too many actors. There are so many people eagerly waiting to film something.”

“You finally have such an opportunity. Look at all the past invited guests on *The Performer*. They were all skilled actors with actual talent. Young rising stars, budding starlets, they would only invite those very popular people. The students from our school can’t get in at all right now. The school discussed with them for a really long time and finally managed to squeeze the top five from the Chinese Arts Championships into the show. It would be a perfect chance for you to compete with skilled actors. You can see where you have to improve and let others witness your acting skills. It will be very beneficial to your future development and widen the paths that you can take. You two actually wasted such a good opportunity!”

Lu Man finally opened her mouth and said earnestly, “Principal, I know that you are genuinely concerned for us and want us to have a better future.”

Right now, Principal Liu didn’t even care that Lu Man was Han Zhuoli’s fiancée and whether or not he could offend her. “You know that and you still gave up this opportunity!”

“Please don’t be so anxious.” Lu Man knew that Principal Liu genuinely wanted what was best for them and, hence, wasn’t angry and even smiled as she consoled him.

“You’re still in the mood to smile?!” Principal Liu became even more frustrated.

“Principal, please listen to what Lu Man has to say first,” Li Zeyu said.

“You still have the cheek to talk?!” Principal Liu scolded him back.

Li Zeyu ducked his neck and stopped talking.

Right now, he really really couldn't offend Principal Liu.

Lu Man explained, “That's right, please listen to my analysis.”

Principal Liu pulled a chair and sat opposite them. “Fine, you can talk.”

Lu Man opened her mouth calmly and, at a comfortable pace, she first talked about the trap in the conditions of the contract. “According to what the assistant director Xu said, we will have to listen to the production group's every request. We have to cooperate with their tricks and create popular topics, regardless of whether or not the topic will be beneficial or bad for us ultimately.”

Lu Man smiled. “But from what I can see, the topics that will land on our head will definitely be bad. It's not a maybe but a definitely.”

At that moment, Principal Liu, Li Zeyu, and Dean He all recalled Lu Man's job before she entered the entertainment industry.

“You're that sure?” Dean He asked.

Chapter 827: All for Show

“Actually, this is something very obvious. Principal Liu mentioned it just now too: the five of us could enter the program because the 23 schools worked together and made a deal with Xing Ke Station. These are placings they got after much effort. From the start, the five of us are already at a disadvantage. Our relationship with Xing Ke Station is such that they are above us. From the start, we are unequal.”

“From the contract, you can tell that we won't have much say. We are only students right now, we don't have a high status in the entertainment industry, and we are just small fries. Compared to other students, perhaps we are already pretty good and have a decent number of fans, but compared to the other guests in the program, we definitely have much fewer. So, when the time comes to generate buzz-worthy topics and create reasons for watching, they will increase the conflict between guests. There will definitely be one side who will have a negative image. And when that time comes, who will be the ones who have to take on that image? Those A-list and B-list guests with a lot of fans, or us?”

“It will be us,” Li Zeyu said solemnly.

“That's right, it's us. Because we are the side who is disadvantaged. The contract the production group gave us will definitely be different from those given to other guests. They wouldn't dare to offend those guests and make them dissatisfied. Those people could directly speak out on various media outlets and blame the production crew. But our words won't mean much. Even if we publicly speak out about our dissatisfaction, the production crew just have to slightly change the topic and mislead others and push the blame on us. And we have difficulties that we couldn't speak of, and so we can only passively accept the netizens' scoldings and unhappiness. We'd even have some of our fans leave us, thinking that we have lied to them, that how we've behaved all along was all for show and now we have shown our true colors,” Lu Man said coldly.

“We have just started out, so we have to be careful with everything. What’s most important is to take each and every step steadily and solidly, not be impulsive and rush into things, just charging straight ahead without thinking it through properly. We can’t simply throw away the popularity that we’ve just accumulated. If our image is gone, what’s the point of having any popularity?”

By the side, Li Zeyu kept nodding his head. Lu Man’s words made a lot of sense.

He didn’t care about winning or losing. Right now, this was the one thing he was most concerned about.

He had always been very mindful of his reputation and image. He didn’t want everything to crumble to nothing just for the sake of this little bit of popularity.

“This is just one of the reasons. Another is that according to what Xu Yaojie said, we will definitely lose with just one round. With so many other seniors around, even if we lost, if it was because my skills couldn’t amount to others’, I will accept it willingly. But after painstakingly preparing for it, the outcome would still be fixed beforehand. No matter how we prepare for it, it would still be the same outcome. No matter how much hard work we put into it, even if the other party is terrible, we will still lose. How could we even improve on our acting? Could we even trust the judges’ feedback? Would we even know if the seniors have put in their actual ability into the performance? Who would tell us exactly where we did wrong?”

Li Zeyu became silent.

Previously, he always thought that winning or losing didn’t matter at all.

This was just a variety show, after all. Winning or losing didn’t mean anything.

Ultimately, the main goal was to get more people to know about him, to earn more money, and to become more successful.

His goal was very materialistic, at least up until now.

But after listening to what Lu Man said, Li Zeyu suddenly realized that he couldn’t accept such rules either.

“Once all of this is exposed, we students from the National Film Academy, and even those from the National Film Academy, will be affected,” Lu Man said at the end.

Even if Lu Man didn’t say it out loud, Principal Liu naturally realized it too.

Chapter 828: A Car Parked Nearby

He stayed silent for a while and nodded. “I understand.”

He smiled. “You two did very well.”

Principal Liu was exceptionally touched. He didn’t think that Lu Man would be so considerate towards the school.

Principal Liu looked so moved and touched, it made a chill run down Lu Man’s spine.

It was too terrifying!

“At the start, I felt that it was such a pity for you guys. It was such a good opportunity. But now, it looks like it probably wasn’t such a good opportunity, after all.” Principal Liu sighed deeply and said, “No matter what, you two have made this decision and I will support it. Thank you, too, for thinking about the school first, even before developing your own future career.”

“Then what about Ni Xue? She signed the contract,” Li Zeyu said.

Principal Liu shook his head and smiled mindlessly. “Everyone has their own career to develop. She agreed to participate in it, and the school doesn’t have the right to interfere. After all, she had the right. From the start, it was already decided that the top five from the Chinese Arts Championships could enter The Performer. The school also can’t force her to back out at this time. I can only hope that the program will move on well and not implicate those three students who are participating.”

Li Zeyu didn’t say anything else. After all, Lu Man had already talked about the inappropriate aspects of the program in front of everyone.

Ni Xue clearly knew it, but she still chose to participate. She had already made her decision.

Everyone has their own fate and destiny. Everyone has their own future.

He chose to believe Lu Man and leave the program.

Whereas Ni Xue chose to seize the opportunity and take a gamble. That was her own choice too.

Lu Man walked out of the dean’s office and met with Zheng Yuan and the others.

“So how was it? Did you sign the contract already?” Zheng Yuan asked.

Lu Man shook her head. “I didn’t.”

“Huh?” Pan Xue’s eyes widened in shock. “You finally won first place after so much effort, so why didn’t you sign it? It was such a good opportunity!”

“Don’t be so anxious, wait for Lu Man to explain herself.” Han Leilei pulled on Pan Xue and told her to be softer. “Lu Man must have her own reasons for not signing it. With that brain of yours, you should stop worrying for Lu Man.”

Pan Xue scratched her head and waited for Lu Man to speak.

Lu Man told them about the contract. “I think that after signing it, I would lose any say. No matter how many tricks I have up my sleeve, I wouldn’t be able to win against their contract. Look at Xing Ke Station, they have always been playing tricks. When the time comes, if they have any requests, I can’t do anything but cooperate with them, even if I resist and fail, I will still be used for them to create a buzz again. The losses will outweigh the benefits.”

“Ah, who would have thought that the program was like that? Then I better not watch it too.” Pan Xue hardened her face. “Originally, looking at the publicity, I did like the actors that they have invited.”

“You don’t have to treat it as a legit competition, you can just watch it as entertainment,” Lu Man said as she smiled.

“That Assistant Director Xu also went a little overboard. To put it bluntly, he is so stuck-up.” Zheng Yuan continued softly, “Right now, he looks down on us students, but when we become famous in the future, wouldn’t he still try to suck up to us?”

“By that time, who knows where he would be? Maybe he would even have been promoted,” Han Leilei said.

“Ah, that’s true too.”

“But I still am pretty grateful for Assistant Director Xu’s personality,” Lu Man said. “If not for the fact that he was looking down on us, would he still have told us about all this dirty dealings behind the scenes? Just because he looked down on us, he thinks that we are powerless, that our words will mean nothing, that we have no right to discuss the contract with them, and that even if we knew about all that, we also couldn’t do anything to them. From the bottom of his heart, he was belittling us, and so he said those words.”

Right now, they were walking out of the school gate together. The four of them were smiling and chatting. None of them saw that there was a car parked not far away from them.

Chapter 829: Lu Qi’s Parents

Lu Qiyuan and Xia Qingyang saw them from inside the car. They hurriedly dashed out from the car and blocked Lu Man by standing right in front of her.

Lu Man was caught off-guard. When she could finally react, she hurriedly pulled Zheng Yuan and the other two and moved back.

Seeing Lu Qiyuan’s and Xia Qingyang’s unfriendly faces, Lu Man said to Zheng Yuan and the others, “You guys go ahead first.”

Zheng Yuan and the others didn’t recognize Lu Qiyuan and Xia Qingyang. In the past, because of Lu Qiyuan’s scandal, Lu Qiyuan and Xia Qingyang had been reported by the media before.

However, after time had passed, their impressions of them had faded as well.

But seeing the two of them looking so fierce and angry, they knew that the two weren’t here with good intentions. How could they just leave Lu Man alone?

“Who are they?” Pan Xue asked softly.

“Lu Qi’s parents,” Lu Man explained.

She completely didn’t acknowledge Lu Qiyuan anymore. She didn’t want to call her “Dad” ever again, even while she was explaining their identities to other people.

Zheng Yuan and the others almost didn’t react to it in time.

Thinking about it for a while, they finally recalled that Lu Qi was Lu Man’s half-sister. So the people right before them, weren’t they Lu Man’s biological father and her step-mother?

Han Leilei's reaction was the quickest. Remembering what Lu Qiyuan and Xia Qingyang had done to Lu Man before and seeing that they look like they were here to cause trouble and harm to Lu Man, she quietly said to Zheng Yuan, "I'll go back to school and get help!"

After she spoke, she took off and ran towards the school.

By the time Lu Qiyuan and Xia Qingyang had reacted to it, it was already too late.

Meanwhile, Zheng Yuan and Pan Xue guarded Lu Man on her right and left.

"Lu Man!"

Xiao Chen, who was here to fetch Lu Man, saw this from afar and hurriedly ran over.

With him was, surprisingly, Zhou Cheng.

Lu Man saw Zhou Cheng and Xiao Chen and let out a sigh of relief.

With Zhou Cheng around, even two Lu Qiyuans wouldn't be able to fight him.

Lu Qiyuan didn't expect that there would still be people helping Lu Man now.

He watched as Zhou Cheng and Xiao Chen shielded Lu Man behind them.

Zhou Cheng's tall and broad build, in particular, so completely blocked Lu Man that she couldn't be seen.

Lu Qiyuan immediately remembered Zhou Cheng. Back when Xia Qingwei was still hospitalized and Lu Qiyuan went over, it was him and Xu Hui who'd tossed him out of the hospital!

He completely didn't expect that Zhou Cheng would still be around.

That also meant that Zhou Cheng had very likely been left behind by Lu Man's boyfriend to protect her.

Lu Qiyuan had never suspected that Zhou Cheng would be Lu Man's boyfriend.

It was very obvious that Zhou Cheng was a bodyguard.

He also heard from Lu Qi that Lu Man's boyfriend had a pretty good family background. Zhou Cheng was clearly working for her boyfriend.

Lu Qiyuan remembered that back when Xia Qingwei was hospitalized, Zhou Cheng was already around. It looked like Lu Qiyuan and that boyfriend had gotten together long ago.

Lu Qiyuan smiled coldly. He pointed at Zhou Cheng and said to Lu Man, "I remember him. Back when Xia Qingwei was still hospitalized, he was around. Back then, you were already together with that fiance of yours, right?! Ha! Back then, you were still crying and acting all pitiful, talking about how Qi Qi had stolen Zhengbai, but in truth, you were already being unfaithful to Zhengbai! It completely wasn't Qi Qi's fault, yet you still blamed her! B*tch!"

In those moments, as she listened to Lu Qiyuan scolding her like that, Lu Man completely didn't have any feelings at all.

Looking at him was like looking at a stranger.

Zheng Yuan and Pan Xue looked at Lu Qiyuan with disbelief. How could a father say that to his own biological daughter?!

It was like he was talking to an enemy!

Lu Man said to Zheng Yuan and Pan Xue, "Go back and find Han Leilei. It's alright. Xiao Chen and Big Brother Zhou are here, they won't be able to hurt me. You guys can leave first."

The two of them looked at the situation and felt more reassured. Hence, they left to find Han Leilei. Right after they left, they heard Lu Man saying to Zhou Cheng and Xiao Chen, "Let's go. We don't have to bother with them."

Chapter 830: I'll Just Take It That You're Using the Company as Mortgage

With Zhou Cheng around, Lu Qiyuan also didn't dare to make a move.

Just after they'd taken a couple of steps, Xia Qingyang shrieked sharply, "Wait!"

Lu Man didn't stop walking. Lu Qiyuan wanted to grab Lu Man, but there was Xiao Chen and Zhou Cheng in the middle. Lu Qiyuan could only speak to Lu Man past the two of them. "You earned a lot of money from shooting *Red Tiger*, right?! The family's company is faced with some difficulties. Give us some of your salary to help the company tide over."

Lu Man looked at Lu Qiyuan as if she was looking at a lunatic. "Where did this shamelessness of yours come from?"

"You have a part in the family's company! What's wrong with getting you to chip in some money?" Lu Qiyuan roared angrily. "Your surname is Lu too! The family is facing problems, you're just not going to care?"

"Of course I'm not going to care." Lu Man smiled coldly. "When the company wasn't doing well as you'd just started your business, it was my mother who was by your side. When the company did better, Xia Qingyang and Lu Qi came along to enjoy the fortune. When the company was doing well, my mother and I didn't reap any benefits from it, they were all given to Xia Qingyang and Lu Qi. Now that it's not doing well, you remember us again? How shameless can you get? You invested so much money in Lu Qi back then, so get her to return the money to you. That money should be enough to help the company."

Xia Qingyang became nervous immediately. She was afraid that Lu Qiyuan's would be easily swayed and really listen to Lu Man.

She hurriedly said, "Qi Qi was harmed by you so much that she doesn't even have any job right now! How could she have any money?! Besides, she had already taken out all of her savings from all these years to help your father out."

Lu Qiyuan was shocked. "Qi Qi really took out her savings?"

"Yes, that child is really responsible. She was afraid that you wouldn't agree to it, but she told me about it secretly last night. However, back when her career was doing well, she did earn quite a bit, but she also had to spend a lot of money. There were expenses for all sorts of promotions, partnerships, and even participating in events. She even gave Lu Man her pay and covered Lu Man's expenses when she had to go abroad for work back then, so she didn't save up much money. Eventually, she didn't have

anything to shoot, so she could only spend her savings, and now she's only left with two million. Even though it's not a lot, she still hoped that it could help you," Xia Qingyang hurriedly explained.

Lu Qiyuan was extremely moved. Even though two million was indeed not much and completely couldn't help him much, Lu Qi was still so thoughtful!

She was so much more filial than Lu Man!

"This child sure is understanding and responsible, but how could I ask her for money?" Lu Qiyuan said, touched. When he looked at Lu Man again, his face darkened once more. "You should learn more from your younger sister! Your younger sister gave me all her money, but what about you? Can't you give me your salary for me to use?"

"No," Lu Man said coldly.

Zheng Yuan and Pan Xue also overheard what Lu Qiyuan said. Both of them looked at each other. They felt that Lu Qiyuan was being extremely ridiculous.

Lu Qi gave him money, but he couldn't bear to use it and said he wouldn't use Lu Qi's money. But he could use Lu Man's money?

What logic was that!

"You unfilial daughter!" Lu Qiyuan roared.

Lu Man scoffed coldly. "You feel bad accepting Lu Qi's money, but you don't mind accepting my money?"

"Both of you are my daughters. You are richer than Qi Qi, isn't it right of you to give me money?" Lu Qiyuan said angrily.

"But in the past, when you had money, you never gave me any. Why should I give you any money?" Lu Man smiled. "How about this? From the time Lu Qi was young until now, sum up how much you've given to her and give that lump sum to me, and then I'll lend you money."

"You started a management company for Lu Qi, you invested in the shows she acted in. All of that has to be added in too." Lu Man considered for a moment and came up with an idea. She clapped her hands.

"How about this? You transfer Yi Lu Culture to me, then I'll lend you money. I'll just take it that you're using the company as mortgage.