

One Birth Two Treasures: The Billionaire's Sweet Love

Chapter 101 – Proving Herself through Her Skills –
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Chapter 101: Proving Herself through Her Skills

Who were the previous auditionees?

Their hair were curled into huge waves, their makeup were heavy and seductive, their eyelashes were thick like a brush's tough bristles, and their nose bridges were penciled thickly – the faces of these ladies were so shiny they could blind others.

The audition participants were either online celebrities who had gone under the knife or unpopular young models in the entertainment industry. They had neither looks nor auras of elegance.

High heels, painted faces, revealing dresses – what were all these? Did they come from nightclubs?

Putting this aside, six words could sum up the two sessions of auditioning today: an entire morning of crying scenes.

All these people seemed to think that a crying scene was the toughest to act out, so, for the rest of the morning, everyone who had come to audition performed the most iconic crying scenes in the story.

Crying and crying... While crying scene was the most challenging to act, one would get sick from watching the same scenes again and

again, no matter how good it was. Lin Fengtian's head throbbed from watching the ladies cry the entire morning that he was no longer in the mood for the auditions.

Bored to death, Lin Fengtian propped his chin on one hand as he rapidly twirled a black pen between his fingers with his other hand. He inadvertently recalled, once more, that 'little fairy' he had seen by the entrance of Huanyu Tower that day. That girl was the 'Yin Xiachun' in his mind.

She did not need to act. She just needed to stand there and she would look just like the female character from the novel.

What a muddle-head he was. Sigh...

The assistant sitting next to him shot him a cold glance...

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He looked lovesick.

Just as Lin Fengtian's face contorted with a deep-rooted bitterness, Yun Shishi pushed the door open and entered.

She was wearing a long, clean dress. She seemed to have only put on light makeup as her face looked natural. Her entire being was simply charming. She was shrouded by a tranquil aura, she wore a warm smile, and she had a pair of bright eyes. She looked as though she had come straight out of a novel – she was Yin Xiachun.

All the examiners were stunned. When Lin Fengtian's assistant saw her, he was thoroughly shocked!

“Director, it’s... it’s her!”

Under everyone’s surprised gazes, Yun Shishi appeared to be a little reserved. Her steps were small and light and her jet-black hair was waist-long, covering her entire back and fluttering in the breeze blowing in from outside the window. She walked to the front of the examiners’ table and raised her face. A faint blush surfaced on her snowy-white skin from anxiety, or from other unidentified emotions. Her eyes displayed the unrest, expectation, uneasiness, and anxiety of a student stepping on the stage for the first time. She gave off the impression that she was performing for the entire student body in the school auditorium for the first time.

Slightly nervous, she looked up and around. When she spotted Gu Xingze among the audience, a weight was lifted off her chest. She closed her eyes and sucked in a chilly breath. Thereafter, she spoke haltingly, “He – Hello, everyone! I’m... I’m Yin Xiachun from Year 2 Class 1. I feel very much honored to be able to stand on this stage. Ne – Next...”

Halfway through her sentence, she blanked out and trailed off. She was just like a child who had forgotten her lines due to stage fright. She cast her worried eyes on Gu Xingze.

“This...”

A producer sitting at the side stared at her with wide eyes, thinking that the girl was so nervous she was stringing lines together. He was about to stop her when Lin Fengtian held his shoulder. He instantly fell silent.

When Lin Fengtian moved his gaze back to Yun Shishi, his eyes were full of surprise and approval!

The others were just sitting in for the audition, but Lin Fengtian was the director for this movie. He was very familiar with the script. This girl was not saying the wrong lines because of nervousness; she was directly proving herself to them through her acting skills

Chapter 102: The Perfect Audition

The others were just sitting in for the audition, but Lin Fengtian was the director for this movie. He was very familiar with the script. This girl was not saying the wrong lines because of nervousness; she was directly proving herself to them through her acting skills.

This girl was extremely clever. She seemed to have predicted that many auditionees would act out a crying scene for this audition, and the examiners would be tired of watching such a scene. She abandoned the emotional scene in favor of a beautiful part in the story.

In the story, Yin Xiachun had been practicing the piano in the music room with Yin Dongyu from a young age. The piano could be said to be what connected the siblings. Through music, they expressed their attraction, infatuation, and love for each other...

Yin Xiachun loved to stick to Yin Dongyu from a young age. She was somehow distant to her other classmates and did not have many friends.

However, in Year 2, the school organized an annual talent show, and Yin Dongyu applied on her behalf.

Yin Xiachun passed the preliminaries and quarterfinals with her brother's encouragement. Finally, she appeared on the highest stage in school!

Going up the stage for the first time, she was very nervous. Yin Dongyu, who was sitting in the first row, did his best to support her.

The scene more or less played out like this. It was one of the most romantic scenes in the story.

This girl was quite interesting!

Lin Fengtian's eyes gleamed. Each frown and smile of this girl was so contagious!

Before his eyes was no longer the audition room but a spacious and glamorous school auditorium instead. It was that moment when the students were applauding and cheering for Yin Xiachun, who was nervously standing on stage, tongue-tied. That nerve-racking moment!

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He felt as if he had been transported physically on the scene!

What a budding young actress!

Lin Fengtian turned around and said excitedly, "Dongyu, coordinate with her!"

Gu Xingze seemed to have received his message. Thanks to his many years of acting experience, he quickly got into character.

The people in the room saw him suddenly stand up. Just like the novel's Yin Dongyu, who was nervous for his sister on the stage, Gu Xingze affectionately looked at her. His eyes were filled with eagerness and anticipation.

Yun Shishi met his eyes. After a short exchange, a bashful smile emerged on her face.

“Hello, everyone! I am Yin Xiachun from Year 2 Class 1. I'm very much honored to be able to stand on this beautiful stage. Next, I shall perform for all of you a piano piece, ‘A Comm Amour’.”

Right after, she slowly went toward the beautiful grand piano in the music room. She unhurriedly reached it. The moment her fingertips made contact with the piano keys, she pressed on a couple of wrong notes.

However, when her hands caressed the piano keys again, her nervous soul was finally released. With her elegant posture, she looked like a musical fairy.

Lin Fengtian suppressed the excitement in his heart. Was she able to play the piano as well, or would this scene end here?

Yun Shishi placed her fingers on the piano as he was contemplating this. A romantic ‘A Comm Amour’ was given life by her fingertips.

It was smooth and sweet!

This piece was extremely difficult to play!

Not mentioning the others, Gu Xingze himself was stunned from hearing this melody, which resembled a song from a nightingale!

In the story, Yin Xiachun placed first in the talent show by playing this ‘A Comm Amour’!

The girl right in front of his eyes was sitting by the piano, looking as lovely as an angel that fell on Earth. After her performance, she smiled with confidence. She stood up from the piano stool and walked to the front of the stage, calmly receiving a lasting ovation from the entire school.

“Good! Bravo! Absolutely great!”

Lin Fengtian took the lead and applauded enthusiastically!

“Yin Xiachun – this is the Yin Xiachun I’m looking for!”

Chapter 103: A Rare Talent

“Yin Xiachun, this is the Yin Xiachun I’m looking for!”

She looked as though she had walked out of the novel. While Lin Fengtian was surprised, he could not help but wonder. Was this girl really a science graduate?

She went into character the moment she entered the room and proved herself to them under the best condition. This girl was quite clever and was a rare acting talent!

In fact, one needed not be too particular about their acting skills in teen movies. No matter how hard one cried, it would appear tasteless and boring to the onlookers and the audience. Regarding youth, it was a reminiscence of one's immaturity, and a sentimental attachment to the joy one felt in their younger days.

The purpose of teen movies was to make use of a beautiful story to tug at the precious memories at the bottom of the audience's hearts.

The true essence of teen movies was to present the beauty of youth and to invoke just the right degree of emotions!

This girl had caught everyone's attention!

Amidst the round of applause, Gu Xingze unknowingly stepped forward. This move was just like that lovely scene in the story when Yin Dongyu went up the stage and held Yin Xiachun in his arms as she received the audience's standing ovation!

"Truly splendid! It's an absolutely brilliant performance which left a great impression!" Lin Fengtian applauded enthusiastically. The others nodded their heads in agreement.

Including Lin Fengtian, everyone thought that Yun Shishi's performance was a breath of fresh air after suffering an entire morning of crying scenes.

"Oh, my god! That was so beautiful... I suddenly thought of my first love..." The executive director was so touched by the scene that the corners of his eyes moistened.

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Even Lin Fengtian was thoroughly impressed. When this girl caught his eye that first time, it was because of her affinity to the character, her stunning appearance, and coincidentally, a similar aura to the female lead. Upon seeing her today, who knew that she was also a skilled actress?

She was not an arts graduate but a science graduate, right? How was her acting this good, then?

This had nothing to do with innate talent, though. Some actors were gifted in acting, but this girl was different. The moment she entered the room, she was already in character. She had professionalism, strong acting skills, and even perfect movements – depicting a character so vividly was only achievable after years of experience in the entertainment industry!

In any case, he, Lin Fengtian, found another treasure!

Yun Shishi reverted to a state of tranquility. She slowly backed away from Gu Xingze's embrace. Her mouth slightly curved at the ends, showing a neither-distant-nor-close smile.

Flexibly switching between a fictional character and her real self, who would believe that she was not an arts school graduate?

Yun Shishi, for her part, knew clearly of the hardships she had gone through to have such great acting skills.

Her teacher was the famous and experienced actress, Mu Yuling. Floating around in the entertainment industry, Mu Yuling did not have a strong backing or a strong fan base. She relied on small side

characters to constantly polish her acting skills. It was only when she was met with an opportunity that she rose to fame.

She clinched the Best Actress Award twice after shedding ten years of blood and tears.

Mu Yuling imparted everything she knew to her. Yun Shishi did come prepared for this audition. If she were to do something, she wanted to do it well.

Gu Xingze looked toward Yun Shishi. A tranquil smile was on her lips, and her eyes were radiant and gentle. He was utterly surprised by her performance just then.

This girl... was too formidable.

He was even unknowingly brought into character by her.

When he first met her in the hotel, she looked lethargic and pale. Just like a traumatized kitten, she was cautious and skeptical to anyone. Right now, the girl standing before him was as lovely as the spring breeze; she was confident but reserved.

Chapter 104: Banquet Invitation

Everyone was so moved and touched by Yun Shishi's performance during her audition that the remaining performance paled in comparison.

In Lin Fengtian's mind, he already had a candidate for the female lead.

When Yun Shishi exited the Music Department, she saw Xiao Xue waiting for her by the door. Xiao Xue rushed to the venue as soon as she heard of her best friend's plan to audition. "Shishi!"

"Why are you here?" Yun Shishi was startled to see her there.

Xiao Xue was apparently still a bundle of nerves. "I called you and Youyou told me that you had come here to audition. I'm so worried..."

"What are you worried about?"

"You really came here to audition?" Xiao Xue asked anxiously.

"Yes. I auditioned for the female lead role in the 'The Green Apple' production."

Xiao Xue only grew alarmed at her reply. "What?! Why didn't you tell me earlier?!"

Yun Shishi looked amused but did not elaborate. "It was a last-minute decision. I just thought of giving it a try for fun."

"Wow! Excellent! Shishi, I'm sure it will go well. You are pretty and have all the necessary qualities. I read that novel before and the first person I thought of that resembles that female protagonist is you! It'll be a box-office hit if you are cast as the female lead. When that happens, you'll be famous!"

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Xiao Xue bubbled on and on until a thought suddenly struck her. Looking concerned, she seriously addressed her, “My father told me that the entertainment industry is shady and full of filth...”

“What’s there to be afraid of? You are here to protect me from bullies, right?” She beamed and patted Xiao Xue’s shoulder. The two were about to leave when someone called out to her from behind.

“Shishi!”

She looked over her shoulder and saw Gu Xingze and Lin Fengtian walking toward them. Gu Xingze was wearing a pristine white shirt with a matching pair of form-fitting dark trousers. The minimalist outfit accentuated his good looks.

His fans that were lying in wait outside the Music Department immediately sprung into action. Although Jinhua University stated explicitly that demerit points would be served if the students were discovered causing a disturbance during this audition period, this did not stop his zealous fanatics from doing anything.

“Xingze! Look; it’s Xingze!”

“Wow! He’s so handsome...”

“Oh, gosh... It’s unbelievable. I’m actually seeing him in person right now! Am I dreaming? Oh, my... Mom, mom, I’m currently seeing Xingze in the flesh...”

Xiao Xue, who was also scrutinizing this superstar at the moment, had to admit that this pretty boy looked better than most girls. Some

were born to be idols, and Gu Xingze was one such person. In this regard, he was a true winner in life.

Yun Shishi was perturbed by the commotion around her, yet it did not seem to faze Gu Xingze at all. He smilingly took a few steps closer to her and asked in a hush tone, “Huanyu Entertainment will be hosting its yearly cocktail party tomorrow night. Do you want to come?”

She was stunned. Was he inviting her to that important dinner party?

When he did not immediately get a response from her, he clarified, “I’d like to invite you to be my partner to this dinner party.”

Is he joking? He’s a famous superstar; why does he want an obscured and unknown person like me to be his female companion?

“I just finished auditioning, and the directors have yet to decide on the final candidate for the role, so I’m not really considered as an actress per se. Besides, I’m not qualified. I really don’t understand why you would want me to be your female companion in that important dinner party.” She subtly rejected his request.

Chapter 105: A Game

“I just finished auditioning, and the directors have yet to decide on the final candidate for the role, so I’m not really considered as an actress per se. Besides, I’m not qualified. I really don’t understand why you would want me to be your female companion in that important dinner party.” She subtly rejected his request.

Xiao Xue was dumbfounded by Yun Shishi's refusal.

Oh, my god. Has she turned stupid? The heavenly king, Gu Xingze, invited her as his partner to an important party, and she actually refused? Does she know that many actresses and stars are waiting for such privilege?

Gu Xingze was not offended in the least, albeit he was a little surprised. Qin Zhou, who was standing beside him, quickly clarified, "There's going to be a signing ceremony after tomorrow night's reception. You have been selected to sign on with our company, so please accept this offer!"

She finally understood Gu Xingze's intention.

He wanted to boost her career with his popularity, and such a grand occasion would be the perfect way for him to announce her entry into the show business. This was an extravagant show that only he could pull off. It also showed how determined he was to support her with such an ambitious move.

Still, why is he... so good to me?

She graciously nodded her head. In a crystal clear voice that sounded melodious, she said, "Okay. If this is the decision of the company, I'll gladly accept."

Lin Fengtian nodded approvingly. This girl had a steady and mature disposition and was mild-mannered. She would go far in the industry.

"Let's go Shishi. And your friend here beside you... Let me give you two a lift," he told them.

Mo Qi, the executive director who was standing beside Lin Fengtian, had, for some reason, become alarmed to hear that Yun Shishi was selected as the female lead. He quickly pulled both of them aside. “Director Lin, Xingze, can you two come over for a while? Miss Yun, I’m sorry, but please give us a minute; I have something to discuss with these two!”

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He smilingly apologized to Yun Shishi while pulling Lin Fengtian and Gu Xingze to a corner. His face lost its smile when he spoke to the two. “Director Li, pardon my frankness, but I think you’ve made this decision flippantly. She doesn’t seem suitable for this role.”

Gu Xingze smiled without a word.

Lin Fengtian went ahead and chose the female lead without discussing with the other directors about it first, and this certainly alarmed them.

Many of them, on behalf of the director team and Lin Fengtian, accepted ‘benefits’ from many famous actresses who wanted to be cast for this role. Since Lin Fengtian was known for his no-nonsense attitude and for not being swayed by favors, the actresses turned to the rest of the directors to buy their chance, instead.

Now that the female lead was given to an obscure newbie, it would be difficult for them to account for the ‘benefits’ that they had previously accepted.

Lin Fengtian, who was not privy to all this, was rather upset when the executive director questioned his decision. “Why? How is she not

suitable? You've seen Shishi's excellent performance earlier, right? She's a natural talent!"

Shishi... Why is he addressing her in such an intimate fashion? Is there something going on between them?

No, that should not be the case. From what he knew of Lin Fengtian, this man was a workaholic and obsessed with his craft. He was not the same as those licentious directors.

He had never accepted a woman because of a shady connection before.

"But she's new! She is obscure without a good background. We don't know if the audience will like her. The investors may not agree," he persisted.

"Her inexperience is not an issue. You've seen her good acting earlier. She fit the 'Yin Xiachun' character in the novel with her looks and acting skills. How can I let such a talent go to waste?" Lin Fengtian could not resist praising Yun Shishi.

"Don't you remember another actress that the investors want to cast for this role? Er... Oh, yes. She's called Yan Bingqing!"

Lin Fengtian flared up when he heard the name. "Yan Bingqing? That carpet star? She's only a vase in any shows she was cast in. Either as white lotus or stupidly sweet Bai Tian, were there any shows she had acted well before? She only knows how to pose on the red carpet during film festivals. She only has her good looks going for her and clearly lacks talent in acting!"

Chapter 106: He Lingxiang

Lin Fengtian flared up when he heard the name. “Yan Bingqing? That carpet star? She’s only a vase in any shows she was cast in. Either as white lotus or stupidly sweet Bai Tian, are there any shows she had acted well before? She only knows how to pose on the red carpet during film festivals. She only has her good looks going for her and clearly lacks talent in acting!”

Yan Bingqing was a popular leading actress who made it big by virtue of the gossips surrounding her. She was presently the hottest and most talked-about actress.

She was unscrupulous and came from a decent family. Besides that, she also had the support of a few rich and influential sugar daddies.

She first appeared in a Qing drama with a meaty supporting role ten years ago.

The drama series was very popular nationwide at that time. The key producers and actors in the show shot to fame overnight.

However, she was lagging behind the lead roles and was soon forgotten.

She seemed to have managed to get hold of a mysterious sugar daddy, which got her a PR team. That PR team sparked public interest in her by using negative publicity stunts.

Yan Bingqing had all the necessary qualities – decent family background, influential backer, resources, et cetera – but she was

lacking in the acting department. She was nothing more than a flower vase each time she was cast in a show.

Even now, people only remembered her in that supporting role she first appeared in.

She acted in another Qing drama last year. This time around, she was cast in the lead role as a capable and seductive empress. She depicted the character as a white lotus². Lin Fengtian was unimpressed by such crude acting.

“Before this, Director Yan also wanted to promote another young, naïve model named Han. How can that girl be in my movie with her subpar abilities? Those investors know nothing about my films; do they really think it’s that easy for me to cast anyone they want?”

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Mo Qi was getting nervous as he tried to persuade Lin Fengtian in vain.

Xiao Xue, who was watching from a distance, asked, “Shishi, what do you think they are talking about? Director Lin seems to be quite upset.”

“Not sure,” she replied. That was when she caught sight of a familiar figure.

He Lingxiang.

Everyone in the show business was familiar with He Lingxiang. He was well-known not for his films but for his notorious lifestyle, instead.

Rumors had it that he had powerful backing from the high society and could get whatever he wanted through unscrupulous means. Most entertainers took extra care not to offend him.

Many actresses, who would not hesitate to use sex to gain fame, would avoid him like the plague.

He was lewd and perverted. He inflicted his masochistic ways on numerous entertainers, male and female.

Yun Shishi even heard that he defiled the Miss World with a few mafia chiefs nine years ago. The poor lady lost her mind after that traumatic experience and found later on that she had contracted venereal disease through that. She sadly passed away two years after.

He Lingxiang used his typical tactics to suppress this shocking news, yet many insiders still came to know about this.

If an entertainer had no strong backer, he could get his hands on him or her.

What is he doing here? Is he trying to lay his hands on a naïve and inexperienced model with the excuse of officiating this audition?

He Lingxiang was jovial as he stepped out of the washroom with another producer. From their expression, it was apparent that they had accomplished what they had set out to achieve.

As they passed by the entrance, their attention was drawn to a few attractive girls standing next to them.

1. Flower vase – In China, it refers to an actress who looks pretty but cannot act. She is likened to a vase prop in a show.

2. White lotus – In China, it insinuates to an evil and unscrupulous woman who appears pure and chaste on the surface.

Chapter 107: His name is evil.

The producer, who was with He Lingxiang, looked especially haggard. After presiding over the audition the entire morning, he had aesthetic fatigue, so when he saw a natural beauty standing before him, he was quickly enticed.

“Oh, my. This girl is pretty! What’s your name?”

He Lingxiang shifted his gaze to her. She was indeed beautiful, but she was detached and aloof. She completely ignored them, as if they were transparent, despite them being next to her.

Yun Shishi turned to walk away. The producer’s attempt to chat her up failed miserably, which irked him greatly. He tried to catch her arm to stop her from leaving, but she deftly avoided him and walked away without looking back.

She did not want to have any interaction with He Lingxiang. The man was too evil, so it was best to steer clear of him.

He Lingxiang snorted and commented acerbically, “Hmph! That girl has some guts!”

The producer rubbed it in. “That girl must be here for the audition. Naïve and inexperienced, she doesn’t know the rules at all, does she? How dare she act high and mighty before you, Director He!”

He ignored the comment. The girl had now piqued his interest. He strode over and caught her by the arm. “Miss, I’m talking to you. Why are you ignoring me?”

“That’s right! You have to learn to be respectful, missy,” the producer added with some annoyance.

What a hypocrite!

“Shishi, ignore him. He doesn’t seem like a good guy.”

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Unknowingly, her name made his eyes brighten in an instant!

“Shishi,” He Lingxiang muttered her name a few times. He tightened his grip on her arm. “Missy, you have the looks and qualities. Why don’t you try auditioning? You may be the next female lead!”

Yun Shishi retorted with much disinterest, “Thank you for your interest, but I am only average and can’t enter the eyes of the directors.”

“Oh, no, that’s not true. You look better than those girls with their thick makeup. You stand a very good chance.” He inched his burly body close to her and coyly whispered, “I’m not sure if you’ve heard of me before. I’m also a director. If you are willing, I can make you the female star in my next movie...”

She was alarmed when she heard that. He clasped her arm so tightly that she could not move away. Annoyed and ashamed, she raised her voice slightly, “... Let me go!”

“Missy, I’m being polite. Are you going to be this rude to me?” he asked, his tone turning cold and threatening.

Xiao Xue was antagonized by his aggressive stance. She walked toward him with much displeasure but was quickly stopped by Yun Shishi. “No, don’t. They are not simple folks. You’ll get into trouble.”

Xiao Xue was too provoked to listen. She shook off her hand and strode toward He Lingxiang.

Chapter 108: Bump Into

Yun Shishi wanted to ignore He Lingxiang. Unfortunately, he was too interested and would not let her go. His lewd eyes revealed his indecent thoughts and desire. He was very satisfied with this ‘catch’.

She heard ruffling steps coming from behind, and, within seconds, Xiao Xue had lunged forward. She tapped his shoulder and gave him a hard slap across the face. Some students that were standing nearby broke into a frightened scream!

“... Xiao Xue! Don’t...”

The alarm bells inside her head went off. Xiao Xue hit He Lingxiang? She was not the impulsive type. On the contrary, she was calm and collected and made rational decisions. However, she would lose her cool whenever she saw Yun Shishi in trouble!

When she saw how this licentious man was shamelessly hugging Yun Shishi's arm, she went mad and sent that hard slap on his face. He Lingxiang hit the floor rather ungracefully. When he got up, he spat out some blood. Two of his teeth were knocked out, and his face burned hot from the humiliating attack!

Yun Shishi felt suffocated by this painful and awkward sight.

Xiao Xue had a black belt in taekwondo and could deliver a mean punch.

“D*mn you! You dared hit him?”

The producer quickly went to help He Lingxiang up as he sent the two a menacing look.

The clueless students hurried off to get the teachers for assistance.

Xiao Xue remained undaunted. Their threats could not intimidate her.

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She was still young and had just returned from studying overseas. She had not experienced or witnessed any social bloodbath, so she naturally did not realize the consequences of her action!

This was a law-abiding society to her. Moreover, they were currently in a university. Surely, these hoodlums could not just arbitrarily create havoc or endanger anyone here, especially the students!

“Shishi, are you alright? Did he do anything funny to you?” Xiao Xue worriedly asked her.

“Quick; let’s go.” Yun Shishi resolved to leave this place immediately and motioned for Xiao Xue to follow her out with a light tick of her dainty finger. Xiao Xue got the hint and both were ready to take flight. The two men were not about to let them go; they insolently and imminently blocked the girls’ path.

“Ladies, do you think you can run after hitting me? How dare you! What’s your name? Which company are you from?”

Xiao Xue coolly and firmly said, “Scram!”

The producer was antagonized by her defiance. “Who the f*ck do you think you are talking to?!”

She could not stand his provocation and pulled his collar, both getting into a scuffle on the spot!

Wanting to protect Yun Shishi, she pushed her away from the danger zone. Yun Shishi was not prepared for her unintentional shove and toppled backward.

Bump! She hit a human wall.

She felt a strong and steady arm hold her firmly.

She caught a vaguely familiar whiff – mature, cool, and seductive – that could only belong to a man.

As she leaned on his broad and muscular chest, she heard the powerful beating of his heart beneath the expensive shirt.

The man’s fragrance assaulted her head-on this time.

Chapter 109: High and Mighty

Yun Shishi frowned as she hit the human wall hard. She looked up and saw that everyone had suddenly fallen silent.

She was bewildered by this unexpected turn of event. She looked in the direction of Xiao Xue and He Lingxiang. The two had also stopped fighting and were standing rooted to the spot.

He Lingxiang had the most confounded and funniest expression. He was utterly shaken up, and his hands surreptitiously let go of Xiao Xue's collar. His petrified gaze was fixated behind her.

The producer, who was standing next to him, wore the same petrified expression. They looked as if they had seen a ghost!

She composed herself and tried to regain her balance. While she was fumbling, a clean and fair hand appeared before her.

The silver cufflink on his suit pierced her sight as it reflected the sunlight.

This hand obviously belonged to a man, yet it was clean and fair. It looked well-maintained with candle-like fingers.

She lifted her face and was met with a pair of deep and penetrating almond-shaped eyes. Standing before her was a tall and handsome man. Although he looked young, only in his twenties, he had a mature and steady disposition. His aura was imposing and imperial.

Just from his presence, one could tell that he had braved many storms – a man with a cold nature.

It was not apathy but rather aloofness and detachment.

From where he stood, his high-and-mighty presence ubiquitously occupied every inch of the room.

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A bevy of tall men in suits stood behind him. They were bowing slightly and respectfully in his shadow, much like an army saluting a general.

Mu Yazhe...

Yun Shishi was frozen stiff, while the nearby Xiao Xue was mesmerized.

The man bowed his head and silently extended his hand to her. He looked elegant in his black suit as the sun cast a soft and devilish shadow on his face.

The sun was glaring straight at her, so she could not directly look at him. Although she could only look at him partly, his exquisite features were apparent enough to melt her heart.

His sword-like eyebrows and angular silhouette seemed to hold the cold, harsh, and disdainful lineage of a European aristocrat, yet it also exuded the unique, elegant, and deeply demonic charm of an oriental man.

He was an undoubtedly handsome, young man, and this beauty was not merely superficial. He held the charisma of a king – high and mighty.

The row of men behind him was curious to see on who could possibly rouse their master's attention to stop him in his path. They dropped their gazes, which felt like shots of darts, on to her. She struggled to right her footing, ignoring his outstretched hand.

The man saw the graceful and valiant look on her face and slowly retracted his hand. He was silent, his mouth deliberately cocking into an indiscernible arc.

Chapter 110: Already Slept Together Before

The man saw the graceful and valiant look on her face and slowly retracted his hand. He was silent, his mouth deliberately cocking into an indiscernible arc.

His stare was starting to make her feel uncomfortable.

She could not understand why he would always appear when she was down.

She dusted off the dirt on her and moved to leave. Behind her came a low and cool command, “Stay where you are.”

His words were sparse and his tone was melodious, like an aged wine.

She paused and shot him a frown. “Mister, what can I do for you?”

“Are you really leaving in this manner?” He was amused by her reaction. Other women could not wait to flock to him, whereas she avoided him like the plague. Could it be because she was harboring a guilty conscience?

His knowing smile irked her, and she asked with much indifference, “Do I know you?”

Her impatience and aloofness surprised the men behind him. They had not seen anyone be disrespectful to their young master before!

Anyone knew that, with his aristocratic background and elite status, even senior government officials had to show him some degree of comity. Her lack of civility offended them.

The man was not antagonized by her behavior, however. With smugness, he walked closer to her and whispered softly next to her ear, “We don’t know each other? We’ve slept together before... remember?”

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Her expression turned grim and she asked him in a spleeny tone, “Mister Mu, why are you so shameless?”

“Er? Shameless? Is this called being ‘shameless’?” His smile deepened. “Do you want to see what shame really looks like?”

Neither she nor Xiao Xue knew of his identity, and the latter was not interested in finding out. He Lingxiang, meanwhile, had an inkling of who this big shot was.

Yun Shishi and Mu Yazhe were standing at an intimate distance; this shocked those that were present at the scene, especially He Lingxiang and his entourage.

He had been in this circle for many years and met countless people. To survive and ensure that he would not step on the wrong foot, he had to be clear about the people occupying the high seats.

He did not know of this young man's identity as they had never met before, but he did know the bunch of men standing behind him. They were all familiar faces in fact!

They were curtsying to the man despite being rich and influential in their own rights.

Take the middle-aged man at the very back as an example; he was among the leading chieftains in the capital, holding power to a few major businesses and secret forces. His current position made him a key decision-maker in the capital.

While He Lingxiang held some power and notoriety, he was nothing to that middle-aged man.

Chapter 111: Mu Empire

Nowadays, those who did business in the capital had shady dealings with the mafia. This was how many managed to miraculously gain fame and fortune in just two short years.

Rumors had it that a few of these successful businessmen started as smugglers.

Some came from other provinces or the central government. They were prominent senior officials and people with high positions in the capital.

Standing before the row of men were a few tall and muscular men. He Lingxiang's face turned pale with fright when he finally recognized these men.

They were from the Mu family!

The Mu family, a famous and noble clan with a long lineage, was the largest family-run consortium in China and even in Asia.

He Lingxiang, however, did not have access to more background details. He was too lowly to be privy to such information, after all.

This clan was known for being elusive and secretive.

It was said that the Mu family ran a network of businesses that spanned across proper channels and underground trading. The family managed to establish Disheng Financial Group through their laundering efforts a while back, successfully entrenching an industrial chain in the global financial industry.

The world dubbed the family as the 'Mu Empire'.

Whether in China or in Asia – even in some parts of North America and Western Europe – the power of Mu family was extensive and growing; it was a much respected global leader. Nobody knew of how vast this family's fortune was except for its head.

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Once, a country clashed head-on with the Mu family over some political issue. Subsequently, Disheng Financial Group withdrew its monetary support from that country, including all forms of trading, and this resulted into that country's economy to regress to its pre-liberation state. After that incident, the country's leader learned to pay obeisance to the Mu family.

Looking at the big shots respectfully following behind the man, He Lingxiang could only cower at the thought of who he might be!

This Shishi actually dares to be disrespectful to him in front of so many people?

He Lingxiang silently sniggered. She would be duly punished for being so disrespectful.

Sure enough, a menacing man approached Yun Shishi to teach her a lesson.

Mu Yazhe dismissed him with a warning look, though. The man was startled by it but immediately understood his master's signal and quietly retreated.

They could not understand what he had in mind.

This girl was neither family nor friend, and, to make matter worse, she was hostile toward the boss! However, he did not seem to take the slightest offense.

Was their master finally moved by a woman?

Although he was young and full of vitality, he remained detached and uninterested.

In the past twenty years or so that he was in control of the Mu Group and despite being constantly surrounded by famous and beautiful actresses and socialites, he hardly got close to any woman. There was no hint of him being in any suggestive relationship with the opposite sex.

Chapter 112: A Rare Happening

Rumors about him abounded. Many said that he had a nominal fiancée, but he was disjointed with her. Some speculated that he had a different sexual preference or a sexual problem. These, though, were merely hearsays!

Another rumor had it that his fiancée was infertile, and the birth mother of Mu Yichen was someone else.

Grandmaster Mu was plagued with worry by these rumors for years!

For one thing, Grandmaster Mu was adamant on Mu Yazhe having progeny to continue the family lineage. Mu Yazhe was the sole inheritor of the family, and it was high time for him to continue the legacy.

He was reluctant to marry, however, so Mu Wanrou, his nominal fiancée, had become the laughingstock of many.

In any case, Grandmaster Mu had had enough of the gossips and rumors about the Mu family.

Six years ago, he was no less busy finding a surrogate mother to bear Mu Yazhe's progeny. From international celebrities to respectable

socialites, he looked at countless candidates, but, despite his best efforts, was unable to find anyone to his liking.

His criteria were harsher than the ancient emperor's choice of concubine.

The men exchanged glances and seemed to be guessing the same thing.

It was He Lingxiang's turn to be speechless this time. Who is this woman?

At this moment, Yun Shishi came to recognize a face among these men. It was the face of the capital's mayor. She had seen his face in a few newspapers before. Realizing that these men were no average folks, she deliberated over their intention in coming here. Just then, a few men's loud shuffling footsteps were heard together with their disdainful shouting and swearing.

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Apparently, He Lingxiang's lackey had called for backup. These assistants had rushed over as soon as they received the call.

He Lingxiang started trembling when he saw his men.

He threw the producer a look. The producer, of course, knew the reason for these men's arrival. Looking at the current situation, he was unsure if this was a good idea.

The backups swaggered in and were stunned to see the impressive lineup. They were ignorant and lacked the ability to read the

situation properly, though. “Director He, who are these people? Why are they crowding here?”

Before He Lingxiang could reply, one of them, a young man, flapped his hand at the men in suits and tried to chase them away. “Get lost; get lost! Don’t crowd in here! You are making a nuisance to the director at work here! Are you lot looking for trouble?!”

Seeing the men in suits remaining unflustered and He Lingxiang continuing to sheepishly stand at the side, the young man hooked He Lingxiang’s shoulder with a smile. “Director He, who are they? Are these chaps giving you trouble?” He pointed to Xiao Xue first. When he saw He Lingxiang’s face turning grim, he brazenly stuck his finger in the direction of the apathetic-looking man and Yun Shishi. “Or is it this girl who is causing you trouble?”

Sshhh...

He Lingxiang sucked in a breath of cold air as he contemplated about running away. The few assistants realized his intention to run away and were annoyed. “Director He, why can’t you say something?”

Chapter 113: Untouchable Person

He Lingxiang shook his head and tried to signal the young man with his eyes. Unfortunately, the chap did not get it and remained oblivious. He merely assumed that He Lingxiang was affirming that the men in suits were the ones bothering him.

“Hey, hey, hey! I told you lot not to block the way here, right? Didn’t you hear me?”

He darted over and put his hand on the aloof man's shoulder. The handsome man, however, did not duck or even look at him.

In that instant, the young man saw a black shadow flash across his eyes. Before he could understand what was happening, his wrist was held firmly by the man who had dashed out from the crowd.

A painful cracking sound was heard from his wrist. One twist and turn, and then he was flung in the air by a huge force. He hit the wall several meters away with such force that it cracked!

He lay on the floor in a heap. Feeling pain in his chest, he spat a mouthful of blood and then passed out!

Yun Shishi and Xiao Xue were terrified at this sight. Before the latter could bring the former behind her, someone from the crowd emerged.

This man was not tall but emanated a menacing aura. His footsteps were firm as he sharply swept his eyes across the room. His baritone voice boomed, "Which gang do you belong to? How dare you cause havoc in my territory?"

He Lingxiang and his followers dropped to their knees on the floor in fear when they heard him.

The man was Lin Xiaozheng of Qinyang Gang, the number one mafia head in capital.

Lin Xiaozheng had a high status in the capital.

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Most gangs, including many entertainment companies, in the capital were under the control of Qinyang Gang. The gang's headquarters was based in the capital. It boasted of a few hundred thousand followers, which went to show the extent of the gang's power. Lin Xiaozheng was the leader of such an enormous gang.

Technically, this area was under his jurisdiction. Those creating trouble on his turf, especially before an important figure from the Mu family, were making him look bad!

He looked at He Lingxiang kneeling quietly in a corner and asked, "What's your name?"

He Lingxiang was terrified by his intimidation. Thinking of something, he cautiously replied, "Chief Lin, I am – I am actually..."

"Speak louder; I can't hear you!" Lin Xiaozheng was getting impatient.

He Lingxiang closed and opened his eyes and mustered up all his courage to speak. "My name is He Lingxiang. May I ask... who this is?"

He asked while looking apprehensively at the tall man whom everyone seemed to worship.

Respect emerged on Lin Xiaozheng's stern-looking face as he shot back, "Is it for you to check on the head of Disheng Financial Group?"

The typically arrogant He Lingxiang was alarmed and sputtered, “My apologies! With all due respect, I didn’t recognize Director Mu from Disheng—”

An abrupt voice interrupted his trembling words.

Chapter 114: First Lady from the Lu Family

An abrupt voice interrupted his trembling words.

“What’s happening here? Why are there so many people at the entrance?” Lin Fengtian, who had stepped outside the audition room, rushed over when he heard a commotion downstairs.

Bewildered, he saw a familiar sight from the crowd. “Director Mu! To what do I owe this honor of seeing you here today?”

Mu Yazhe gave him a quick glance and ignored him. Huanyu Entertainment was a sizeable corporation, and Lin Fengtian was considered as an old-timer in the company. He was sly and talented – a rare genius that could go both ways. Still, Mu Yazhe could not be bothered with him.

Lin Fengtian beamed, turned, and saw Xiao Xue huddling protectively in front of Yun Shishi; this was when he realized what was happening.

“Brother Mu!”

A sweet and shy figure barged in.

Everyone turned to look and saw a lady wearing a baby blue pleated dress happily running toward Mu Yazhe. This woman shoved Yun Shishi, who was standing in front of him, to the side.

Who is this woman to block Brother Mu's way? What an eyesore!

She looked in Yun Shishi's direction, turned to gaze at Mu Yazhe with a smile on her pretty face, and asked, "Brother Mu, why are you here today? Are you here to see me?"

The lady was called Lu Jingtian, the precious twenty-year-old lady of a family of military and political giants in the capital and a prominent upper-class socialite.

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Mu and Lu families had generations of rapport, so there was a rumor that Lu Jingtian was initially selected by Grandmaster Mu to be the daughter-in-law. Mu Yazhe was not keen despite the lady's interest, however.

Mu Yazhe had known Lu Jingtian since young and had a close relationship with her. She had a huge crush on him, which was no secret among the rich and famous in the capital.

Mu Yazhe was also fond of Lu Jingtian and looked after her with extreme care. His treatment of her was like that of a brother to his beloved little sister.

She was a little sister to him and nothing more!

Lu Jingtian looked adoringly at him. His name was deeply carved in her mind and heart that the sound of it would send her into a bundle of tingling nerves.

She was so in love with this man, whom she had admired since young, and wished for him to give her a second look. When she saw him look at Yun Shishi several times, she decided to pay attention to her.

The woman was admittedly pretty.

Huanyu Entertainment was so big it was responsible for half of the show business. She had seen entertainers of all shapes and sizes as she followed Mu Yazhe on his businesses.

She could say that the woman was different from those typical pretty faces. Her elegance and beauty, with no traces of artificiality, were inborn. The ethereal beauty of this woman was ineffable, and that was what she was most jealous about.

She heard what Lin Fengtian had said earlier, and it made her even more jealous.

She was striving to enter the entertainment industry to have more presence in Mu Yazhe's life.

As for Lin Fengtian, he was the acclaimed director she wanted to work with the most. However, from the conversation earlier, it seemed that the star director had to stoop low just to get this unknown woman to be part of his film. This made her anxious.

Chapter 115: Offended

Lu Jingtian panicked when she realized that her lofty status was being threatened. She quickly turned to Mu Yazhe and asked smilingly, “Brother Mu, why are you ignoring me?”

Mu Yazhe finally lowered his gaze to look at her for the first time.

“Director Lin is here as a judge today. Let’s go for coffee after this audition.”

Lu Jingtian clung onto his arm, her coyness with him appeared intimate to the onlookers. She deliberately increased her voice’s volume to show off her close relationship with the most desirable and influential man in the capital.

Earlier in the waiting room during the audition, a newbie was being rude to her. She would use this chance to make a silent proclamation of her eminent status!

Amid the crowd, Yun Na was fidgeting nervously.

What is that woman’s relationship with that rich and influential man?

She could not recognize the handsome Mu Yazhe naturally, but she did identify the mayor respectfully following the man from behind. The tall and handsome man had a remarkable relationship with that woman?

She shuddered at the thought.

Earlier in the waiting room, she had been difficult with that woman. Would she, Lu Jingtian, seek revenge in return?

Mu Yazhe knew well the vain intention behind Lu Jingtian's action, so he did not expose her. "Your grandpa asked me to come and take a look at you."

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Yun Shishi's heart skipped a beat.

He is here for her, huh...

His words satisfied Lu Jingtian's vanity. She pretended to be upset with him. "Hmph! Grandpa must have sent you to dissuade me from acting again. I love acting, though! Brother Mu, this is my dream!"

His lips revealed a slightly elegant arc, yet he kept quiet.

She continued, "Brother Mu, you invested in this film, right? Jingtian really wants to be the female lead in this movie..."

He strode off with her close to his side. The row of men behind him followed suit, and the masses dispersed next, just like an imperial procession following the king on duty.

"Let's go, Shishi. And your friend here beside you... Let me give you two a lift," Lin Fengtian told them.

The group walked to the exit. When Xiao Xue caught sight of a black shining Rolls-Royce Phantom, she excitedly danced around the vehicle a few times like a little kid.

Oh, god! This is a rich man! This model is an imported vintage car!

Lin Fengtian was slightly stunned by her reaction. This little girl!

“Brother Lin!” Xiao Xue called out. With her manicured fingertips displaying orchid motif, she pointed to the grand car and asked, “Can I take a few selfies here with this car?!”

“Sure,” he agreed readily.

She immediately took out her hand phone and snapped a few selfies with the car. Her alluring and showy expressions made her look sleazy...

“Enough! Let’s get into the car first!” he urged the two.

“Er, alright!” Xiao Xue excitedly got into the back seat, leaving Yun Shishi gawking at her best friend’s antics.

The group stepped into the car one after another. None of them noticed the pair of eyes following them from behind.

That pair of eyes was full of ill intention.

That d*mn girl called Shishi almost cost him his life. He almost unintentionally stepped on the toes of those mighty shots. Without mentioning the men from Disheng Financial Group, Lin Xiaozheng alone was enough to squash him flat!

Chapter 116: Yun Na’ s Underhanded Ways

That woman called Yun Shishi is rather capable!

But so what? It is more fun to play with a woman who used to be the boss's favorite. Besides, Mu Yazhe won't be that much interested in a newbie with no decent background.

The entertainment industry has no lack of beauties. With his status, he can have anyone he wants.

It doesn't sound so bad to go after a woman whom Mu Yazhe has fooled around before.

With this plot in mind, he furiously crushed the paper with Yun Shishi's information using his fist. His evil thoughts were interrupted by a coy voice beside him.

“Hello, how – how are you doing? May I ask if you are Director He Lingxiang?”

He turned around and saw a bare-faced Yun Na speaking to him.

Having removed her makeup, she actually looked way cleaner than before.

Her face was still swelling slightly, but it did not diminish her beauty.

Yun Na's seductive and devilish beauty was different from Yun Shishi's pure and innocent splendor. The former was the kind of vixen that enchanted emperors in ancient times. She would be able to make the cut if she were to act the character of Daji 1.

She was petite unlike the slender and tall Yun Shishi. Her shy and timid expression complemented her small, pale, and clean face; she came across as vulnerable.

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She unwittingly fit He Lingxiang's pitch!

He recently took a liking to such type of beauty, so he was immediately attracted by her.

Seeing him staring at her, she knew she had gotten him interested. Not many men could resist her charm – even a veteran like He Lingxiang with his filthy mind.

“Director He, my name is Yun Na. I graduated from an arts school. I've looked up to you and your talent. Oh, I greatly admired the film you directed last year called ‘Blood Roses’; I still consider it as the best film.”

‘Blood Roses’?

That was a half-assed production with a bad script that received bad reviews. How could she consider that rotten movie as a great film? He realized what she was after with her flattery.

Yun Na was not from the entertainment industry, so she did not know of his disgusting deeds and the troubles she would be getting into with her action now. She only knew that he held some reputation within the circle.

He Lingxiang would not reject women who threw themselves at him. Besides, he was deeply humiliated by the incident that had happened earlier and needed an outlet to vent.

He came close to her intimately, grabbed her wrist, and pulled her to his chest. Hiding behind the shady trees, he groped her breasts as he nibbled on her ear.

“Ahh...” Pretending to be alarmed and scared, Yun Na feebly attempted to push him away like a frightened little rabbit. “Director He, what are you – you...”

Her body had a faint aroma that got him more aroused. It looks like this girl is still a chick.

He Lingxiang was not the kind to accept all women without filter. Fortunately, Yun Na satisfied his criteria.

“Didn’t you just say you admire me?” He decided to be direct with her. “You purposely sought me with those intended flatteries. Others would think I have ulterior motive if they heard what you had just told me.”

Yun Na got his meaning. With their aroused bodies so close together, the intention was evident to both!

She was of course a little scared. The entertainment industry was messy and dangerous, after all. However, she was filled with loathing at the thought of Yun Shishi passing the audition and getting the coveted role. How proud and glamorous that woman would be thereafter?

Her jealousy was like a poisonous tree taking root in her heart. She would do anything for it.

“Director He, it’s not convenient here. Why don’t... we change location?” she suggested with an alluring smile.

“Great!” He had been waiting for this.

1. ‘Daji’ character in Chinese literature refers to the legendary beautiful and wanton concubine who eventually led Emperor Xin to his downfall.

Huanyu Tower.

By the window, a man stood tall and upright; his deep-set eyes, proud and distant, gazed at the tall buildings outside the window.

Earlier, the board of directors had a heated argument over the female lead role for the ‘The Green Apple’ movie.

The female lead had already been decided internally. The nationwide audition was just a publicity stunt as a warm-up to the eventual release.

Lin Fengtian was absent from the board meeting, yet he made his stance clear over the phone.

He expressed his support for Yun Shishi, a newbie with superior qualities, and wanted her to play the lead role.

All the investors and producers were thoroughly upset by this and unanimously voted against it.

The role had already been set for Lu Jingtian. How could an unknown newbie come out of nowhere and enchant Lin Fengtian into selecting her?

When Lin Fengtian heard that Lu Jingtian had been selected internally, he announced his decision not to direct the show unless

the female lead was Yun Shishi. The art film he wanted to direct had been reduced to shambles, and that antagonized him into making such a bold declaration.

The lead director's threat to resign from production stunned the collective directors, and they proceeded to apologize and ask for his forgiveness.

This might be a good script, but, without Lin Fengtian, this film would be nothing.

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The movie would lose half its appeal without him.

Hence, the meeting ended badly.

Lu Jingtian was also present during Yun Shishi's audition. That breathtaking scene was still vivid in her mind, which made her all the more jealous and envious.

That Yun Shishi successfully portrayed the innocence and beauty of Yin Xiachun with her near-perfect acting. Lu Jingtian was initially satisfied with her performance at the audition, but when she saw Yun Shishi's, she knew she could have done better.

The crying scene she had performed at the audition was overly exaggerated.

“Hmph! She is so opportunistic!” Lu Jingtian commented resentfully. Looking imploringly at Mu Yazhe, she whined, “Brother Mu, you'll let Jingtian have this role, won't you?”

Mu Yazhe glanced briefly at her without a word.

She held tightly onto his arm with much coyness. “Brother Mu, Jingtian really likes this novel. It is Jingtian’s biggest dream to act the character of Yin Xiachun! It is Jingtian’s little wish, so you’ll agree, right?”

Mu Yazhe deftly removed his arm from her embrace. In a calm and cool voice, he said, “Jingtian, I give in to you because that’s what your grandpa wants. You know very well that I’m impartial when it comes to business. This may be an investment by Huanyu, but I don’t interfere with role selection.”

“Brother Mu...” Her face turned red. This was the first time he had refused her.

She knew that the role selection was decided by directors, but this was hardly the case in the current entertainment industry!

It was normal for a director to have limited power over the selection of actors and actresses. Even for acclaimed directors like Lin Fengtian, they had to take into consideration the investors’ requirements. Huanyu Entertainment was the biggest investor in this film, so the company would have its fair share of deciding power.

Mu Yazhe returned to his desk and coolly said, “You are not a child anymore. You can’t get your way all the time.”

“Brother Mu!”

“Go,” he commanded impatiently.

Lu Jingtian knew not to test his patience and dared not insist. She moodily took her leave.

Not long after, Aaron knocked on door and walked into the office.

“Director Mu.”

Mu Yazhe leaned on the office seat; his eyes on Aaron were sharp and penetrating.

For some reason, his penetrating gaze greatly disturbed Aaron!

Chapter 118: The Bonds Within

Aaron did not know why the deep-eyes looking at him made his heart tremble!

He suddenly felt a little uneasy. His guilty conscience rendered him incapable of lifting his head.

The man before him was standing at the pinnacle of power; he could control everything with just a wave of his hand. His innate majestic aura made people fearful of him.

He dared betray this frightening man...

Even now, Aaron was still in a state of shock. If the boss found out that he had fiddled with that report, he would certainly be personally dealt with by him.

Just when he was thinking of this, Mu Yazhe raised his eyes and said, “Aaron.”

“Yes...”

With an ambiguous smile, the man asked, “How long have you been with me?”

“Boss, I’ve been with you for four years,” Aaron submissively replied with lowered eyes.

Mu Yazhe continued emotionlessly, “I set my eyes on you back then because of your outstanding abilities. You said you won’t disappoint me.”

“Yes. Boss personally nurtured me, so I’ll remain loyal to you for the rest of my life.”

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Mu Yazhe nodded. With an unfathomable expression, he raised his hand with a photo clipped between his fingers.

Aaron retrieved the photo carefully. In it was the side profile of a child carrying a small bag and exiting the gates of a kindergarten.

Although it was taken from afar, regardless of the angle or the resolution of the photo, the child’s facial features could be completely and clearly seen.

The child in the photo was the spitting image of Mu Yichen.

Be it their appearance or their facial features – even the mannerisms they had – the two children seemed to be cast from the same mould.

Could two of the same leaves in this world exist without a connection?

This photo was captured by a private investigator under Mu Sheng's order. When the old man received the photo, he bristled with anger and barged into Mu Yazhe's office. Pointing his finger at him, he fumed, "You bastard! You have an illegitimate child?! Are you trying to piss me off? No wonder you keep refusing to marry Rou'er. Do you have an affair with another woman out there?!"

Mu Yazhe was also overwhelmed when he saw the photo. It was understandable why Grandpa Mu had fumed like that. The child looked too similar to him.

Those eyebrows were especially a perfect replica of his.

Family bloodline was something magical – it was something that could not escape anyone's eyes.

The child was undoubtedly his flesh and blood. He felt that there was no need to resort to other verification methods.

There was a magical connection between father and son, and it was something difficult to explain. It was a bond from within.

The child was hidden from him by that woman for over six years.

What was she scheming?

Could she be greedy for riches and wanted to make use of his child to marry into a wealthy family?

She did not seem to be that kind of woman, though.

Mu Yazhe had had Aaron investigate that woman. The report he had given him mentioned nothing about this – unless someone tampered with it.

Who could it be?

Thus, he began to suspect his personal assistant.

Could his personal assistant, who was closest to him, hold a spark of infidelity?

As Mu Yazhe questioningly looked at him, Aaron felt chills down his spine.

He knew of his boss's ruthless tactics.

He dared not imagine what would happen to him if the man discovered his betrayal.

“Aaron, I'm giving you another chance. Give me a satisfactory answer.”

He stared, with unreadable eyes, at his right-hand man and said slowly, “Continue investigating that child.”

Chapter 119: Panic

As Aaron left the office with an uneasy feeling, he met Mu Wanrou at the door by chance.

He had no idea how long she had been standing outside and as to what extent she had overheard their conversation. At this moment, the pallor of her skin was extremely terrible.

Stunned, his expression slightly faltered and he exclaimed in shock, “Madam!”

“Shut up!” Mu Wanrou immediately stared daggers at him. She stepped forward, covered his mouth, and then pushed him into the assistant’s office before swiftly locking the door from the inside.

Bang!

At a loss, Aaron stood rooted to the spot. Mu Wanrou was trembling from head to toe. She leaned on the door and let her body slide down helplessly, looking as if she had plunged herself into great fright and distress.

“Madam, are you alright?” he looked at her with worry.

At present, she appeared to have lost her composure. Her face was ghastly pale, just like a white sheet of paper.

“He... What did he say to you? Did you tell him?” She asked, as he fixed her gaze on him. She appeared to be in a situation where she was on the verge of drowning.

“Boss requested me... to look into Yun Shishi’s identity again and get every piece of information about her no matter how trivial it is. I have to re-examine everything... including that child.”

When Aaron ended his words, he observed that Mu Wanrou’s expression had worsened.

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“NO!” Her eyes were stricken. “You will destroy me if you do that!”

He took in a breath of cold air with some complicated feelings resonating in his chest.

“I can’t betray the boss again.” He showed a pained expression, his good-looking face contorting. “I’ve already betrayed him once...”

“If you keep mum, how will he know?” She sounded as if she were trying to survive from drowning by grasping at the last straws. She was so frightened that her voice shook.

“If that child were really boss’s flesh and blood, wouldn’t it be good to investigate thoroughly?”

“NO!”

“Why?” he asked with confusion.

She, of course, could not give a reason why.

Why? If Yun Tianyou’s identity were to be discovered, he would be treated as one of the future heirs to the Mu Group, and he would be taken back into the Mu family.

Benefitting from her son, the woman would rise in status. She was the surrogate chosen by Grandpa Mu. She was outstanding, and the scarier thing was that she had given birth to two sons for the Mu family.

In contrast, being infertile from birth, she was unable to deliver any children for the Mu family, and her position as the young mistress was not sturdy.

The world of the rich was profound and difficult to navigate through. If one did not have any children, they would be unable to stabilize their position in the family.

She currently had influence in the Mu family because Grandpa Mu adored her.

However, no matter how hard she tried, she could not enter Mu Yazhe's heart.

He agreed to marry her only because it was Grandpa Mu's order – something that he could not defy.

However, Grandpa Mu's physical condition was deteriorating with every passing year. To live a more relaxed life at an old age, the authority in Disheng Financial Group slowly shifted into the hands of Mu Yazhe.

What if... Mu Sheng were gone? Would she still have any place left in the Mu family?

Would she be kicked out of the family?

When that time came, Yun Shishi would ascend in the position because of her son – this was not something impossible.

The scariest thing was... If Grandpa Mu knew of Yun Tianyou's identity, he would surely make him acknowledge himself as part of the Mu family.

Based on his usual actions, he would certainly have someone conduct a thorough investigation on Yun Shishi.

If that incident from a decade was dug out, if Mu Sheng discovered that she was the one who snatched Yun Shishi's jade away and pretended to be her for over ten years, what would become of her?

She shuddered at the thought of this.

“Don't dig into this. If you do that... I will be destroyed!”

Mu Wanrou covered her face and wept helplessly. She was weeping beautifully on the surface, but she was cursing herself bitterly on the inside.

Damn it... She was too slow to act!

Chapter 120: By Hook or by Crook

Damn it... She was too slow to act!

That Yun Shishi was a b*tch! A damn b*tch! Why was it her? Why was it her of all people?!

Were the riches and luxury within her fingertips going to be snatched away before her eyes?

Aaron gazed at her pitiful appearance, and his heart squeezed with pain, as though it was being shredded to pieces.

No man could resist a weak and helpless woman.

“Aaron, help me...” Mu Wanrou pleaded. Looking fragile and weak, she leaned on his chest and her hot tears made his clothes wet. “I can’t let that child return to the Mu family! Aaron, I know you like me. This is the last time; won’t you help me, please?”

Mu Wanrou spoke in a tearful voice, each of her words hitting his heart hard.

His heart skipped a beat. He looked at her in disbelief.

She actually knew?

She was his university classmate for four years. Her tenderness, beauty, pride, and confidence were the most beautiful things he had always yearned to see.

He loved her from the bottom of his heart, but he had never once let it show.

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This was because, from the very start, he had always known that she was an unattainable dream in this life.

He was so insignificant he did not dare confess to her; he was contented with just observing her from afar.

After graduation, he entered Disheng Financial Group and became Mu Yazhe’s personal assistant. Only then did he realize that the man in her heart was like a god.

“Wanrou, I...”

“Just this once. This is the very last time. If you promise to help me, I will do anything you request of me in future,” she begged earnestly once more.

From his furrowed brows, one could tell that he was struggling inside.

Mu Wanrou gritted her teeth. Her hands latched onto his shoulders. She tiptoed and pressed her lips onto his.

Shocked, Aaron’s body became as stiff as stone.

Her lips onto his, she asked with a hint of seduction, “Is... Is this enough?”

“Wanrou...”

“Don’t speak. Hold me.” She smacked his lips with hers again. Her seaweed-like hair was tangled in a mess as she leaned her seductive figure onto his chest.

Mu Wanrou’s dainty frame stretched out enchantingly; it was extremely fascinating and charming. On a regular basis, she cared for her body exceedingly. She was blessed with good looks and a hot body. A normal man’s heart would thump erratically just by looking at her.

Aaron was unable to resist her sweet poison any longer and completely fell into her deadly yet gentle trap.

He let himself go and indulge. Closing his eyes and following his heart, he clutched her shoulders and went down along her back.

An inappropriate scene secretly played out in the assistant's office.

What the two in indulgence did not know was that a mini pinhole camera was in a hidden corner of the ceiling...

...

Gu Xingze sent Yun Shishi home later that evening.

Knowing that she did not own a proper dress for tomorrow's party, he spent a huge sum to gift her one. She was embarrassed to accept it at first, but he smiled at her and told her that she was treating him too much like an outsider.

“Silly girl. Tomorrow is a party breaking new grounds for Huanyu Entertainment. Many first-class producers and directors from movie festivals will be there. Don't tell me that you, as my female partner, will be in a school uniform at the venue?”

Her wits were muddled by his words.

“Alright. Don't stand on ceremony with me. If you succeed in signing the contract, just remember to treat me to a meal!” He presented her with a condition.

She readily agreed.

Erm... It was not like she could not afford to treat him to a 6-yuan Mala hotpot!

Before leaving, he suddenly planted a soft kiss on her forehead.

“Yun Shishi, good luck.”

Chapter 121: Taken Advantage Of

It was already eight at night when Yun Shishi made it to the Yun House to fetch Youyou. She already informed Yun Yecheng of this beforehand, but the air in the living room remained somber when she arrived.

Noticing her return, Li Qin hurriedly approached Yun Shishi. “Have you seen your sister? She’s still not back yet! I’m worried sick!”

“Why would I know where she is?” She showed puzzlement.

She did see Yun Na today, but why should she explain herself to her? She could not be bothered to report anything to Li Qin.

Yun Yecheng saw that Yun Shishi was home and quickly inquired after her wellbeing, which earned him his wife’s pointed stare. She looked at Yun Shishi once more. She was reminded of her daughter who had yet to return home, and immediately exploded in anger.

“Yun Yecheng, what a good father you are! You are so concerned for this wild straw, yet you don’t even ask about your daughter who isn’t home yet!”

Hearing this, he turned livid. “Who did you say is a wild straw?! I’m also worried that Nana isn’t home yet. What are you on about?!”

The two started arguing back and forth. Yun Shishi, who was unwilling to get involved in their fight, calmly headed to her room. However, she was stopped midway by Li Qin’s bellow, “Stop right there!”

Yun Shishi looked over her shoulder and asked in a lukewarm manner, “May I help you?”

Li Qin noticed the exquisite paper bag in her hand. Armani! Years of frequenting the shopping malls, she naturally knew of this international brand. She almost pierced it with her stare!

How did Yun Shishi get a hold of such an expensive item?

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“Where did you get that from?”

“Why do you care?”

After she asked that, Yun Shishi faced forward and continued walking to her room without a backward glance. Li Qin’s head nearly burst in anger. That wild b*tch was becoming more and more disrespectful to her nowadays!

Hmph! What Armani? It must be a cheap imitation of the real thing!

It suddenly poured that night. Yun Shishi then decided to sleep over at the Yun House and went to bed early with Youyou.

At midnight, streaks of lightning and roars of thunder started accompanying the unexpected downpour outside.

Since Yun Na was still not home by then, the worried couple decided to file a ‘missing person’ report at the police station.

The two were about to rush to the station when they were alerted to a strange noise beyond the door. They hurried over and found Yun Na

leaning on the door in a vain manner. They did not know how long she had been standing outside for her hair was soaking wet, her clothes were disheveled, and her face was strangely flushed.

“Mom...” she tremblingly called out. She sounded as if she had experienced a huge chagrin. A trail of clear tears rolled down her cheeks thereafter.

Li Qin felt as if a knife had pierced her heart. “What happened? Nana... come in first!”

Yun Na was helped into the living room. She rested her weight against the chair weakly. Pearl-like tears rolled down her face unabatedly.

Li Qin looked at her daughter, heartbroken. With a tense expression, she inquired, “Nana, what happened to you? Tell me who bullied you?”

Yun Na continued sobbing in tears but remained unforthcoming.

Now, she absolutely regretted it! He Lingxiang appeared to be a dignified gentleman, but he was actually a beast in disguise – a beast among beasts!

He Lingxiang had brought her into a private room this afternoon. She originally thought that she had attached herself to a huge tree and was very pleased with herself!

If she could please him, she might be able to make a grand entrance into show business. Thereafter, she would no longer have to look at Yun Shishi in envy!

Yun Na was unclear of the man's identity but she knew that he was a famous director. Although his movies were box-office flops and were not highly acclaimed, they were often hot topics.

Chapter 122: A War Breaking Out

If she could have such a powerful backer, her acting career would be smooth sailing!

Yun Na naively thought that He Lingxiang brought her along to meet with other producers. He had wide connections, after all. Little did she know that she was being led into a wolf's den of extravagant orgy.

All she wanted to do now was forget what had happened earlier tonight.

She only remembered him handing over an invitation card before asking someone to send her home. He nibbled at her ear as he said, "I heard Gu Xingze had invited your sister to Huanyu's Annual Gala tomorrow. You come, too."

A strange smile appeared on his face when he issued this invitation. "You and your sister shall treat me well tomorrow. Don't worry; I'll give you benefits!"

He could hardly contain his excitement inside. Just imagining that intimate scene of both sisters riding him, no words could express the feeling!

Yun Na held in her disgust and indignation and managed to keep her smile up. She would rather not be together with Yun Shishi!

If things took a wrong turn and the man shifted his support from her to Yun Shishi, what could she do then? She was like a slave today, catering to the whims of every boss with a smile. She was shamed so thoroughly, but, in the end, she was unwilling to throw the helve after the hatchet.

She acted coyly. “I hate that! Mr. He, am I not enough for you?”

“Don’t worry, sweetheart. You’re very attractive, so I, of course, love you the most! Rest assured; I won’t love anyone else!”

With his promise, she felt more at ease.

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Li Qin naturally did not know what she had gone through. Studying her despondent face, she hesitantly asked, “Darling, have you auditioned?”

Yun Yecheng’s head jolted in shock at that. “You said she had gone to audition again?”

Li Qin realized her slip of the tongue and bit her lower lip.

He was very enraged and felt somewhat exasperated that his daughter could not live up to his expectations. “I provided you with good education, but you persisted in becoming an actress? Is our family not capable of feeding you fully and dressing you warmly? Why do you insist on degrading yourself like that?”

As soon as the word ‘degrade’ reached her ears, Yun Na sobbed in indignation and shouted, “DAD! Sis also went to audition, but why didn’t you scold her?!”

“What?!” Li Qin gasped in shock. “She auditioned, too?!”

“How could that be possible?” He defended Yun Shishi and said, “Your sister always behaves properly; she won’t go into a place like the entertainment industry!”

“Dad, you never believe me! Since you don’t believe me, you can ask her yourself! Not only did she take part in the audition, she even passed it! Today, I saw her in a Rolls-Royce; I don’t know what tactics she used, but she probably hooked up with a boss or something—”

SMACK!

Yun Na’s face turned to the side from the fierce slap. She cradled her face and looked at her father in horror. Her heart broke into pieces. “Dad... you hit me?”

Disappointment was written all over his face. “Nana, how could you speak of Shishi like that? She is your sister! How does she usually treat you? She lets you have delicious food and all the good things, but what about you? You are talking behind her back! What about hooking with a big boss? Shishi is not that kind of person!”

“WHY?! Why is it okay for her to participate in the audition but not me? Am I still your biological daughter?!” she yelled at him in exasperation.

He was stumped and watched her run to her room. Only he and his wife were left in the living room, and the latter was looking at him with cold eyes.

Chapter 123: Yun Na' s Coveting

On a certain day, the early morning sun shone brightly.

Youyou got up early and kicked Yun Shishi from the bed.

“Mommy, wake up!” Youyou shook her awake. “Today is a special day! Get up and exercise to prepare for tonight’s gala!”

Yun Shishi was shocked. “Darling, how do you know that mommy is attending a gala tonight?”

He gave her a dull look. “I even know that you are the female partner that Gu Xingze has invited.”

She was baffled.

How does Youyou know ?

Youyou helplessly held up his forehead. How could he let his dumb mother know that this was all part of his plan ? “Anyway, go work and earn money to feed the family! Youyou’s future wife depends on mother!”

He knew how tedious work in the entertainment industry could be. Everything was glamorous and beautiful on the surface, but few people knew of the tough work stars did behind closed doors.

Therefore, he had to put more effort into monitoring his precious mommy and make sure that she had enough strength for the tough work ahead.

“Oh... No, Youyou. Please don't marry someone. Instead, take care of mommy forever!” Yun Shishi tightly hugged her son as the latter's face darkened.

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The mother-son pair changed into a set of comfortable clothes and went for a morning jog of a few kilometers.

Huanyu Entertainment's Annual Gala would be held at seven tonight.

After experiencing yesterday's mess, Yun Na was in total discomfort. When she woke up, no one was home; it was empty and void. Feeling hungry, she checked the fridge for something to eat.

When she passed by Yun Shishi's room, she came to a halt and looked at the door. Something was gnawing at her heart.

She really wanted to know what good stuff was in that exquisite paper bag of Yun Shishi's.

Yesterday, her mother mentioned seeing Yun Shishi carry an exquisite paper bag into the house. She then recalled He Lingxiang saying that Gu Xingze had invited her sister to Huanyu Entertainment's yearly gala as his female partner. After hearing that, Yun Na's heart was filled with resentment.

She regarded Gu Xingze as a person as noble as the gods. How could Yun Shishi, a wild b*tch from nowhere, be worthy of being his female partner?

The longer she thought of it, the stronger the fire of jealousy in her heart raged.

How could Yun Shishi, that vixen incarnate or something, gain the favor of so many producers and directors without doing anything, while she had to work hard and give up so many things just for a chance to participate in tonight's gala?

Hmph! She's nothing more than a disposable toy for the upper echelons of the entertainment industry. After they are tired of her, they'll throw her away. Currying favor with them? Dream on!

Yun Na walked to her door and turned the doorknob – it was actually unlocked. That idiot; she's unguarded as always.

With that mocking thought, she openly strutted into the room. Yun Shishi's room was tidy and free of any clutter. The bed sheets were smoothed and the blankets were neatly folded, and the pillows were properly stacked together. Her desk was also organized. One could even catch a whiff of a clean and pleasant smell in the room.

This fragrance was inherent to Yun Shishi's. She had this refreshing smell since young, so whenever there was a family get-together during the New Year's, many uncles would compete for a chance to cuddle her and get a whiff of that fragrance. Therefore, Li Qin disliked her when she was young and insisted that she was a vixen spirit incarnate with a bewitching scent.

Chapter 124: A Jealous Heart

Yun Na stood before the study desk and opened the drawers. There were textbooks and notes, a few writing pens and erasers, and a family photo with her father.

She dug deeper and found some revision textbooks and exercise booklets. This was when she flared up.

Muttering, “Bookworm!” she searched further but only found books and stationeries.

She turned to aim for the shabby wardrobe, instead. There were only some old clothes hanging inside, faded from too much washing.

This was why she easily spotted the exquisite carrier.

Armani. It was Armani!

She took out the carrier; it contained an elegant and luxurious evening gown!

Oh, god. It was the latest design from Armani’s Summer series!

She frequented the shopping malls, so she was familiar with this expensive brand.

She loved dressing up, but dresses like this were so costly that her mother refused to buy her any!

Looking at her sister's evening gown, she wondered who could have bought it.

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Yun Na had once seen this dress being modeled in a fashion show on TV, and she really liked it! However, the 100,000-yuan price tag scared her.

How could her adoptive sister get a hold of the gown she wanted?!

Her heart was distorted by a surge of senseless jealousy.

In what way does she deserve nice treatment and admiration from the directors and to receive such expensive and beautiful clothes?

She was abandoned; nobody wanted her. Her father adopted and treated her well. He had not cared for his biological daughter the way he cared for Yun Shishi since they were young!

That b*tch snatched away father's love for me.

Yun Na could bear it no longer. She took out the dress and put it on before the mirror.

Her lips curled into a smile when she saw herself wearing the beautiful gown in the mirror. She twirled a few rounds, and her heart soared with happiness!

Her adoptive sister did not deserve such nice clothes; only she herself deserved them. Yun Shishi was Cinderella, while she was a real princess.

The dress came at the right time, too. She was worried she would not have a decent gown to wear at tonight's gala.

She carefully folded the dress and chanced upon a small, exquisite box hidden in a corner of the wardrobe.

It looked like a jewelry box. Out of curiosity, she reached out for it and carefully removed the cover. Something dazzling flashed within her sight.

She followed jewelry trends closely and knew that this was the unique VICOMTE from Van Cleef & Arpel's Secret Garden series.

Yun Na was astounded by the beautiful and dazzling sapphire necklace. It seemed to be chained and connected by countless small diamonds, giving off a cool and noble impression.

It was so beautiful! So beautiful!

This necklace should cost a fortune.

How did her adoptive sister get her hands on such an expensive jewelry? It would be a waste on her.

Another bout of jealousy gripped her heart. Why was it her again? Why was she given such a beautiful necklace? Why was she always so lucky?!

Yun Na bit her lower lip as she clenched the jewelry box with a trembling hand. She could not bear to put it down!

Chapter 125: Taking What Is Not Hers

She knew very well that she should not take the necklace. Her adoptive sister would find out sooner or later.

Staring at the sparkling sapphire necklace, she took a deep breath, paused for a while, and eventually made up her mind. With the box clenched tightly in her palm, she hastily fixed the wardrobe as how it should originally be and dashed out of the room!

She headed straight to her bedroom and panted nervously, feeling guilty. Her pounding heart only managed to calm down after she had stashed the necklace in her drawer.

She tried to console herself. Her adoptive sister was not wearing it anyway, so she might as well take it.

Even if Yun Shishi saw her with the necklace, her adoptive sister could not prove that it belonged to her. After all, there were so many of this kind in the world.

She would simply insist that this was hers! She could say that she had bought an identical necklace like Yun Shishi's! Anyway...
Anyway...

She just wanted to have this necklace!

When she attended the gala tonight, she would wow the crowd. Afterward, she would no longer need to play second-fiddle to her adoptive sister!

She was, nonetheless, ridden with guilt because of her deed, so she quickly packed the things she stole and left after giving He Lingxiang a call.

Yun Shishi returned to her room after the morning run, intending to get ready for the reception later that night. She was shocked to find the room in a mess. The gown and necklace she had prepared for tonight's event were missing. She panicked momentarily.

Youyou was equally alarmed and suspected a thief until he saw Yun Na's earring on the floor. His heart sank when he realized who the culprit was.

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The room did not have a proper lock to hide valuables. He had initially thought that Yun Na would be wiser by now. Instead, she only became more brazen.

Yun Shishi's phone screen lighted up with an unfamiliar number; she picked up the call after some hesitation.

“Hello?”

“Shishi, are you at your house?” Gu Xingze's warm and polite voice came through.

“Er... yes.”

“Great! Are you staying at Peace District? I'll be there soon.”

“Er! We have a little sticky situation at hand.” She rubbed her chin in frustration. Taking another look at her room, she sighed in

resignation. “I’m very sorry; I don’t think I can attend tonight’s gala with you.”

“What’s the matter?”

For some reason, Gu Xingze felt disappointed upon knowing that she would be unable to attend tonight’s gala. He had been in a good mood since morning and was looking forward to it.

“What happened?”

She told him the situation, “The gown... I’m not sure how, but it is missing along with the necklace you borrowed...”

“Lost?”

“I’m not sure. The room was in a mess when I got home. I forgot to lock the door...”

Gu Xingze sighed in relief at that. “Oh, I thought something major happened!”

His agent, Qin Zhou, who was standing next to him, cried in frustration.

“What?! My god! That necklace is the one and only precious gem from EMPRESS! How could she lose that?!”

Chapter 126: EMPRESS

“What?! My god! That necklace is the one and only precious gem from EMPRESS! How could she lose that?!”

That necklace did not come easy. He had borrowed it from the director behind the president’s back. If this were to be found out by his boss, he would end up in dire straits!

“Forget it. Let her come over first. It’s still early, so we can go over to EMPRESS to select another gown.” Qin Zhou had a plan.

Gu Xingze’s extended Bentley parked at the entrance to Peace District. The expensive car drew much attention from the residents in the neighborhood.

This was a poor residential area, so the people in it had not seen such a luxury car before. They quickly gathered in one corner, gesticulating animatedly as they enviously observed.

Yun Shishi quickly got into the car, and it was soon on its way.

As they watched the car drove off, the neighbors started whispering to one another.

“Er? Isn’t that the child from the Yun family?”

“Yes! That’s Yun Shishi! I heard... she’s Yun Yecheng’s illegitimate daughter.”

“Illegitimate child? I heard that she is the child he had with his first wife.”

“Who can confirm if she’s truly his daughter? In what way does she look like Yun Yecheng? This Ah Yun probably got cuckolded in the past and still helped others raise the b*stard child...”

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The Bentley raced all the way to the capital’s busiest shopping mall.

EMPRESS, a luxury fashion shop patronized by the socialites and movie stars in the capital.

The store was lavishly decorated. From Milan Fashion Week’s top handmade dresses to Italy’s range of luxury brands, EMPRESS was the capital’s most well-known go-to fashion shop.

Not just anybody could enter the shop, and third-rate actresses would certainly not have the privilege of stepping through its doors.

This was precisely why, when Qin Zhou handed Yun Shishi over to the styling director, who only served superstars, Alan looked slightly sluggish.

“Agent Qin, what is this?”

“Alan, this is Xingze’s companion,” Qin Zhou explained with a smile, the expression in his eyes self-evident.

Alan naturally understood what Qin Zhou was getting at.

As the chief styling director, he had mingled with the rich and famous and knew many of them by heart, so he was stumped when presented with Yun Shishi, whom he did not know at all.

However, despite not knowing Gu Xingze's reason for choosing an unknown woman, since she was the superstar's companion, he would give it his best shot.

“Okay, leave it to me!”

He then turned to Yun Shishi with a gentle smile. “Miss Yun, please follow me.”

Qin Zhou's interest was piqued when he noticed that one of the VIP rooms was locked. “Alan, you have another customer?”

He had just finished his question when the door to the VIP room was opened from the inside, and a man in a neat suit walked out.

Gu Xingze heard the shuffling noise and subconsciously turned to have a look. He was rooted to the spot.

It's her...

His handsome face froze.

Gu Xingze tried hard to mask his irk, but Yun Shishi still detected his slight shift in temperament.

Chapter 127: Star Story Romance

“Director Shao, you are here, too?” Qin Zhou asked with astonishment once he recognized the person who had walked out of the VIP room.

Shao Dong nodded at him with a fake smile.

An elegant figure emerged from the room soon after, and the dressing room suddenly became brighter and grander.

Han Yuyan was in a gorgeous gown with a train. The exquisite and delicate makeup she was wearing complemented her pair of startlingly expressive eyes, which could seduce almost any man.

Yun Shishi was also blown away by her beauty.

So beautiful...

She did not avidly follow the entertainment news, so she was unable to recognize the beauty before her. Han Yuyan, who was one of the four most popular actresses in the current film industry, was also the most highly paid first-rate actress.

She acted in a teen movie called ‘Bamboo Dragonfly’ at sixteen. Her sweet and innocent screen image was idolized by tens of millions of fans; she went viral in the filming scene.

‘Bamboo Dragonfly’ was the first film directed by Lin Fengtian. It won him Best Director in Hundred Flowers Film Festival and Golden Pin Awards.

Gu Xingze was dubbed as ‘China’s Most Handsome Bachelor’ after his role as the male protagonist in that film, while Han Yuyan became ‘China’s First Love’. She was the goddess in the eyes of many men after that.

Many newcomers shot to fame after acting in Lin Fengtian's film. The ladies in his movie were nicknamed 'Phoenix Girls', but none could compare to Han Yuyan's popularity. She was way ahead of many in the country's filming industry, and no one could catch up to her.

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Back then, Gu Xingze and Han Yuyan were recognized as the 'Golden Couple' on screen and collaborated in a few other movies and TV shows. It was once rumored that romance had blossomed between the two for real, and that they were seeing each other in secret.

However, not long after, Han Yuyan was unexpectedly confirmed to be romantically involved with the young director of Shao Group. This ended the gossips of their 'Star Story Romance'.

There was a gossip being passed around in the entertainment industry. According to it, Han Yuyan was from a poor family and very materialistic, and that she was not as innocent as she looked.

There were other gossips, too. One said that when Gu Xingze lost his mother, Han Yuyan was constantly by his side. She even refused movie offers so she could stay by his side. Another rumor claimed that they were seeing each other for quite some time, but she was discovered to be after his fame and fortune, so their romance ended... Another tale described how he only regarded her as his sister and could not reciprocate her feelings for him. They went their separate ways once she found another way to reach the top...

Alan hurried over to Han Yuyan's side and smilingly praised, "Miss Han, you look fabulous! All eyes will be on you in tonight's gala!"

Han Yuyan looked abashed with his praise on the outside but was actually rejoicing on the inside. She smiled at her reflection in the mirror and asked her partner, "Shao Dong, what do you think?"

She did not get a response from him.

She was rather annoyed with his silence and turned to look at him disapprovingly. This was when she noticed that his eyes were on Yun Shishi, who was walking toward the changing room.

Seeing Yun Shishi, he found her to be oddly familiar.

He could not recall her unfamiliar face, yet her eyes' expression was engraved deeply in his heart.

1. A phoenix is reborn from its ashes in Chinese mythology. Thus, in China, it refers to a woman who has a meteoric rise to fame from humble beginnings.

2. 'Xing' in Gu Xingze's name means 'star' in Chinese. 'Yu' in Han Yuyan's name means 'word' or 'story' in Chinese.

Chapter 128: The Imperial Jewel

"Shao Dong, where are you looking at?" Han Yuyan called out to him reproachfully.

“Oh, nowhere in particular!” He quickly turned to regard her gown. There was no sign of awe or amazement in his eyes when he praised, “Yuyan, you look so good in this dress!”

She did not detect the insincerity in his compliment and, instead, proudly posed in front of the mirror upon hearing him.

Qin Zhou looked at this pair of miserable couple and exchanged a cold snort with Gu Xingze.

“Hmph. The wife just died, yet he’s already changed a few new partners. Rich men can be so heartless. Meng Xialan probably did not die in peace.”

Shao Dong was married when Han Yuyan stepped between the husband and wife as the third party. This extra-marital affair had been kept under wraps.

Shao Dong’s wife was in a car accident and passed away not too long ago. This was only when Han Yuyan was able to be his partner officially.

“Don’t poke your nose in other people’s business.”

Gu Xingze concentrated on picking a suitable gown for Yun Shishi. His eyes fell on a glamorous and elegant red gown.

This evening gown was personally designed and sewn by the world renowned designer, Helen Swift. It was in noble red. The top came with a light shoulder yarn, which followed a small, fluffy skirt flowing down from the waist. The silky gown was exquisite and had all the curves in the right places.

Beautiful. It was really beautiful.

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Gu Xingze always had a high aesthetic standard and a strong fashion sense.

“I want this,” he instructed succinctly.

Alan walked over to look at his choice and objected discreetly, “Xingze, this gown is our imperial jewel.”

Does he really want this unknown lady to wear it? That would be wasteful.

Besides, the designer said before that not every Asian woman could flaunt the dress.

He concluded that Yun Shishi would be too frail to look good in it.

Even if the gown was suitable for her, other famous ladies would make a fuss about her wearing it.

The dress had yet to be worn by any ladies, after all. Many famous socialites and actresses wanted to try it on but were refused.

Han Yuyan heard their conversation and came over to have a look. She blushed slightly at the sight of Gu Xingze.

No woman in the industry could withstand his charm, not even a first-rate actress like her. She had loved him deeply before. Alas, he was not interested.

She was secretly in love with him for four years; that went to show how much feelings she had had for him.

She elegantly moved over in her dress, saw his gaze on that red gown, and gently reminded, “Xingze, the director told me that this is EMPRESS’s imperial jewel and isn’t just for anyone to wear. I was also interested in this piece earlier, but I wasn’t fit for it.”

She was trying to hint that no woman would qualify if she could not.

Gu Xingze completely ignored her existence, as if she were air, and simply said to Alan, “I want this. Unlock the closet.”

She felt exasperated when he totally disregarded her.

She heard Shao Dong gave a slight disapproving cough from behind and caught herself in time. She awkwardly turned toward her partner.

“Xingzhe, this dress...”

Gu Xingze did not want to hear any more explanations. “The dress is designed to complement a beauty. Alan, don’t you trust my taste?”

Alan could not refuse further. He had his assistant open the glass closet, take out the gown, and bring it over to Yun Shishi in the changing room.

Qin Zhou was full of anticipation. He had eyed this piece as well and wondered how stunning Yun Shishi would look in it.

Chapter 129: Amazing! Attention Grabbing!

Qin Zhou was full of anticipation. He had eyed this piece as well and wondered how stunning she would look in it.

Yun Shishi quickly changed into the gown and was led by Alan into the dressing room for her makeup.

Shao Dong wanted to leave, but Han Yuyan insisted on staying. She wanted to see how Yun Shishi would carry the dress.

Makeup, styling, accessories, high heels... A woman had to go through a few steps for a full dress-up. While Shao Dong and Han Yuyan were getting impatient, Gu Xingze was just leisurely flipping through some style magazines without showing a hint of impatience.

Finally, the door to the dressing room swung open and out came Yun Shishi. She held the hemline of her dress as she elegantly walked over. Everyone's attention was on her.

Under Shao Dong's stunned exclamation, Gu Xingze put down the magazine in his hand. Alan, who was equally amazed, carefully brought Yun Shishi before him.

"Xingze, are you happy with this?" Alan spoke with marvel. "It's unbelievable; Miss Yun is able to bring out the elegance of this gown completely! She's the classiest lady I've ever seen thus far. Miss Helen will be most delighted if she sees this!"

Gu Xingze was attracted to Yun Shishi the instant he set his eyes on her in this gown. In his many years in the entertainment industry, he had seen so many beautiful people, yet he could still not help but wonder at this particular creation of the god.

Beautiful! She was absolutely stunning!

Yun Shishi looked stylish and elegant with her arms akimbo. The red gown accentuated her soft smooth curves. She was sexy without looking explicit and subtly gave off the image of nobility.

The gown was a blend of oriental allure and European nobility. Having been designed by a top designer and tailor-made by a top craftsman, this fashion statement was worth a fortune.

(vit(function())())

Gu Xingze, who was enchanted by her beauty, made Yun Shishi blush with his unbridled stare.

Alan was laughing inside. Gu Xingze might appear aloof and detached, but he was a man through and through. No man, not even him, could resist her dignified beauty.

“Very beautiful!” Gu Xingze gave his heartfelt verdict after assessing Yun Shishi.

His two simple words could not hide his amazement.

His praise did not go to her head, though. Giving him a faint smile, she respectfully turned to Qin Zhou for his opinion.

Qin Zhou nodded happily. “Looks good; looks good! Looking so good! Shishi, you are so beautiful I’m at a loss for words!”

“Thank you!” She smiled and turned to elegantly inspect herself in the mirror, completely unaware of a pair of lewd eyes staring at her.

Shao Dong did not expect to see a woman so beautiful in such an unworldly fashion. His attention was entirely focused on her!

The gown might be beautiful, but her classiness and poise were more stunning! Any man would be charmed by her, and he was no exception.

Han Yuyan stood enviously at the side. A woman's jealousy could be violent. She currently resembled a proud peacock that had spread its haughty feathers, only to be robbed of attention by a competitor.

She was originally the focus in the store, but no one was looking at her now.

Chapter 130: The Viciousness of a Top-star Manager

She was originally the center of attention in the entire store, but no one was looking at her now. She was like a doll which had fallen into disfavor and was heartlessly thrown aside!

Han Yuyan indignantly tugged at Shao Dong's sleeve and muttered, "Darling, I also want this gown. Buy it. I'm going to wear this to the gala. If you ask me to wear this, I'll definitely be more beautiful than some random b*tch!"

For a while, the man gave no reaction.

She raised her head, disgruntled, only to see him staring directly at Yun Shishi. Astonishment, admiration, and some indescribable emotions flitted in his eyes.

She was even more furious and spat with dissatisfaction, “Shao Dong!”

“Huh?” He regained his senses and lowered his eyes.

Staring coldly at the gown, she did not say anything this time besides, “Buy that!”

He hesitated for a moment. He sincerely believed that other than the beautiful girl before his eyes, no one else was befitting of the gown!

However, noticing Han Yuyan’s weak and hurt look, he drew in a deep, chilly breath and stepped forward. “Director, how much is this gown? I’m getting this!”

Alan seemed to be in a bit of a dilemma and, for a short moment, he did not know what to say in response.

Gu Xingze requested for this gown first, and it was unfavorable to offend him – damn, this Miss Yun truly looked gorgeous in it – but if he rejected Shao Dong, it would be unfavorable as well.

(vit(function())())

Gu Xingze stared at Yun Shishi’s back and sneered lightly at him. “Mr. Shao, you can’t afford this gown.”

He seethed. “Gu Xingze, what do you mean by that?”

“What do I mean?” He smirked with scorn. “I’m being straightforward here. I want this gown!”

Shao Dong snorted indifferently. Gu Xingze was a superstar, but he was just one of many in the entertainment industry. An unpleasant way to say it would be: What was his difference with an actor in ancient times?

He turned his head and told Alan candidly, “State your price for this gown!”

Qin Zhou was about to lose his temper and bantered, “The starting bid for this gown at Fashion Week was five million. How generous of you, Mr. Shao.”

Shao Dong heard this and, without batting an eyelid, said, “Five million. I’m getting it.”

Qin Zhou raised a finger. “Our Xingze is going for ten million; we’re getting it!”

“You—” Frustrated, he called out, “I’m going for twenty million!”

“As expected of Mr. Shao. You’re generous. Truly very generous!” Qin Zhou flashed him an evil smile. “Xingze laid his eyes on this gown, though. It won’t be a problem even if we call out thirty million.”

“Fifty million!” Shao Dong made his final call; even Qin Zhou was flabbergasted at his words.

Han Yuyan observed everyone’s shock and chuckled to herself.

This man she had hooked up with was the future successor of Shao Group, so he was truly wealthy. Although Gu Xingze was a

decade-long actor, he was just a star in the end. How could he compare to Shao Dong?

Alan's expression did not exactly look good and only gently said, "My greatest apologies, Mr. Shao! Once Master Gu lays his eyes on something, he won't give it away to others!"

Master Gu? What did he mean?

"Why? He's just a small star—"

Qin Zhou lightly frowned and cut in, "Mr. Shao, please mind your words! Our Xingze is not a person to be offended by the owner of a small enterprise held up by a woman!"

Shao Group lacked the financial strength it had now at the start. Shao Dong was a fine-looking man and, under his father's arrangement, he was married off to the daughter of the wealthy Meng family. The current Shao Group was formed under the assistance of the Meng family.

"You!" Shao Dong was flustered. A small manager dared to look down on him and call a company that was worth billions on the market as a small enterprise?

Soon after, he realized something. Master Gu? Why would Alan call Gu Xingze Master Gu?

Qin Zhou did not give him a chance to respond and made use of his viciousness as always. With a sneer, he said, "Don't think that you, who relied on a woman to become an upstart five years ago, can show off your deep pockets everywhere now, Mr. Shao. You need to be clear on the difference between the nouveau riche and old money!"

This gown is elegant and pristine. Don't turn it into a stinky and rotten outfit when it reaches your hands!"

Chapter 131: Mother and Son, Face to Face

What this meant was that he was an upstart, and that Gu Xingze was truly from a powerful family?

Qin Zhou, a famous top star manager in Huanyu Entertainment, had top-notch lip service skills; it was as if his mouth was injected with poison, and each word he spouted carried savagery.

When he started to manage Gu Xingze, the latter was still an innocent young boy, but under his influence, he became equally scheming.

Shao Dong was so furious he nearly suffered from internal bleeding. However, what he said was indeed the truth, and there was no way for him to deny it.

Yun Shishi stood in front of the dressing table. The smile on her face froze for a split second. The current atmosphere was truly awkward.

Gu Xingze glanced intensely at him. "You are not fit to compete with me."

Shao Dong was extremely furious. He was about to speak when he was timely interrupted by an abrupt sound.

"It's so lively today." The haughty voice of a woman sounded from beyond the door.

Everyone froze, and, one by one, they looked in the direction of the door.

There, they saw Mu Wanrou, who was dressed in a well-cut black gown, appear in an elegant and grand manner.

When everyone caught sight of the man behind her, all of them were instantly astonished.

(vit(function())())

The man, who was standing behind her, was in a well-tailored, custom-made suit. With his hands in his pockets, his tall and lean figure gave off an intimidating aura that was like an imperial personage.

He appeared to be very young, just about 25, to others, yet he seemed dignified and extremely mature.

This maturity was simply not skin-deep but was, in fact, bone-deep. Looking at him, a calm and standoffish king, who was setting the world right, came to mind.

When he swept his gaze across the room, with a pair of deep-set and attractive eyes that was hidden under the lights and angular face, he almost stole hearts away.

This man, standing under the dazzling lights, was proud and overwhelming.

Even Gu Xingze's aura was suppressed by him.

Everyone wore a different expression on their faces.

The beautiful face of Yun Shishi, which was further enhanced by makeup, turned a few shades paler as she tried to reduce her visibility by standing behind Gu Xingze.

Nonetheless, the man found her instantly. A strange glint showed in his eyes, but it quickly vanished, and his eyes regained their tranquility.

A little boy in a suit was by his side. His beautiful hair was neatly combed, and his face showed coldness and arrogance.

It was him... little Yichen!

Yun Shishi occasionally laid her eyes on the child with her lips quivering. She bit her lower lip with force, and when her eyes happened to meet Yichen's, she hastily averted her gaze.

Yichen thought this to be odd.

This woman was truly strange! Why was there a weird expression on her face when she looked at him?

She seemed to be hiding from him.

The others present wore different expressions at the sight of the child.

Mu Yichen was the little royal prince of Mu Group. Mu Yazhe fiercely protected him even from the most experienced tabloid reporters, so nobody was able to track his trail.

Few people had seen Yichen before.

However, in the industry, there were still rumors that Yichen was not the son of Mu Wanrou and Mu Yazhe.

Mu Wanrou was diagnosed to be infertile, and nothing had worked despite her going around for doctor's consultations or trying out in-vitro fertilization.

Doctors said that, in this lifetime, she did not have the privilege to bear a baby. Stubbornly going forward with artificial insemination and the pain from it could destroy her body.

She was dispirited but she could only accept reality.

She could only accept that Yichen's biological mother was someone else.

Although this was a heavily guarded secret, some insiders still managed to leak this piece of information out. Mu Wanrou was, thus, infuriated.

As Qin Zhou and the others looked at the little child, they were only somewhat surprised. In the past six years, Mu Yazhe had carefully kept him away from the eye of the media.

Chapter 132: Nobles and Commoners?

As Qin Zhou and the others looked at the little child, they were only somewhat surprised. In the past six years, Mu Yazhe had carefully kept him away from the eye of the media.

Why was he wearing an English-style Armani suit? Was this a plan to let him publicly be known as the Mu Group's future successor via the gala?

What came as a greater surprise to Qin Zhou, however, was that Yichen's physical appearance looked very familiar to him. Had he seen someone with the same physical looks before?

Qin Zhou came to a sudden realization at that, and he turned to look at Yun Shishi, only to see that her head was down while she bit on her lower lip. She was clearly suffering in silence.

She looked dejected and helpless. With her handsome brows knitted together and her arms defensively hugging each other, she hid herself behind Gu Xingze.

If one were to look at her and Yichen separately, perhaps it would be slightly difficult to make the connection.

However, they were now facing each other, and the comparison could be done easily.

If it were addressed earlier that Mu Wanrou was not Yichen's biological mother, Qin Zhou might have still withheld his suspicion, but with Yichen standing next to her, a clear distinction could easily be made.

Blood relation, although mysterious, could not deceive anyone.

Inheritance was something even more profound.

Little Yichen and Mu Wanrou that were standing side by side looked nothing alike.

(vit(function())())

In contrast, if he stood next to Yun Shishi, he totally looked like her biological son.

Qin Zhou went back and forth surveying Yun Shishi and Yichen, his eyes unduly reticent.

Gu Xingze saw Qin Zhou's scrutinizing eyes on Yun Shishi and Yichen and directed him a warning look.

Qin Zhou received his warning signal and pursed his lips.

He was unaware that, for a long time, Gu Xingze's heart could not calm down.

Gu Xingze, just like the others, had not seen the Mu family's young master before; this was indeed his first time seeing the child.

However, unlike others, he had seen the child by Yun Shishi's side before; that boy shared the same facial features with the Mu family's young master.

It was as if they were cast in the same mould.

No one would believe it if someone said that they were not twins.

The shock and suspicion he felt were more intense than anyone else.

The situation suddenly became tense, and the air was so still it seemed frozen.

Alan reacted first by respectfully greeting the man, "Mr. Mu!"

“Mr. Mu...” Shao Dong returned to his senses as well. He retracted his anger and courteously inquired, “Mr. Mu, how have you been?”

Unlike his earlier display of haughtiness to Gu Xingze, his attitude did a one-eighty – his conduct and manner became proper – in front of Mu Yazhe.

No matter how well-known Gu Xingze was, he was ultimately only a star. Mu Yazhe was different.

Mu Group was a well-known, influential family and owned a business empire. A small subsidiary of it was much more powerful than Shao Group.

He could afford to ignore Gu Xingze but not Mu Yazhe!

Han Yuyan had never met Mu Yazhe before; the successor to Mu Group was all along mysterious and unfathomable. Any news with regard to the Mu family was always based on hearsays.

Still, she knew how to act accordingly. Observing the once proud Shao Dong being all respectful, she also put on a graceful mannerism. She formed a flawless smile on her face and looked at Mu Yazhe charmingly.

Shao Dong noticed that Mu Yazhe had not given a response. He stepped forward and stretched out his right hand. “Mr. Mu, do you remember me?”

Mr. Mu ?!

Could this man be from the rumored wealthiest, most mysterious, and most influential family in the capital... the Mu family ?!

Han Yuyan listened from the side and kept cursing to herself.

The noble with the title of Young Master Mu that was able to humble and cow the snobbish Shao Dong into submission; who else could it be other than the man from the capital's Mu family?

Mu Yazhe nodded first and then looked at him. Compared to Shao Dong's face that displayed formalities, his remained emotionless.

“You are?”

Shao Dong froze, a flustered smile appearing on his face. “Mr. Mu, have you forgotten? We've met each other before for the takeover of Meng Corporation—”

“I forgot,” the man cut him off. Clearly, he did not have the patience to listen to him.

He then left Shao Dong, who had yet to retract his outstretched hand, and Han Yuyan, who had an elegant smile on her lips, foolishly standing in one spot. The situation became extremely awkward.

Qin Zhou could not help but let out a “Pfft!” He then muttered, “How delusional. He's just an upstart, yet he's already dreaming of having ties with someone from the high society.”

These words of his were spoken softly, as if he were talking to himself, yet they were directed to Shao Dong's ears. Shao Dong's face showed rage and Han Yuyan's face was no better as she flushed from embarrassment.

He presented himself with utmost respect to the man, yet the man ignored him. Shao Dong was seething.

What an egocentric!

Mu Yazhe walked toward Gu Xingze. There was, ultimately, a flaw in his cold and indifferent expression.

Two men. One mature and conceited; the other as gentle as jade.

One threateningly beautiful; the other refined and handsome.

Mu Yazhe just had to be taller than Gu Xingze. Thus, the former was unavoidably looking down at him.

Comparing the two, Gu Xingze's presence was somewhat suppressed.

The corners of Mu Yazhe's mouth curled with scorn and arrogance. He had an indifferent and insincere smile on his face.

“How beautiful!”

His eyes turned to the adorned Yun Shishi behind Gu Xingze, and he was unexpectedly surprised.

This woman looked like a lotus in full bloom in the past. Her aura was so elegant it seemed otherworldly, but, right now, wearing the glamorous dress, she was dignified and pristine.

The red and coquettish dress made her graceful figure stand out. The long dress, which was touching the ground with its hem, was akin to a blooming rose. It complemented her so much that, in that moment, she looked like an alluringly beautiful noble.

Mu Yazhe smirked and added two words, “This gown.”

Whether a piece of clothing was beautiful depended on the person wearing it.

Yun Shishi was somewhat afraid of the man with an overwhelming presence, so she subconsciously retreated behind Gu Xingze even more.

Her small, jade-like hand instinctively clutched the hem of Gu Xingze's suit. This small gesture was captured by Mu Yazhe's eyes.

This prideful man, at this very moment, was slightly disappointed.

Yichen, who was standing by his father's side, blinked his eyes. The longer he looked at the woman, the odder she seemed to him.

She looked so timid, just like a small deer.

Deep down, however, Yichen thought that she was very beautiful.

She looked particularly classy and sophisticated in that long and exquisite red gown!

This beautiful woman gave him a strange feeling.

Where had he seen this woman before?

Somehow, bits and pieces of his dreams appeared in his mind. At this moment, he could not recall anything, but why did he feel that she was so, so familiar...

Somehow, there seemed to be a very deep bond between them.

It was an indescribable and unfathomable feeling, but he did not find it the least bit repulsive.

The first time he saw her, she did not feel like a stranger. He even perceived an odd sense of warmth.

This warmth was too strange yet very attractive. He had never felt it before even from his ‘mother’.

Yichen tilted his head. His mind was in quite a mess!

His lovely mother was right next to him, yet he could not feel any familial warmth from her.

A stranger was right in front of him, and he could feel warmth radiating off of her.

He puckered his lips and shook his head.

Don’t think too much about it!

Mu Wanrou looked at Yun Shishi and saw the strikingly beautiful long gown – it was such an eyesore.

Yun Shishi was standing in front of Mu Yazhe like an elegant and noble fairy queen when she was simply a commoner. What rights did she have to be in this place?

EMPRESS was a fashion landmark of those in high society. A commoner should know better than to invade her territory.

She was stealing the limelight, too. Was this not a provocation toward her?

“ALAN!” Mu Wanrou bellowed.

Alan hurriedly said with great politeness, “Yes, Miss Mu.”

“Since when did EMPRESS welcome such a lowly commoner?”

Mu Wanrou pointed at Yun Shishi scornfully. Her voice was cold; it was as if she were chasing away a lowly beggar.

Alan’s face immediately displayed awkwardness as he thought to himself, Oh, my. Why don’t you just admit that you’re jealous?!

Where did Miss Y

un offend you? Isn’t it just because she’s prettier and more elegant than you? Miss Mu, you really aren’t tactful when you’re jealous.

“Miss Mu, there seems to be a misunderstanding. Miss Yun is invited here by Xingze!”

“Oh?” The arrogant Mu Wanrou began to lose her smile. “Xingze, when did your standard stoop so low that you would actually invite a pitiful commoner to this place?”

Qin Zhou showed a cold and stern expression at that. “Miss Mu, please be respectful! Don’t live in too much comfort. When are people classified as nobles and commoners in this store? I did not see a ‘commoners prohibited’ signage at the entrance of EMPRESS!”

He purposely pretended to cry a little. “Miss Mu, is the commoner you were talking about, me?”

Flustered, Mu Wanrou stoically refuted, “I’m not talking about you!”

“Then... Is it our Xingze?” He looked at her with a saddened expression. He just had to hold a handkerchief and his innocent act would be completed.

“No, I’m talking about her!” She gritted her teeth and pointed at Yun Shishi once more.

“Oh, my. When did our Shishi become a commoner? She’s Xingze’s female partner for the gala tonight, so I brought her here to try out a gown.”

“Xingze’s female partner?”

Gu Xingze’s female partner?

Her expression completely changed. Even Han Yuyan paled in shock.

What did being Gu Xingze’s female partner mean?

It meant confirmed exposure and publicity. With Gu Xingze’s popularity alone, one was sure to be featured in many entertainment media outlets!

Why?! Why her of all people? Back when Huanyu Entertainment was heavily promoting Han Yuyan, the company’s higher-ups pressured Gu Xingze into walking the red carpet while holding hands with her, but he never agreed! Why exactly was it her?!

Han Yuyan was so jealous that her eyes turned red.

Mu Yazhe’s eyes, meanwhile, slightly turned cold.

Gu Xingze's female partner? Would she be attending Huanyu's annual gala tonight?

This woman was dolling herself up in grandeur for another man.

Mu Yazhe lifted his haughty chin a little higher, and the eyes he used to look at Yun Shishi suddenly turned dark and gloomy.

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Chapter 133: Do you think I am lacking that one billion?

Mu Yazhe slightly lifted his proud jaws and gazed deeply at Yun Shishi.

An unexplained unhappiness surged inside him.

He looked up just in time to see her hide behind Gu Xingze like a startled cat, totally unnerving him.

She was so wary of him, yet she was so close to another man. That really put him off. He gave her one last penetrating look before turning away and leisurely occupying the sofa.

The atmosphere was bizarre and awkward for a moment.

Little Yichen stood at the side, his handsome little face also showing a trace of disdain.

Somehow, he felt unhappy at the knowledge that Yun Shishi was Gu Xingze's partner.

He felt that she would be more compatible with his father and was startled by this thought.

Oh, god... Why did he have such a thought? It was too ridiculous.

Still, somehow, he felt a strange and unexplainable closeness to the woman. Why?

The little lad was thrown off his guard.

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The two were indeed father and son; they had the same demanding temperament of wanting to have their ways.

Mu Wanrou swept her haughty eyes around the room. Her gaze fell on Yun Shishi and felt a thorn in her eyes.

The elegant gown on Yun Shishi was too glaringly beautiful.

She sauntered over and condescendingly eyed Yun Shishi, her lips curling into a smirk.

“Oh, Xingze. When did you lower your taste to get such a low-class woman to be your partner?” Mu Wanrou continued to look at Yun Shishi disdainfully; her lips were still curled into a seemingly spurious smile. She was about the same height as Yun Shishi, but the eight-inch heels she was wearing gave her the edge to arrogantly look down on the latter. She was just like an empress peering down at a lowly maid.

Yun Shishi calmly met her eyes without anger or fear.

“This is a masterpiece designed by Helen from Fashion Week’s Gold Award! Who gave you the rights to wear it?” Mu Wanrou proudly lifted her jaws high.

When Alan heard her question, he politely said with his shoulders shrinking in fear, “Young Mistress Mu, I was the one who let her try on...”

“You?” She angrily snapped at him, “Do you know how expensive this dress is? Who gave you the authority to try it on her?”

“It’s me,” Gu Xingze answered calmly, explaining, “I judged that this beautiful gown would look good on Shishi.”

Shishi? Why is he addressing her so intimately?

Mu Yazhe’s eyes sank deeper.

The unhappiness in his heart grew even more.

Mu Wanrou softened her tone toward Gu Xingze. “Xingze, this is a masterpiece by Master Helen that is worth a fortune; how can you bear...”

“She is worth it; besides, Shishi really looks good in it.” He lowered his gaze at Yun Shishi and reached out his hand to tidy a stray sideburn.

This subtle yet affectionate gesture stung a few people present, especially Mu Yazhe. The displeasure in his eyes deepened.

Sh*t. He did mind.

He actually cared if someone else touched her; it was such an eyesore...

This kind of feeling was so d*mn irritating.

Mu Wanrou did not notice the inscrutable expression on Mu Yazhe's face as she went on, "Xingze, tonight is Huanyu Entertainment's yearly gala. Many important guests, as well as entertainment media, will be attending it. Aren't you worried of losing face by bringing such an unremarkable partner?"

Qin Zhou frowned with dissatisfaction at her mean words.

Alan quietly added, "I feel that... Miss Yun looks very good in this dress!"

Mu Wanrou pursed her bright-red lips and gave a sharp warning look at Alan, who promptly shut his mouth in fear.

Han Yuyan was happy, though. She disliked Yun Shishi with her poor and unremarkable background. The growing disgust within her was vented through Mu Wanrou's timely malicious words. She mockingly said with a touch of schadenfreude, "Young Mistress Mu has a point. The poor will always be poor no matter how they dress up. Is a sparrow here trying to be a phoenix? Dream on!"

Mu Wanrou smoothed her sleeve and gracefully crossed her arms. What Han Yuyan had just addressed her with was music to her ears.

Han Yuyan's words could be as sweet as honey when they could help her climb higher.

She took Shao Dong's arm as she said with a disdainful and provoking smile, "It is better if she stops shaming herself and returns to her slum!"

Qin Zhou raised an eyebrow at that and asked sarcastically, "If our Shishi is poor, then how about Miss Heavenly Han?"

Han Yuyan was dumbfounded.

Of course, she was also poor!

Her family was actually so poor the five of them had to squeeze into a tiny room. She was from a real slum, and, because of that, she was now very materialistic.

Once she graduated from high school, she entered an arts school. She had neither the smarts nor talent for learning. She only managed to enter the show business when she luckily got that role in Lin Fengtian's movie before graduation.

To formally step into the show business, she did everything even if it caused her pain and suffering.

Her hard work paid off and she was now famous. The entertainment media had criticized her as uncultured, and that was her sore spot.

Qin Zhou saw her awkwardness and continued in a critical tone, "In any case, our Shishi is a prestigious arts school produce and is highly regarded by Director Lin."

Director Lin?

Han Yuyan's face sank. "Director Lin? Which Director Lin?"

“Oh, my! You are so forgetful; how can you not remember the mentor who made you famous?” Qin Zhou quipped nonchalantly.

Lin Fengtian!

How could she forget?!

He was one of the most talented directors in China’s film industry. Two of his movies were box-office winners for three consecutive years!

Isn’t Director Lin busy with his latest film, which is an adaptation of a teen novel? Is... she the female lead?!

Mu Wanrou was also surprised to hear this tidbit.

On the sofa, Mu Yazhe’s handsome face displayed a trace of change at the news.

Han Yuyan blurted out, “How can that be? Director Lin chose her as the female lead? Why?!”

She was able to get the lead role in ‘Bamboo Dragonfly’ because she had the biggest investor’s support back then. Director Lin was displeased with her because of that and had been nasty toward her since then.

What did she do to get the role?

Did she... use the same underhanded means, too?

“Why?” Gu Xingze smiled. Ignoring others around him, he reached out and pulled Yun Shishi close to his side with eyes full of

tenderness. “Some may come from a humble background, but they will always emanate innocence and beauty. Shishi may not be famous, but she’s the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen.”

Mu Wanrou looked at Gu Xingze and suddenly got it. He was planning to create some hype for Yun Shishi with his popularity! He was evidently satisfied with this female lead whom Lin Fengtian had chosen. If it were not the case, Gu Xingze, with his aloof and detached nature, would not allow her to ride on his coattails.

This Yun Shishi... What did she do to receive such favors from the heavens ?!

“I don’t care who selected her. She is not welcome here!”

Mu Wanrou’s eyes shone with malice. With a voice somewhat twisted by jealousy, she demanded, “Take that dress off and get out!”

Yun Shishi felt slightly embarrassed because of her humiliating words.

This woman was willing to go this far just to humiliate her? It was too much.

She smilingly asked, “Why should I?”

She was not going to undress just because someone said so.

She, Yun Shishi, would not be bullied.

Mu Wanrou laughed haughtily, as though she had heard a ridiculous joke. “You asked me why?”

Alan reluctantly informed, “Miss Yun, I’m very sorry; EMPRESS is a property under the Mu Group...”

Yun Shishi was slightly startled.

It was no wonder Mu Wanrou was so arrogant. She was the lady boss of EMPRESS.

Gu Xingze said with a smile, “I’ll buy this gown.”

Mu Wanrou snorted. “Not for sale.”

“One billion,” he spouted a figure without flinching.

Even Qin Zhou was shocked to hear the figure.

Oh, god! Xingze... Has he gone mad?! One billion. How did he get that figure?

Even though he liked Yun Shishi very much, one billion for a gown was still too much!

Yun Shishi was very moved by Gu Xingze’s action. She knew that the gown was not worth a billion, but he was willing to buy it for that amount to protect her pride. It would be greatly humiliating for her if she had to take off the gown and be chased away from here. He was shielding her dignity with one billion.

Was it worth it? Gu Xingze... Why did he treat her with such gentleness and care?

“Xingze, are you mad?” Han Yuyan could not bear to watch this further and chipped in, “This gown is not worth a billion.”

“I like,” he replied with just two simple words, totally disregarding Han Yuyan’s unhappiness.

“I’ll buy this with one billion,” he calmly declared to Mu Wanrou.

“You...” Mu Wanrou was furious and stared at him in disbelief.

At one side, Mu Yazhe coldly replied, “Not for sale.”

Everyone actually sighed in relief at his words.

The gown was not for sale even with one billion, but why not?

Qin Zhou asked with a touch of annoyance, “Director Mu, this is one billion we are talking about. It’s an astronomical amount!”

Mu Yazhe leaned like an emperor on the sofa. His haughty and suppressive presence permeated every corner of the shop.

“Do you think I’m lacking that one billion?”

Chapter 134: No Comparison; No Harm Done

Mu Yazhe leaned like an emperor on the sofa. His haughty and suppressive presence permeated every corner of the shop.

“Do you think I’m lacking that one billion?”

Everyone did not get what he meant at first but eventually realized that, indeed, as the sole heir to the massive fortune of Disheng Financial Group, he could keep or sell whatever he wanted. Disheng

Financial Group was prominent not just in the capital but also on the Asian market. That one billion was nothing to him.

Han Yuyan was astonished to learn something about the Mu family. She knew that they were one of the richest in the capital but did not realize the extent of their power.

In comparison, the sullen-looking Shao Dong, who was standing next to her, was nothing at all.

She bit her lower lip in frustration at her lack of foresight and could not help but feel jealous of Mu Wanrou.

Shao Group was a laughingstock next to Mu Group.

Gu Xingze and Yun Shishi were floored by Mu Yazhe's domineering provocation.

Even Qin Zhou, with his typical viciousness, could only sigh helplessly; he knew Mu Yazhe too well.

Mu Yazhe was out to challenge Gu Xingze.

Gu Xingze's face turned a shade darker; a chilly look flashed across his usually calm and collected demeanor.

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He knitted his brows tightly and turned to face Mu Yazhe. Both men stared at each other; the atmosphere was charged with explosive.

“Director Mu, this gown is displayed in the shop, yet it is not for sale. What's the meaning of this?”

Mu Yazhe arched his lips into a graceful smile and slowly stood up. “To sell or not to sell, it’s my prerogative. No one can interfere with my decision.” The room was once again charged by his commanding presence and tyrannical action.

Gu Xingze’s eyes were full of hostility, and his muscles turned palpably rigid. As he was about to speak, Yun Shishi tugged at his sleeve.

He was startled into looking down and saw her pleasant smile. She calmly told him, “Xingze, thank you for your kindness, but I think I’ll return the gown.”

“Don’t you worry; the dress suits you—”

“I still prefer the gown that Qin Zhou and you have selected earlier... I really like that evening gown in pure white,” she gently cut him off with a shake of her head.

When Han Yuyan heard this, she laughed mockingly. “Hmph. EMPRESS belongs to the Mu family. Of course, it is up to Director Mu to decide whom he wants to give the dress. He adores Young Mistress Mu, so why should he give the gown to a nobody?”

These words were hurtful to Yun Shishi’s ears for no apparent reason.

Mu Wanrou... is his fiancée. Of course, he won’t give up that one-of-a-kind pretty gown to others.

Still... Why was there a stuffy feeling in her heart?

Yun Shishi gave a self-deprecating laugh.

What is there to question? He evidently loves his fiancée. Would he do this if that were not the case? I'm just a nobody to him!

She actually did not mind not wearing the gown. It was glamorous and would definitely attract attention to her during the gala. However, she was just a newcomer with no decent background to boast of or a film to showcase. Such unwanted attention would only bring her trouble in the future.

She was not a vain woman, so people's attention was not important to her.

Yun Shishi walked toward the changing room with a carefree smile. She gracefully held the gown's hemline as she made her way across the room. Her steps were firm and her back was upright without signs of despondence or clumsiness. Her serenity actually made Mu Wanrou and Han Yuyan feel ugly and embarrassed. They stood at the side, waiting to see how she would run back to her shabby house in tears after their humiliation or plot her next move to take advantage of the situation. However, either did not happen...

Yun Shishi's calmness highlighted the viciousness and hypocrisy of Han Yuyan and Mu Wanrou.

Shao Dong's eyes were full of admiration as he watched Yun Shishi walk away. He was deeply shaken.

She was destined for doom earlier as no one could protect her dignity before Mu Yazhe. Unexpectedly, she was able to walk away from the situation without a hint of shame...

Yun Shishi was not Mu Wanrou. She was not rich, but some women were like this; they had innate aristocracy and elegance that were hard to replicate.

Mu Yazhe watched Yun Shishi from behind with narrowed and unreadable eyes.

He could not fathom her intention.

He wanted to send her into a helpless state with his humiliation, but she maintained her gracefulness from start to finish. She was incomprehensible.

Unhappy. He was very unhappy.

The woman was not as easy to control as he had thought.

Mu Yazhe admitted that he had thoroughly humiliated and embarrassed her because she submissively hid behind Gu Xingze's back earlier. Before him, she was like a fully armed kitten that had its sharp claws out to defend against him.

He might seem indifferent most of the time, but he was actually a control freak. He had hidden his real nature well.

He had an inherently tyrannical nature, which would not tolerate any defiance, yet he just had to meet an equally domineering woman.

He pursed his lips into a thin line as his gaze turned unfathomable.

Alan felt bad for Yun Shishi and followed her into the changing room. With his help, she changed into the former evening gown, altered

her hairstyle, and replaced her elegant accessories with simple ones. Feeling guilty, he carefully applied another set of makeup on her.

Since the outfit was simpler and more delicate, her makeup would naturally need adjustment to go with it.

The gorgeous makeup on her face was replaced with a light one. When Alan looked into the mirror, he saw Yun Shishi's extraordinary face.

Her features were already distinct and beautiful. Under his topnotch manipulation of the makeup, she looked even more stunning.

Yun Shishi stood up and smiled at Alan, who could only marvel inside, What an extraordinary beauty. She actually doesn't need any outfit or maquillage to accentuate her looks. Even in a plain white dress, she is already gorgeous.

When she stepped out of the changing room while holding the hemline of her dress, she was once again the center of attention.

The wonder in Gu Xingze's eyes was even more apparent.

Little Yichen, who was now sitting on Mu Yazhe's lap, was stunned speechless. At the side, Shao Dong stared at her with amazement.

Han Yuyan was astounded and jealous. Yun Shishi had such inherent beauty and grace. Why was she so blessed by the heavens?

Mu Wanrou had a perplexed look on her face as her eyes shone with malevolence.

Yun Shishi walked toward Gu Xingze and Qin Zhou and smilingly asked, “How is it?”

“Excellent! Beautiful; really beautiful! Shishi, you look good in anything. You are a natural coat hanger!” Glancing at Han Yuyan, Qin Zhou could not resist digging further. “Hmph. No matter how beautiful the clothes may be, just like a certain someone here, some people can only be accessories! There’s no competition at all!”

Han Yuyan could only fume inwardly at his words. Despite being mocked, she could not retaliate. Qin Zhou might only be an agent, but he was an ace in Huanyu Entertainment and had access to multiple resources and influential people. She could not afford to offend him.

Gu Xingze chipped in, “Qin Zhou, you’ve got good taste. This outfit is beautiful!”

“Shishi looks good in any outfit!” His assistant was still marveling at Yun Shishi’s natural beauty.

She replied with a smile, “Oh, no. Agent Qin really has good taste.”

“Oh, my. Your words are as sweet as honey and bring delight to my heart!”

Gu Xingze’s infuriation dispersed as he looked at her. He turned to address Alan, “This is good; bill it to my account.”

Alan nodded and took a careful glance at Mu Yazhe’s face.

Somehow, Director Mu seems to pay extra attention to this newcomer?

Mu Yazhe was looking down without paying attention to Yun Shishi. It seemed she was someone nondescript to him.

Alan pursed his lips. Could he be mistaken? He had a hunch that Director Mu was particularly concerned about this woman, yet he seemed to be indifferent toward her right now.

A man could be inscrutable, especially someone like Mu Yazhe.

Up to when Yun Shishi left with Gu Xingze, he did not look in her direction.

Mu Wanrou quickly instructed Alan to pass her the gown Yun Shishi had taken off and hurriedly stepped into the changing room. She was full of anticipation to see how she might look in the dress.

She originally did not like the gown.

She preferred royal purple compared to rose red.

However, Yun Shishi looked so good in the gown that... it attracted his attention.

That naturally made her unhappy.

In what way... does she deserve to be so outstanding?

She had to show them that she looked equally stunning in the gown! She could not wait to prove this to everyone.

Soon, she pompously came out of the dressing room in the gown. She was thinking inside that she was more stunning in it than Yun Shishi.

She waited for their praises with her jaws held high, but all eyes dimmed a little, instead, as they looked at her.

Even Han Yuyan almost burst into laughter.

It was so tacky.

The elegant evening dress seemed a little gaudy on her body.

Bringing out the classiness in an outfit was up to a person. An ordinary being would be unable to look good in such a glamorous gown.

Yun Shishi looked so good in it, while Mu Wanrou became an accessory to it.

For a moment, the atmosphere was silent and cold.

Han Yuyan knew how to take stock of the situation and immediately quipped, “Young Mistress Mu, you look so good in that outfit!”

The compliment was so cheesy even Little Yichen detected the insincerity in her words.

Chapter 135: Take It Off

The compliment was so cheesy even Little Yichen detected the insincerity in her words.

In the tense and stifling silence of the dressing room, the praise sounded fake and awkward.

There was no competition or comparison at all.

Yun Shishi was able to wow everyone present when she was wearing the gown earlier. Mu Wanrou who was now dressed in the same gown was greatly overshadowed.

The dress was elegant and sophisticated, yet it looked unbearably tacky on Mu Wanrou's body.

Yun Shishi had a good figure, with her slim waist, slender long legs, elegant shoulders, and exquisite collar bones. The gown was able to accentuate all these assets with just the right touch.

As for Mu Wanrou, she just did not have the right figure to carry off this gown. Her voluptuous figure looked vulgar and crude in the dress.

Mu Yazhe opened his eyes to have a look and immediately felt disgusted at the sight of her.

He recalled how incomparably magnificent Yun Shishi had looked in this gown; it was a sharp contrast from what he was seeing now.

There was a long silence before Alan launched his perfunctory praise, "Young Mistress Mu, you look... good in this dress!"

Mu Wanrou's face turned dark at his phony compliment.

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Unhappily looking at the dull and awkward faces of those around her, she forced out a smile and asked, "Why? You mean I don't look good in this, right?!"

Han Yuyan smilingly replied, “You look good. Beautiful and elegant.”

Her words sounded hollow, though, as she truly did not know what else to praise.

It was in woman’s nature to compete and envy; Mu Wanrou would not allow Yun Shishi to outshine her.

Little Yichen was still young and did not understand the need for hypocrisy. He frowned and said, “Mommy, you don’t look good in that!”

Han Yuyan’s mouth twitched ever so slightly. Why is this child so honest and direct?

Mu Wanrou almost threw up at his next words. “That pretty sister looks better in this gown! This dress doesn’t suit mommy, so it’s better if you change into another one!”

Her face looked more terrible now.

Han Yuyan tried to lessen the blow with a smile. “He’s just a child. He doesn’t know what he’s saying. Young Mistress Mu does look good in that dress.”

“Hmph! You are so good at bootlicking. Are you trying to embarrass my mommy at the reception tonight?” Little Yichen harshly retorted when his taste was questioned.

His words really infuriated Han Yuyan. Fearing that Mu Wanrou would take his words seriously, she quickly clarified, “Young Mistress Mu, I did not have such a thought!”

Mu Wanrou ignored her. She walked toward Mu Yazhe and asked with a smile, “Zhe, do I look good in this dress?”

She insisted on an answer from him. It did not matter what others think; his approval would beat all the praises from anybody. She had been disgraced, but his one word would salvage the situation. If he said she looked good, no one would dare say otherwise!

His words were like edict that none had the courage to refute.

Mu Yazhe slowly raised his head and looked at her. Seeing that there was no admiration and only intolerance in his eyes, Mu Wanrou’s heart turned cold.

Chapter 136: You deserve the best.

Mu Yazhe slowly raised his head and looked at her. Seeing that there was no admiration and only intolerance in his eyes, Mu Wanrou’s heart turned cold.

“Take it off.”

One heartless command from him pinned her to the spot in utter embarrassment.

“Why?”

“Did I give you permission to wear this?” He snorted.

Her face turned stiff and ugly.

She did not understand; he had always given in to her demands. She could have whatever she wanted. He always spoiled her and would agree to anything she asked for – even if it was unreasonable.

Why was he suddenly so cold and distant toward her?

“Why? Why must I take it off? You mean I can’t compare to her? That b*tch—”

“Take it off. I’ll give you five minutes to change into another dress.” With that, he fixed his gaze on his wristwatch. He was counting the time down.

“I won’t!” She was on the verge of tears. “I like this. I am going to wear this to the gala tonight!”

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He frostily said, “I have limited patience.”

“Zhe...” She was alarmed. He had never been heartless to her before.

Yun Shishi, that b*tch, must be a vixen incarnate. All men have been bewitched by her.

“One minute left,” he coldly warned.

This was a hint to her that he would not leave her even a shred of dignity if she did not obey within the last minute.

He always did what he threatened.

With much resentment, she stomped into the dressing room to change into another evening gown.

...

The Bentley slowly and steadily drove on the highway toward the hotel for the yearly gala.

Inside the car, Yun Shishi silently sat down with her head lowered. She no longer had that self-confidence she had displayed earlier. From her profile, one could tell that she was feeling down.

Gu Xingze, who was sitting beside her, watched her closely. He saw her look out the window with her head still lowered. Her thin and frail frame was heart-wrenching to see for him.

She was the kind of woman a man would want to care and protect.

Recalling the earlier scene at EMPRESS's showroom where he saw that little lad that looked so much like her, his head was filled with questions.

Rumors had it that Young Mistress Mu Wanrou was betrothed to Mu Yazhe, the Mu household's successor, since young. The two were childhood sweethearts and were so in love with each other.

This was only a front, however. In truth, Mu Yazhe was a cold and aloof man, who had never fallen in love with any woman. Mu Wanrou was also not the biological mother of Little Yichen.

She was diagnosed to be infertile and had no ability to bear a child. Little Yichen's real mother was somebody else.

Is she, the mother ?

That day, he saw her with a little boy, whose age and features were identical to Little Yichen's.

Gu Xingze softly chuckled. He actually minded about this matter, yet he had no right to ask.

Qin Zhou was also looking at her. He wanted to console her but did not know how or where to start.

Yun Shishi looked at the man beside her and thanked him sincerely, "Xingze, about earlier, thank you. Thank you for guarding my pride!"

"What's there to thank for?" he asked with amusement.

"That gown isn't worth a billion even though it is indeed very beautiful."

Was that dress not worth that one billion ?

He smiled and disagreed, "It is worth it."

"Er..."

She looked at this handsome man with some surprise. His smile was soft and gentle, yet his tone was serious and firm.

"Shishi, you deserve the best."

Chapter 137: Dress Up for the Show

“Shishi, you deserve the best.”

Gu Xingze looked at her and said this. A simple statement like the summer wind left his warm and gentle lips.

Yun Shishi was a little flattered. “Xingze... why are you so good to me?”

“I don’t know!” He smiled ruefully. “You are a girl who makes me want to take care of you.”

“Thank you!” She was deeply and sincerely grateful to him.

...

Tonight’s annual gala was to celebrate the tenth anniversary of Huanyu Entertainment. It was a gathering of all the famous stars in film, TV, and music arenas, highly acclaimed directors, and VIP investors. Thus, international entertainment reporters would surely be covering this grand affair.

Huanyu Entertainment used to be Huanyu Records. It was once the top music recording company where many super idols came from. There was none that came close to this company’s performance in the music industry.

After a while, however, the music industry entered a period of slump, and Huanyu Records faced the issue of going bankrupt. Disheng Financial Group later bought it and officially renamed it as Huanyu Entertainment. It then became a company where many first-rate performers and the Big Four Stars Agents gathered. Thanks to this, Huanyu Records could continue its legacy.

Before anyone knew it, Huanyu Entertainment had been in business for ten years.

Tonight's gala was bound to be spectacular.

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It was no wonder that the young starlets and passé were cudgeling their brains out for a chance to walk the red carpet and make an appearance in tonight's event. If they were able to grab the right opportunity, they could rise to stardom or make a comeback!

One must know that many well-known directors and producers would be present in it. More importantly, the president of Disheng Financial Group would be an attendee, too.

The president of Disheng! He was the prince of and the sole successor to Mu, the most elite family in the capital!

Mu Yazhe had always been secretive and elusive, and news about him was few and far between. The public knew very little about this mysterious, noble prince as he seldom showed his face.

Once the socialites and elites confirmed his attendance to the gala, the ladies spent much effort to dress up in hopes of earning some brownie points by leaving a deep impression on the blue-blooded president.

What did it matter if he had a fiancée?

There was always the possibility of having a wife with two or three mistresses for such an elite household like the Mu family.

For instance, Mu Yazhe's grandfather had a legal wife and two mistresses. His father was the first wife's son and was doted on by Grandmaster Mu.

Plenty of elites would also be attending the gala just to see the young master of the Mu family for themselves.

Even if they could not attract his attention, anyone from the Mu family would do, too.

The reporters were, thus, stunned by the resulting glamor at the event.

Everything was too luxurious and over-the-top to the point of being... decadent!

Only the Mu family had such power and influence in the whole capital.

For the sake of attending the gala, Yun Na poured her life savings of 2000 yuan into renting an extended Bentley.

The Bentley rode to the venue and stopped at the entrance. She adjusted her outfit one last time; she paid special attention into arranging the beautiful piece of jewelry on her neck to make sure that it would be seen by the media from the best angle.

She had put in a lot of effort and attention to look her best in this gala to heighten her chance of exposure.

Hmph! Yun Shishi, you don't deserve to attend this gala. Stay at home watching TV with your b*stard son as I dazzle everyone here!

She cursed under her breath.

She put on a perfect smile as the chauffeur opened the car door for her. She held her chin high, proudly straightened her back, lightly pushed her hair behind her shoulders, and then proceeded to walk the red carpet.

She attracted the attention of many female stars with her appearance.

There were praises or shocked exclamations centered on her neck – at the priceless jewel hanging on it.

Chapter 138: Stealing the Limelight

Van Cleef & Arpels was the most valued jewelry brand, and the Secret Garden series was its most sought-after product by the rich and the powerful. In this Van Cleef & Arpels series was VICOMTE, the one and only in the world.

Yun Na garnered all the attention the moment she stepped on the red carpet.

The paparazzi saw her and aimed their cameras at her to take pictures one after another.

Other female stars were discussing among themselves, “Who is this newcomer?” as they glared daggers at her.

“She’s wearing Armani from the latest Summer series. Oh god, look at her neck, it’s a necklace from the Secret Garden series of Van Cleef & Arpels!”

“I heard that gem is worth millions...”

“It must be fake! VICOMTE is a worldwide limited edition, so it’s not easy to get your hands on it.”

“Definitely fake. The VICOMTE necklace is priceless. Where did this newcomer come from for her to be wearing such fake jewelry? Hmph...”

“I heard there’s a sugar daddy who wanted to buy this necklace at an auction at an exorbitant price...”

Everyone was discussing this matter fervently.

Yun Na could not make out what they were talking about, but she knew that she was currently the center of attention with the many jealous pairs of eyes looking at her. Her heart was smug as she strutted to the entrance with her head high and ample bust raised. She was politely blocked by the concierge at the door, however.

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“How are you, madam? Kindly show your gala invitation card, please.”

Invitation card? Does one need an invitation card to attend this gala?

She was momentarily thrown off but quickly recovered herself. With her proud chin lifted high, she sneered at the man. “What is the meaning of this? Are you asking me for an invitation card? Do you think I’ll attend this gala without an invitation?”

“Sorry, madam, you have misunderstood. Asking for an invitation card from a guest is one of the protocols for tonight.” The concierge’s

face continued to smile politely, though there were doubts in his eyes.

Rigorous entry protocols were being followed for tonight's gala. This was to prevent the young, naïve, and unpopular models and starlets from gatecrashing this event. Some entertainers tried entering the venue without an invitation card.

Huanyu Entertainment had given out five hundred invitation cards, and one hundred guest passes for this event. There were a hundred seats for the media representatives and all guests had to display their passes before they were allowed entry. There was no exception.

She looked slightly embarrassed and unhappily retorted, "I'm the partner of Director He. Does this require an invitation card, too?"

"Yes, may I ask which Director He you are referring to?"

"The well-known director, He Lingxiang."

"Haaa!" A burst of disdainful laughter came from her side.

She frowned in shameful frustration, turned her head over, and saw Yang Mi, one of the four most popular starlets, laughing at her.

Tonight, she was dressed in an evening gown with golden tassel. The long and flowy gown made her look extra slender and tall. Simple yet luxurious. And with the diamond jewelry on her neck and exquisite makeup, she looked stunning.

As a top public figure, she, Yang Mi, knew how to build publicity for herself. She attracted many camera flashes from the media the moment she appeared.

However, halfway on the red carpet, the attention shifted away from her to this unknown newcomer; naturally, she was very unhappy about it.

Where did this newcomer come from? Why doesn't she know the rules?

Where did this newcomer come from? Why doesn't she know the rules?

She was an unknown newcomer who had violated the unspoken rules when she snatched the limelight from the seniors with her extravagant appearance.

This is not her show. Is she doing this on purpose?

Yang Mi did not like the look of Yun Na. She looked like a bimbo, the kind who would act without thinking, and indeed she was right. By stealing the limelight, she had offended many stars who were more experienced than her.

“Which director did you come with?” she asked as she haughtily walked up to her.

Yun Na was somewhat dumbstruck by her presence. This woman had a domineering demeanor and haughty eyes.

“I'm... I'm with Director He. I'm his partner.”

Yang Mi was being spiteful to her. After all, Yun Na had unreservedly seized all the attention that was meant for her, so she naturally would not make it easy for this newbie.

“There are so many directors with ‘He’ as their last name. Not everyone is qualified to enter this venue. Tell me his name and I’ll determine his qualifications.”

Yun Na gritted her teeth in frustration. This woman was making things difficult for her. Who her partner was had got nothing to do with her!

Still, she knew that Yang Mi had a tough backing behind her. Those actresses who managed to make it big in the entertainment industry would have strong supporters backing them up. Thus, she did not dare offend her. Otherwise, as a newcomer, she would be banned from this industry before she could make an appearance.

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As such, she respectfully replied, “It’s... It’s He Lingxiang; Director He.”

“You stammer when you speak. It seems to me that you are not used to such splendor. Do you think you are fit to attend this gala in the first place?!”

“Sister Yang, as she has just said, she is He Lingxiang’s partner! That Director He is... Hehe!” Another effulgently dressed female star that was standing next to Yang Mi whispered this to her.

This actress was Tang Yu. She was the supporting character in a TV drama, which Yang Mi was the female lead. She gained quite the fame due to the show’s popularity and subsequently received several acting offers. She became rather close to Yang Mi lately.

Though she was whispering, in fact, she was making Yun Na hear it. Her words were full of humiliation. “The newcomers nowadays will do anything to get ahead, won’t they? He Lingxiang has such a notorious reputation and she can stand to be with him. She must be a sadist!”

Yang Mi gave a sarcastic laugh. “True! There are some newcomers who don’t know any better. They think they own the world once they grab a thigh. Who do they think they are?! The show business is not meant for every Tom, Dick, and Harry to crawl into.”

“Hmph, that’s right.”

Yun Na was full of grievances as she could not rebut despite their continuous humiliation of her. She could only pout while tears welled up in her eyes, clenching the edge of her dress in silent anger.

Tang Yu rubbed it in further. “Oh, no. Look at her, acting so pitiful. Sister Yang, she seems to be the calculative type. With how she is dressed for the occasion, she’s obviously trying to undermine you!”

“Is she fit?!” the other asked, “I think what she’s wearing is all fake!”

Yun Na immediately cut in, “No—”

“No? How about that jewel on your neck? Where did you get it?” Yang Mi did not believe her and forced her into giving an affirmative reply. “This necklace is worth a few millions. Can you afford it?”

“That’s impossible! It must be fake! She looks like a country bumpkin!”

A few invited actresses at their side had crowded around them and started to voice their vicious and sarcastic remarks one after another.

Yun Na was shaking with fury. These women were out to humiliate her just because they were jealous and unhappy of her stealing the limelight from them!

Chapter 140: A b*tch is coy.

Thus, with no other choice and without any rescuer, Yun Na remained standing there, her heart full of grievances, and listened to them endlessly humiliate her.

Wait and see. Just wait and see, all of you! I'll remember tonight's humiliation; you'll pay for this one by one.

When I become famous one day, I'll exact vengeance a hundred—no, a thousand times to you all!

The entertainment reporters beside her were sympathetic.

This newbie has offended many seniors in the field even before she steps into the venue. Pitiful, indeed. However, as a newbie in the entertainment industry, one needs to know how to keep a low profile, or they risk stepping on the wrong toes.

Hence, no one came to her rescue.

Yang Mi held the highest status among those present. She was at the peak of her career after eight years in the entertainment industry, and no one dared to offend her.

“What’s happening? Why is everyone crowding at the entrance?”

A male voice, husky and crisp, was heard from nearby.

Everyone turned to look and was surprised to see Li Jiuxian standing behind. He was wearing a handcrafted suit, with fine tailoring details, that made him look outstanding. His handsome face garnered many screams the moment he entered the venue.

Li Jiuxian was Huanyu’s latest idol. He was highly popular with his intellectual persona and exceptional appearance. His outstanding qualities had landed him two big commercials and five teen drama series. Highly productive and resourceful, he was a teen idol greatly valued and promoted by Huanyu Entertainment.

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Yun Na saw him looking at her pitifully humiliated self and looked at him imploringly, telling him with her puppy eyes that he was her last chance at getting out of this shameful situation; she looked adorable with her red-rimmed eyes.

He could not help but take pity on her. Looking at Yang Mi, he asked, “Sister Yang, why aren’t you going in?”

He was on good terms with her. Both were from the same company and co-acted in a TV drama series with a high viewership. Rumors that both fell in love with each other afterward circulated and even became the hottest news in the capital for many months.

She replied, “This little b*tch is blocking my way. An ambitious newbie who is out to grab attention.”

He gently smiled at her. “Sister Yang is so pretty tonight; all the attention will definitely be on you.”

She liked what she heard and blushed at his compliment. She gushed, “Jiuxian, you look so smart tonight; you’ll definitely be in the news tomorrow.”

“Thank you for the compliment, Sister Yang! You know that the media is already waiting inside the venue. Don’t pick a fight with a newcomer, or you’ll be labeled as a bully if this leaks out. You’ll lose more than you gain,” he advised.

“Er, you are right,” she agreed. As he smiled, she took his arm. Both then walked into the dining hall.

Yun Na watched with pounding heart as they walked away.

Seeing that the two had left, Tang Yu decided to leave as well. She snorted, gave the newcomer a warning look, and followed the pair into the hall.

Shortly after, He Lingxiang arrived.

Yun Na, who was waiting for him at the entrance, immediately approached him and hooked her arm through his as she coquettishly moaned, “Director He, you are finally here! I almost assumed you are going in without me!”

Chapter 141: Clear Skies and Fine Sceneries 1

“Director He, you are finally here! I almost assumed that you are going in without me!”

At this point in time, He Lingxiang was locking arms with a famous model. When he spotted Yun Na in her extraordinary dress, he was momentarily dazed but was unable to recall who she was.

She only looked vaguely familiar.

He had played with plenty of women.

His partners would change almost every night, and when he played, he played hard.

At present, many female stars looked largely identical in the entertainment industry; they were all products manufactured by plastic surgeries at hospitals, and they could hardly be distinguished from one another.

A heart-shaped face, small cherry lips, tall nose bridge, and large eyes were the standard.

There was a saying within the industry: ‘We ask not to be born in the same year, same month, or the same day, but we wish to seek the same nose, same face, and the same doctor.’

Hence, he had no recollection of her face.

With a troubled face, he asked, “You are?”

“Director, who is she?!” the model beside him demanded flirtatiously.

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“Director, I’m Yun Na. Don’t you remember me?” she asked, feeling flabbergasted. He would not make use of her and then go back on his word later, would he?

Going back on his word was fine, but he should at least bring her in.

“Hmph, scram!” The model did not wait for him to reply Yun Na and merely linked her hand with his, wanting to drag him away.

“Hold on...” Yun Na, who felt extremely humiliated, gritted her teeth in anger. Blocking his way, she said, “My elder sister is Yun Shishi. Director, you do remember her, don’t you?”

Yun Shishi. She is her younger sister, Yun Na?!

He remembered her at once. He then surveyed her from head to toe and, in his eyes, emerged a tinge of greed. “Yun Na, you’ve gorgeously dressed yourself today; I almost couldn’t recognize you.”

Yun Na sighed in relief at that. She beat his chest with indignation and coquetry as crocodile tears fell down drop by drop from her eyes. “Director, I almost thought that you don’t remember me. I waited for you for so long. The concierge refused me entry; it was really embarrassing to stand here at the entrance!”

He felt disgusted by her pitiful and coy act that goosebumps rose on his skin.

He had seen tons of women like her in his many years in the industry, and he was already sick of the tactics she just played.

Yun Na was actually decent-looking, just a tad hypocritical; she always acted innocent and harmless but was in fact unrestrained.

He toyed with her once and knew that she was the typical snob; she would do anything to rise in status. No matter how hardcore the game was, she welcomed everything.

He would at most play with this type of women for a night or two before throwing them away. He would not take them to heart.

Men had the strong desire to subjugate women. Women like this, who threw themselves at men, were especially worthless. He was easily fed up with them instead.

However, she was Yun Shishi's younger sister, and that made a difference.

He was more than interested in Yun Shishi.

Besides her natural charm, just the thought of her innate stubbornness already excited him.

If he managed to conquer her, it would be such an accomplishment.

Moreover, she seemed to have some intimate relationship with Mu Yazhe.

The woman Mu Yazhe had his eyes on must taste good.

Just by thinking about it, greed nearly emanated from his eyes.

“Yun Na, sorry to hear that. I'm late!”

Saying this, he easily pushed away the model by his side and embraced Yun Na instead.

“Director, why are you...”

The woman panicked. Her round fiery eyes glared at Yun Na, but the latter merely countered with a haughty expression, shrugging her off.

“Go back; I’m not bringing you in today.”

The woman seethed. “Director, you promised me that you’ll bring me to see a big event—”

“Next time, then! I’ve changed my mind,” he impatiently cut her off.

The woman’s lips shriveled in annoyance, but she did not badger further and just took her leave with an ashen face.

Yun Na was over the moon. He lowered his sight and glanced at her with interest. He laid out his plan and asked, “How’s everything going? Your sister, did she come?”

Come? How could she come? She was wearing her sister’s gown, so how could the latter come?

She had never thought of bringing her adoptive sister along in the first place.

If she were to walk side by side with her adoptive sister, she would snatch away all the spotlight.

She was also unbothered by his request.

As long as she could infiltrate this venue, she could hook up with anyone and everyone would be an attractive investor. Why would she take fancy to a mere He Lingxiang?

She could not expose her true intentions this early, though.

“Don’t worry; I’ve got everything settled. You’ll definitely be satisfied tonight.” She smiled seductively as she nibbled at his ear.

Their intimate association unknowingly triggered a numbness at his lower abdomen. The gala had yet to start, but he could hardly wait.

He nodded in satisfaction and hinted, “Listen; inside, there’s a row of wine especially arranged for those investors. One gulp and they’ll get a strong kick.”

The wine was spiked with a certain amount of aphrodisiac and incapacitating agents. Those who were in the industry long enough knew of this unspoken rule, but most newbies were unaware of this trick.

Some investors would have someone pass this wine to a newbie to drink if they were interested in her. Once she drank it, she would fall into their trap.

“Director, I get what you want me to do, but if I were to succeed with my mission, then what you promised me...”

“An idol drama that Huanyu invested in this year. I’ll arrange to let you into the crew as the female lead.” He was withholding something in his eyes.

“Director, don’t go back on your words!” She planted a kiss on his chin in satisfaction and smiled radiantly.

“Of course!” He grinned as the flame of ambition burned in his eyes.

...

It was star-studded on the gala’s red carpet; its luxurious lineup was comparable to a global movie festival.

Amidst the reporters’ hubbub, a nanny van traveling at a high speed slowly came to a halt at the venue’s entrance.

Han Yuyan and Shao Dong then walked the red carpet while holding hands. They had just appeared, yet many reporters were already surrounding and blocking their way.

She was the only Asian female actress that would be attending this year’s Uslan Movie Festival for the huge film production, ‘Harsh’.

Standing on the red-carpet, she, with exquisite makeup, wore a long-tailed oriental dress. Linking her arm with Shao Dong’s, she walked toward the stage with dignity and grace.

Flashes of light accompanied their entrance. They enhanced her alluring makeup and made her seem more beautiful. Who knew how many films were instantly used up to capture her lavish appearance?

She put up her signature smile, and under the camera flashes, it was captivating.

It was a moment to testify one’s popularity on the red carpet.

She clutched his hand tightly and continuously posed. The two interacted with great intimacy under the reporters' requests.

This was when someone bellowed, "AH! Gu Xingze, he's coming; he's coming! The biggest star of tonight's gala!"

"Oh, god, Xingze! Xingze! Keep up! Keep up!"

"Ouch! Don't push!"

Many excited reporters flooded the entrance to the red carpet again. Han Yuyan was posing and stroking her hair in coquetry, but, in the blink of an eye, the reporters were completely gone, and no further interest was shown on her.

She was still maintaining her signature hand-wave, so she and Shao Dong ended up standing there rather awkwardly and humiliatingly.

The smile on her face twitched and then stiffened.

She grinded her teeth in anger and could not take this lying down. She looked in the direction of where the media reporters had gone in droves, and—

On the red carpet, Gu Xingze, who was holding Yun Shishi's hand, walked forward slowly. Throughout their journey, camera lights flashed nonstop.

"God, Xingze is so handsome in that outfit today!"

"He has been in the industry for ten years, yet his looks are still so attractive, elegant, and noble. Oh, god... "

“The other male artistes that had debuted in the same year as him couldn’t even stand the test of time. Some have become disabled and some have aged... He’s the only one who still looks so fresh... ”

“Ohhh... What did time leave on him...”

“Huh? Who is that woman beside him? I’ve never seen her before!”

“Oh, god. See that woman holding on to him? She’s so beautiful! More beautiful than Queen Han even!”

Someone with keen eyes spotted Yun Shishi beside Gu Xingze and marveled at her beauty. Thereafter, all the reporters consecutively shifted their attention to her!

Yun Shishi, who was wearing a graceful white evening gown, came off as a beautiful goddess. Unlike Han Yuyan’s carefully crafted glamorous facial features, she was effortlessly beautiful. She seemed like heaven’s masterpiece with her extraordinary looks.

Her looks were refined. The black and white of her eyes were vividly separated – expressive irises that matched her attractive appearance. Her nose bridge was high, her lips was red, and her teeth were pearly white. When she smiled, it was as if all living things on heaven and earth were drained of colors!

White suited her very much.

Her smooth skin was so delicate and fair that she strongly resembled a jade doll – outrageously refined.

At this moment, with the snow-white gown on her, her elegance was more apparent. Standing next to Gu Xingze, she was not

overshadowed and was in fact extremely compatible to him. Their every action was done with indescribable grace. Yun Shishi, in fact, overwhelmed everyone with her presence alone!

Her poise was just right. She was not overwhelming Gu Xingze's but was not being overwhelmed by others, either.

A beauty like Han Yuyan even became her backdrop.

“Oh, gosh. She's like a fairy.”

“The air around her, how can it be so ethereal?! You can't compare her to others. If Queen Han were to stand next to her, she would be unable to hold her fort!”

“Even if it were Yan Bingqing, she would also be unable to compare.”

“Who is this woman? Why haven't I seen her before... ”

...

Who was she?

Almost everyone had the same question.

Many famous directors and producers were at the venue, including high-profile individuals, and all of them were so astonished they stood rooted to the ground as they observed her.

Beauties were a dime a dozen in the entertainment industry, but none of them was comparable to Yun Shishi.

She looked elegant and ethereal – truly ethereal without a tinge of tackiness. She and Gu Xingze together were like an incomparably beautiful oil painting.

Gu Xingze frequented movie festivals, but he rarely had a female partner. Since Yun Shishi was a newbie who had yet to debut, the surrounding people could only speculate about her identity.

Hearing the discussion of the entertainment reporters, Han Yuyan nearly flew into rage.

What were they thinking? They actually compared her to an inexperienced newbie! Did they not have good taste?

She dressed herself up so meticulously and attended the event in glamor, but the limelight was easily stolen from her by a newbie whom these people did not even know the name of. Han Yuyan bit her lips in hatred and locked her eyes on to Yun Shishi.

Chapter 142: Clear Skies and Fine Sceneries 2

If eyes could kill, then Yun Shishi would already be shredded into a thousand pieces.

Damn it!

“Xingze, is this your female partner?” one of the many entertainment reporters asked in surprise.

Gu Xingze grinned and nodded.

“What’s her name? Is it okay if you tell us?”

He lowered his eyes to Yun Shishi and sent her a signal with them.

Feeling a little nervous, she blushed lightly. Fortunately, she had nice makeup applied on, as it covered any of her tizzies or worries.

This was her first ever red-carpet walk, and she already had to be under these many reporters’ cameras. This occasion was no less inferior to any global movie festivals.

Her appearance was already extremely eye-catching.

Her lips curled into a charming smile and her lovely voice reached their ears like spring breeze. “Friends from the media, good evening. I am Yun Shishi.”

She paused for a while before continuing with a radiant smile, “Clear skies and fine sceneries.”

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Yun Shishi was always a detailed person, and even for her name’s meaning, she was very particular about it.

The reporters were mesmerized by her voice, which was akin to a passing light breeze. Compared to the self-introduction of fresh female stars, Yun Shishi’s was more reserved and conservative.

Some recalled when Han Yuyan first debuted, it was during the launching ceremony of the first shooting of her movie. Her self-introduction was quite simple yet brute.

“Hello, everyone! I’m rookie Han Yuyan; ‘Han’ as in Korea and ‘Yuyan’ as in the Eight Books of the Heavenly Dragon. Nice to meet you all!”

Just by comparing, one could perceive the difference in cultivation.

Uncultured, indeed.

In that instant, Han Yuyan’s poor level of education and immaturity were once more distastefully made apparent to these entertainment reporters.

Thus, with Han Yuyan serving as a foil, the reporters developed a rather good and deeper impression of Yun Shishi.

However, some reporters still had questions.

“This newbie is so pretty. She has yet to debut, but she’s already walking the red carpet with Gu Xingze. Did she pull off any shenanigans? What’s her background like?”

“Precisely. On what grounds is she able to walk the red carpet with him? Her background is unknown. Since the handsome Xingze is known for his coldness and high status, this newbie probably has a strong backer!”

“Her beauty is also a strength! Look at her; her face is so delicate it seems water can be squeezed from it with a pinch. She even looks way better than those who have gone under the knife!”

“I recognized her now! She’s that auditionee who left the judges with a great impression at the last day of auditioning for ‘The Green

Apple'. I was there at that time and saw her amazing performance, too! I heard that Director Lin was so impressed with her!"

"Oh, so it's her! I heard that the movie's directors originally wanted to cast Yan Bingqing for the female lead role, but Director Lin didn't like her rigid acting and strongly voiced his support for a newbie, instead. Rumor has it that he even announced his intention to discontinue filming the movie himself if another person is cast for the role and then walked out of the audition site, causing the assistant director to lead the entire crew into bringing him back."

"Director Lin is as stubborn as always. The newbie he has his eyes on must be very outstanding."

"Isn't it so? He was practically beaming with joy that day and decided the female lead on

the spot without much consideration!"

The reporters gossiped with one another about it.

Once everyone heard that Yun Shishi was the female lead personally handpicked by Lin Fengtian, they took another look at her with increased admiration!

Lin Fengtian was known for his strictness and meticulousness with work; he was so harsh he was nearly apathetic.

He made sure to be involved with everything, even if it was role selection, shooting, post-editing, or even processing. At the set, he was famous for being stringent. His words were final, and no meant no; everything had to be redone if it was not executed satisfactorily.

A problem with a scene or an emotion, and the entire crew had to shoot everything again.

Han Yuyan was inexperienced when she first participated in his production; her portrayal of the given role was weak and lacking. For a scene in the rain, she stumbled and made many errors in her lines. Lin Fengtian was so enraged he berated her. Half a night was spent for that one scene.

Thus, Han Yuyan held him in reverence.

She had never been in any of his movies again even when she rose to stardom.

What a monster...

Yang Mi, who had already made her entrance, was curious of the craze among the reporters. She turned to see what it was and spotted an unfamiliar face.

Another newbie. She knew nothing but came in such a grand fashion, nonetheless. She had yet to debut but already wanted to suppress her seniors. She was this ambitious now, so what about in future?

Feeling threatened by the newbie, she sneered. “Why are the standards for this year’s gala set so low? Since when did they start permitting every Tom, Dick, and Harry entry here?”

Tang Yu chimed in, “Exactly! Who is this newbie, anyway?”

Yun Na, who had successfully entered the venue with He Lingxiang, also heard the commotion behind her. The continuous flashes of cameras made the entire venue as bright as day.

She looked over her shoulder in astonishment. Who was putting on such a big show that so many entertainment reporters were clamoring? When she saw that the person was Yun Shishi, she was so shocked she inhaled a chilling breath!

The person was her!

She originally thought her sister would be at her wits' end from worrying over the missing gown, but never did she expect for the latter to wear a more expensive gown than hers to the event!

Her level was much higher than hers.

She even appeared to this event as Gu Xingze's female partner!

Once she made her entrance, even Han Yuyan's presence was overshadowed.

One must know that Yang Mi's status could not compare to that of Han Yuyan's!

D*mn it!

“Your sister is here!” He Lingxiang, by her side, stared at Yun Shishi with excitement. She was so dazzling tonight he almost lost his will to move his eyes away from her.

The thought of being able to enjoy the two sisters' services tonight made his Adam's apple bubble heavily. He could hardly wait.

Noting his excitement, Yun Na was infuriated further. She was so jealous fire almost emitted from her eyes. She bore extreme hatred in her heart. Was Yun Shishi really going to fight her for everything?!

She was not going to let her have her way!

This was when she thought of a plan, causing a sinister smile to blossom on her lips.

Han Yuyan was so furious she turned livid with rage. The situation was already out of her control and she could not do anything to steal the other's thunder. With a stiff face, she made her way to the venue's entrance.

However, when she reached the entrance, no one was accompanying her; Shao Dong did not follow her.

“Where's that man?”

She twisted her neck in annoyance, only to see the man still standing in the same spot. He seemed to be in a daze as he gazed in Yun Shishi's direction.

His infatuated expression made her so furious she almost threw her high heels at him.

However, being at such an important event and under the watchful gazes of the media personnel, audience, socialites, and influential people, it was just not proper to openly express her anger. She could only suppress the flames of fury inside her. Swallowing her anger, she called out, “Ehem! Shao Dong, it's time to go in.”

He was jolted out of his dazedness by her call and turned to see her looking dissatisfied. He felt chagrin over his loss of self-control.

Unbeknown to the two, a wayward reporter managed to capture this moment.

“Nice! This shot is too perfect. I’ll use it for tomorrow’s breaking news.”

[Famous actress Han Yuyan’s fine looks at the gala fail to keep boyfriend’s eyes! Newcomer receives all the spotlight!]

This headline is great. It has hype.

Gu Xingze and Yun Shishi made their way to the middle of the venue. Gripping a golden pen, he drew an elegant signature at the center of the signature board. The gala’s red-carpet event had, thus, ended.

She had many butterflies in her stomach and took several deep breaths in secret. It was too stressful being his female partner.

Security was fortunately tight for tonight’s gala. Non-attendees, reporters, paparazzi, and staff were not permitted entry, so Gu Xingze’s fans were kept outside.

If this were not the case, she might receive quite a bit of trouble.

However, despite the tight security, throughout the red-carpet event, she felt uneasy over those envious eyes trained on her.

Gu Xingze was an excellent idol. The scandals he had were close to none. His usual image was that of an aloof and handsome man, and because of this, several female reporters got smitten with him.

However, tonight, the superstar standing next to a newcomer had a gentle smile, which could only appear in movie scenes, on his lips, and the crowd was instantly captivated.

Was this really to make a name for her?

This was not to attract haters, was it?

His fanbase was huge.

The thought of it caused Yun Shishi to break into cold sweat.

A gentle whisper to her ear from him dispersed her wayward thoughts.

“Shishi.” He dipped his head and passed the pen to her. “Sign.”

“Ah? I have to as well?”

“Mhm-mhm, of course. You are my female partner and my female lead.”

She asked with some uneasiness, “Where do I sign?”

“Here.” He pointed at the blank space below his signature.

With her cheeks tinted red, she abashedly signed her name.

She had never practiced her signature before, but just like her, her handwriting was very beautiful and graceful.

“Let’s go.” With eyes as gentle as calm waters, he proffered his hand to her.

She pressed her lips together, gave a bashful smile, and then placed her hand to his.

He held her hand tightly and did not let go.

Her hand was soft and warm, and her skin was as supple as a flower petal. His heart skipped a beat the moment he held her hand.

Could there be love at first sight in this world?

Many years later, when he recalled this scene again, he felt lonely.

He clasped her hand tightly. If he were to hold it tighter, just a little tighter, she would be his...

If he were to go back to this moment, he would hold her hand even tighter – tighter to the point of never letting go ever again...

Anyway, this was a story for another day.

...

In a narrow alley at the back of the event venue, a luxurious Bentley perfectly avoided the sea of reporters and stopped at the VIP entrance.

Mu Yazhe stepped out of the car indifferently. Coldness and detachment were present in his eyes as always.

Under the retro lightings and wearing a handmade Armani suit, his tall and lean figure and long and sturdy legs formed the perfect golden ratio.

Mu Wanrou, who was wearing a purple gown, followed behind him with the sleeping Yichen in her arms; there was indescribable grievance in her eyes.

She gazed up at the stoic-looking man before her in bitter silence. She bit her lower lip as tears welled up in her eyes.

Mu Yazhe looked at his wristwatch. His facial expression seemed to be sealed in ice – it was devoid of emotion. “Feeling indignant?”

“?”

He leisurely turned to look at her with frigid eyes. “You’d better know your place, hm?”

Feeling wronged, she asked back, “My place? What is my place, then?”

The man was still regarding her emotionlessly.

“I’m your fiancée! Your future wife...” Tears flowed out from her eyes as she asked with a cracked voice, “Aren’t I?”

He studied her for a while, and frustration started to stem from his heart.

He had lost some of his patience tonight, so a word of apathy came pouring out of his lips for her, “Ugly.”

She was puzzled.

“If you still show this face, then disappear from my eyes.”

Chapter 143: You Are Too Deep into the Act

“If you still show this face, then disappear from my eyes.”

Mu Yazhe said this with an expressionless face and a strangely detached voice.

Mu Wanrou gawked at him. It was as if she was talking to a stranger.

“Zhe, what happened to you... tonight?”

“Huh?”

“Usually, you’re not like this... you’re not like this toward me.”

The corners of his mouth curled into a chilling arch. He stepped closer to her.

If it were per normal, him coming closer to her was something she would swoon over. However, looking at his piercing eyes and chilling presence now, she unconsciously took a step backward in fear.

“How should I treat you, then?”

If Yichen were to notice the bitterness on his face, his heart would also shudder instinctively. His father had never displayed this expression before...

Ever since they were at EMPRESS, he could sense his father’s inexplicable ire. In the past, even if his daddy were to lose control, he would never show it on his face. However, tonight, he was especially out of control...

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She asked with a trembling voice, “Zhe, you’ve always been gentle to me, but tonight, why...”

Everything was originally alright... originally alright! However, after he entered EMPRESS and saw Yun Shishi and Gu Xingze standing together and being intimate with each other, his heart was thrown into disarray. He was in such a jumbled mess that he was unable to restrain himself.

He was never a moody man. In fact, despite his cold persona, toward her, Grandpa Mu, and Yichen, he had always been more patient.

He said emotionlessly, “Don’t mess around too much. I’ve already lost my patience with you.”

“All along, toward me, there’s only ‘patience’? What am I to you exactly?”

She was on the verge of tears as she questioned him bitterly, “Fifteen years. Have I never entered your heart once?”

He gazed at her with cold eyes and replied apathetically, “We are just acting. You are too into the act.”

She was rooted to the spot, as if lightning had struck her.

She stared at him in utter disbelief. “Why do you want to marry me, then?”

His eyes slightly narrowed, and he responded unenthusiastically, “Because it is grandfather’s wish.”

He did not understand what marriage was before.

The Mu was old money in the capital for over ten decades; they had a huge house, a huge company, and a strong foundation.

Internally, it was chaotic. Everyone had clashing ideals and lusted for power, wealth, and control. Born with a silver spoon in his mouth, he was destined not to carry personal emotions.

He was unable to decide even his marriage.

Mu Sheng had five wives. For as long as he could remember, conflicts existed within their huge family.

Fight? What were they fighting for? It was just for status, for affection, and for inheritance. Who was fighting whom, everyone fought until they were battered up and gunpowder was in the air. They were duplicitous, stabbed each other's backs, set up traps, and schemed against one another. In the world of the rich, one had to always tread on thin ice.

His impression of marriage was that it was tiring and something that could not withstand even one blow.

Since marriage could not withstand the test of power and money, it did not matter who his marriage partner was.

Was there true love in this world?

He did not know.

He was still young back then, and Grandpa Mu had the highest position within the family. His one word was akin to an imperial decree, and no one dared to disobey.

He was all along hardworking and outstanding, and Mu Sheng chose him as his successor simply because he had never let him down and done everything perfectly. He had never allowed himself to show any signs of weakness.

Chapter 144: True love can only come with a true heart.

In the past twenty over years, he had not lived his life as his own. He had no emotion to call his and solely abided by his grandfather's wishes.

His entire life was about following every instruction of Grandmaster Mu.

Very satisfied with his grandson, Mu Sheng transferred most of Disheng's shares under Mu Yazhe's name before the latter even reached adulthood. His only request was for him to marry Mu Wanrou.

He was not in any position to refuse.

It was only up to this point that everything was in upheaval because of that woman.

When it came to business, Mu Yazhe was the elite of the elites. He was ruthless and charismatic. Disheng Financial Group held the fate of the financial market.

His thirst for conquest was perfectly displayed in this aspect.

Right now, he discovered that one woman could equally stir up the same thirst in him.

This was especially the case when Yun Shishi, with her exceptional beauty, appeared before him tonight. Her every look and smile moved him deeply.

With just one look, he was blown away!

Her smile was not meant for him, though.

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His thoughts strayed to that night six years ago as he looked at her. She had anxiously lain in the bed, blindfolded. She was so fearful and helpless when he arrived yet still tried to accommodate him with her all.

When his fingers ran through her hair as he rode in perfect unison with her, he had this thought of keeping her by his side as a little pet. However, soon after, she completely disappeared from his life.

Meeting her again was unplanned, and he was unprepared. After their one-night stand, he realized how much his body craved and thirsted for her, but she refused him.

She told him before, “True love is priceless.” She then pointed a finger resolutely to his chest. “If you really want it... then use this to exchange for it!”

Can true love only come with a true heart?

Does that mean one can't buy everything with money and power?

Still, why... is she giving her best smile at that Gu Xingze?

His heart was in turmoil.

D*mn. This woman can really stir shit.

He turned his back and refused to look at her again. He proceeded to coolly instruct the nanny, "Bring your young master upstairs."

"Yes!"

The nanny quickly took the little lad from Mu Wanrou as he strode off without looking backward.

Mu Wanrou watched his departing back with a cold heart.

Up until now, the man's heart had never beat for her.

She could not control the overwhelming pain and jealousy, as well as hatred, welling up from within her heart.

Yun Shishi, are you really a vixen who can steal a man's heart? You only have a pretty face, right? If your face is destroyed, can you still tempt men?

The gala tonight will be your night of destruction!

You just wait!

Mu Wanrou clenched her lips as she cursed, "Yun Shishi, go to hell!"

...

“Yun Shishi...”

Inside the dining hall, Yun Shishi stopped walking and looked around quizzically when she heard someone call her name.

Gu Xingze was ambushed by the media once they entered the hall. All the camera lenses and shutters were aimed in his direction as the reporters clamored to be the first to interview him.

How dangerous!

She quickly extricated herself from the media ambush, but she did not reach far before she heard someone call her.

She turned and saw that it was Yang Mi.

Chapter 145: Beauty is also a kind of talent.

Yang Mi. Half of the rookies in the entertainment industry had to call her their senior. Even those from the same batch feared and had to show her deference.

This was not just because of her popularity with the masses; she had an influential backer, so people were wary of her.

Yun Shishi was slightly perplexed. Why did the woman call out to her when she did not know her personally?

As she was wondering about this, Yang Mi and Tang Yu walked up to her. The former snorted audibly while the latter, who standing next to her, commented in half-jest, “Why? Is this your first time

attending a grand event that you've become tongue-tied in front of a superstar?"

"No," she replied sweetly.

"Why aren't you addressing 'Sister Yang Mi', then?" Tang Yu rolled her eyes.

These ladies aren't here with good intentions, huh.

She smiled and humbly replied, "That's because Sister Yang Mi is so stunning tonight in that beautiful gown. She looks way better in person than on screen."

Hearing this, Yang Mi happily accepted the praise. She eyed Yun Shishi properly for the first time. "You are a newbie but seems to take well to grand occasions. You are sweet with your words, too!"

"Hmph! Bootlicker!" Tang Yu was bent on stirring conflict as she added sarcastically.

Yun Shishi was not flustered when she heard that. Instead, she smilingly asked, "It is a sincere compliment to Sister Yang Mi. She really looks radiant in her dress tonight. Does Sister Tang Yu not agree with my assessment?"

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Yang Mi gave Tang Yu a warning look from her peripheral view. The latter rushed to clarify, "Nonsense. Are you trying to cause a rift between us?"

Yun Shishi gently replied, “I won’t dare do that. Sister Yang Mi is an excellent actress and Sister Tang Yu has great acting skills, too. You two are as close as sisters; how can I cause a rift between you two? Still, I must say that Sister Tang Yu is also up for the challenge tonight with your splendid appearance.”

She was subtly hinting that Tang Yu was equally dressed to kill, so she could fight with Yang Mi for the attention.

The two were under the same manager and company. Both became famous after acting in a drama series and were currently highly sought-after. Though Yang Mi was more famous than Tang Yu, she was often compared to the latter, and that had been making her quite unhappy lately.

Tang Yu was also frustrated with the constant comparison.

The two put so much effort into dressing up for tonight’s gala with the underlying intention of stealing each other’s thunder. However, both ended up looking almost the same.

“How can I compare with Sister Yang?! I’m behind her in terms of quality and experience!”

That goes without saying.

Yang Mi ignored her words and said, “You are called Yun Shishi, right?”

“Yes. How did Sister Yang Mi know of my name?” She was puzzled.

She smiled insincerely. “I heard about you when you got the female lead role in the ‘The Green Apple’. Congrats.”

She sounded like a sour grape.

Yun Shishi suddenly recalled some gossips Qin Zhou had shared with her earlier. Apparently, the female lead was already pre-determined despite the audition. The list of favorites included Yang Mi. Unfortunately, she was deemed as too old for the role by Lin Fengtian.

Getting disqualified due to her age was actually not fair to Yang Mi. At 25, she was not much older than the 24-year-old Yun Shishi. However, the deciding factor was that the latter looked much younger than her age and looked the part of a naïve school girl in uniform.

How could Yang Mi compare?

In this way, beauty was also a kind of talent.

Chapter 146: Drawing Closer

Yang Mi was rather vain. She believed that the only one capable of snatching the role from her was Yan Bingqing. That would be acceptable as the latter had a higher reputation and more resources.

Thus, when she learned that she had lost to a rookie with no track record, she was displeased.

When she found out that Yun Shishi would be at tonight's gala, she decided to check her out. In the end, she had nothing to criticize about this newbie. She also realized why Lin Fengtian had insisted on this girl to have the female lead role. Yun Shishi in her white gown seemed to have just stepped out of that teen novel. She even agreed with the director's choice to cast Yun Shishi as Yin Xiachun.

Yun Shishi could suss out the hostility in her words. She smilingly replied, "It's kind of Director Lin to give me the role; Shishi is nervous about it, too."

"Hmph. Nervous?" Yang Mi laughed sarcastically. "You need not be nervous. The entertainment industry isn't as simple as you think. You can't make it big on looks alone. Looks without skills will only lead to elimination sooner or later."

Yun Shishi was unperturbed and maintained her smile. "Thank you for your kind advice, Sister Yang Mi. Shishi will keep your words in mind."

"Sister Yang, there you are."

Li Jiuxian walked over with a wine glass in his hand. He was dumbstruck by the sheer beauty of Yun Shishi, who was standing with a smile before Yang Mi.

Yun Shishi ?

He had heard of her name before.

He was among the first few candidates to be considered for the male lead role in the ‘The Green Apple’. In the end, he was given a supporting role.

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Acting in this teen movie would help enhance his idol image. Besides, this film was going to be directed by the great Lin Fengtian. He would accept any role, even a cameo, in it. If this were just any average movie, he would reject the role as a second fiddle.

He had already seen Yun Shishi’s audition photo but was still swooned by her in person. She was radiantly beautiful.

“Are you... Yun Shishi?” He could not hide the admiration in his eyes.

“Yes, how do you do?” she affirmed with a smile. Inside, she was awkwardly deliberating over the identity of the man.

She barely followed the entertainment news and often confused the names of artistes.

Li Jiuxian was a relative new actor, so it was hardly surprising for her not to have heard of him yet.

...

Yun Na entered the venue with He Lingxiang and eagerly followed him to meet a few directors. One had even directed a Hollywood film that was nominated in the Oscars.

This was her first time seeing such splendor and was grateful to the man despite him forbidding her to speak at all.

It seems he has lots of connections. If he introduces me to one of the directors here, getting famous is just a matter of time.

She was feeling excited and elated.

This was when he pulled her to the side and asked, “Where is your sister?”

“Ah!” She clasped her mouth in alarm. She had almost forgotten about this.

He looked at her warningly. “You’d better not forget what I’ve instructed you earlier.”

“No, I didn’t. I was just—”

“Don’t you worry. You’ll get an appropriate reward as long as you give me what I want.” He was getting impatient.

She nodded readily. She scanned the crowd and spotted her adoptive sister. “Director He, my sister is over there!”

“Let’s go.”

He picked up a glass of alcohol from the counter. The corners of his mouth evoked a touch of evilness as he walked toward Yun Shishi.

“Sis, you are here!”

Li Jiuxian was chatting happily with Yun Shishi when someone suddenly interrupted their conversation.

Yun Shishi was startled to hear Yun Na's excited voice. She saw the latter approaching her with He Lingxiang and frowned. Her wrist that was holding a wine glass stiffened a little.

Yun Na... Why is she here?

However, when she saw Yun Na's elegant evening gown and the Secret Garden necklace, she immediately understood.

Her gown and jewelry were stolen by her adoptive sister!

Feeling utterly disappointed with her adoptive sister, she pursed her lips in anger.

She had been kind and giving to Yun Na despite the latter not being her biological sister. Since young, clothes or jewelries, the best was always reserved for her younger sister.

In university, she splurged on the latest fad, an Apple iPhone, for her sister with the money she had painstakingly saved from working as a part-timer for two months simply because the latter had asked her for it.

However, despite her loving and pampering, her sister had tried to do her in time and again. Now, she even resorted to stealing her important things.

She curled her fingers into a fist as she resolved not to condone her adoptive sister's behavior.

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She had always forgiven her sister in the past for the sake of their father. Now, she would not be so kind.

Yang Mi looked in the direction of the person who had called Yun Shishi and saw Yun Na, the newbie she detested.

Yun Na also spotted her. She almost cowered in fear, but then she remembered that He Lingxiang was with her now. With that, she snuggled his arm with apparent conceit as they walked up to the group.

Yang Mi could not help but sneer at her cockiness.

What a hypocrite!

Tang Yu shuddered at the sight of He Lingxiang, and she whispered to Yang Mi, “Isn’t that the girl who stole your thunder earlier? She is his partner, after all! No wonder she is so arrogant.”

“B*tch.” Yang Mi looked at Yun Na with despise.

Yun Na, with He Lingxiang beside her, was no longer afraid of her, though. The only thing in her mind was how to make her sister take the drink that had been drugged. She did not care about the rest.

Yang Mi became more upset when she was ignored and decided to teach the newbie a lesson. As Yun Na was walking past her, she subtly stuck out her foot under the cover of her long gown.

Yun Na missed this little action as she approached Yun Shishi. She was still holding her head high when she tumbled forward due to getting tripped by Yang Mi’s outstretched foot.

“Ahhh!” Yun Na let loose a scream.

Actions entangled...

Li Jiuxian managed to catch the falling Yun Na in time, but he failed to balance the wine glass in his hand. The glass of red wine flew and landed on Yun Shishi without warning.

Splatter!

The red liquid splashed on her beautiful white gown in an embarrassing fashion.

Yun Shishi frowned at Yang Mi. She had seen her furtive action from where she stood. Yang Mi saw her look and sniggered. She knew that Yun Shishi could not do anything about it even if she was caught in action.

He Lingxiang, as well as Tang Yu and Li Jiuxian, was flabbergasted at this unexpected turn of event.

Chapter 148: You don' t deserve these!

One after another, the guests crowded at the scene, buzzing with curiosity. The media hounds were drawn to the commotion too.

The atmosphere was tense.

Many of them wanted to see Yun Shishi make a fool of herself.

Yun Na, with her ashen face, carefully opened her eyes to look. Yun Shishi was staring at her with a chilly expression that she had never seen before. She was taken aback by this. Her adoptive sister was

usually sweet and gentle and would never shoot her such a deadly look. She retreated a step in fear.

“Sis...”

Splatter!

Before she could regain her composure, an expressionless Yun Shishi went up to her and, with a tilt of her wrist, poured the wine in her glass on Yun Na’s head.

Drip...

The cold liquid drenched her.

The crowd let out a gasp at this spectacle.

Yun Na was unprepared for her usually meek and defenseless sister to suddenly retaliate by drenching her with wine in front of all these people.

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She furiously lifted her head toward her sister, who was looking at her frigidly. “You! How dare you?!” She then marched up to Yun Shishi with her hand held high, intending to slap the latter.

However, before her palm could land on her sister, someone caught her wrist tightly.

With her eyes fuming in anger, she turned to see who had restrained her.

“Xing – Xingze...” It was Gu Xingze who had stopped her.

Yun Na widened her eyes in surprise. Her fury simmered in his presence.

Gu Xingze was her idol and the man of her dreams. She had to rein in her temper or, at least, pretend to be meek and well-behaved, lest she leave him a bad impression of her.

She withdrew her hand and looked timidly at him. Realizing how embarrassing she looked right now, a spate of hatred sprang in her heart for her sister!

It's all because of her! She shamed me before all these people and my idol!

She cursed Yun Shishi under her breath as she gushed at him, "Xingze, how do you do? I'm Yun Na... I'm – I'm your fan. I like you a lot; you've always been my idol..."

She smiled at him, only to see Gu Xingze frostily eye her dress and... necklace.

"Xingze..." Yun Na held her arms in shame. She was wet from head to toe – an utter embarrassment.

She put on a pitiful and wronged look. "I'm sorry that you have to see me in such an embarrassing situation..."

Moving closer, he grabbed the necklace on her neck and gently held it as his eyes narrowed dangerously. "How dirty..."

"Yes, I look like a mess... I – I don't have another gown to change into, though. What should I do?" she asked pitifully, mistaking his words for sympathy.

He looked her straight in the eyes. With his handsome face contorting with censure, he ordered jeeringly, “Take them off.”

“... What?!” She was partly alarmed and partly abashed. “What’s that for, Xingze? What do you mean by ‘take them off’?”

“I want you to take off that dress and necklace now.”

He looked at her with disgust, as if she were a scanty worm crawling in a drain. “It’s because you don’t deserve them.”

Chapter 149: I will not leave your side again.

“It’s because you don’t deserve them.”

With that, he strode over to Yun Shishi and covered her with his outer coat.

Yun Shishi thanked him quietly. Despite the mess on her, she still looked ethereal.

He felt a pinch of pain as he looked at her. He should have known that she would inadvertently step on the toes of many seniors as a newcomer in this grand occasion.

Women were prone to jealousy, especially in the entertainment industry. He knew it was full of ugly competitions and bitter cat fights, yet he did not protect her well.

“Sorry; I didn’t take proper care of you.” He frowned in self-chastisement. “I should’ve made sure to stay by your side at all times in this gala.”

She was surprised by his words. Nonetheless, she gently consoled him, “I’m fine. You don’t have to blame yourself.”

He gently squeezed her shoulders, drew her slowly into his embrace, and whispered to her ear, “I am not leaving you again.”

I won’t leave you and won’t allow anyone to bully you again.

She was unable to hide her surprise as she stared at him. She lifted her blushing face and acknowledged his promise with a smile, “Thank you.”

Yun Shishi’s calmness throughout the whole incident disappointed Yang Mi who was waiting for her to commit a social faux-pas. In fact, not only did she miss the chance to laugh at her, she even witnessed Gu Xingze treating her with loving tenderness. That left a bitter taste in Yang Mi’s mouth.

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The crowd around them started whispering to one another.

“Why is Xingze... so protective of this newbie? Who is she exactly?”

“That’s right. He treated me aloofly and coldly when I co-starred with him. Why is his treatment of this newbie so different? Is she someone important?”

“Hmph! She must have a big shot as her sugar daddy, so even Xingze has to kowtow to her...”

Yang Mi, who was already feeling very displeased, turned to face those gossipers and viciously snapped, “Shut your traps!”

On Yun Na’s end, she was unable to grasp the meaning behind his words and stupidly assumed that he was concerned for her. He treated her coldly and disdainfully, though.

She did not deserve them? What did she not deserve?

She could not understand.

Yun Na, with her pitiful and trembling voice, asked, “Master Xingze, what do you mean by that? What am I not deserving of?”

She then scanned the crowd like a scared kitten and lamented with tears, “Why are you bullying me? I may be a rookie, but that doesn’t mean you can treat me this way.” She crossed her arms and held her sleeves tightly.

The way she looked, with her moist and grievous eyes, and trembled in fear and embarrassment could move anyone’s heart, especially men’s. This would usually rouse their protective streak.

Li Jiuxian expectedly took pity on her.

He did not notice Yang Mi’s evil deed earlier, but he could tell that Yun Na’s fall was unintentional. If that was acting, her acting skills would be superb.

Despite it being unintentional, Yun Shishi did not wait for an apology and, instead, retaliated by doing the same thing to the unnerved Yun Na. That was just unkind.

He slowly walked over to Yun Na. Following Gu Xingze's example, he gentlemanly covered her with his outer coat.

Chapter 150: History repeats itself!

He slowly walked over to Yun Na. Following Gu Xingze's example, he gentlemanly covered her with his outer coat.

Yun Na was surprised and touched by this gesture. She smiled gratefully through her tears. "Li Jiuxian, thank you!"

"Come, dry your tears. Your makeup is going to be ruined," he kindly reminded her.

She hung onto his shirt cuff as if he were her last straw of hope. She implored, "It's unintentional; please believe me. I really didn't do it on purpose."

He nodded seriously. "Yes, I saw that it's really unintentional."

He then turned to Yun Shishi with a reproachful look. "She didn't do it on purpose, yet you drenched her with your wine. Don't you think your action is a little vicious?"

She raised an eyebrow in mock surprise. "Oh, I'm vicious?"

Tang Yu, who was standing at one side, added to Li Jiuxian's defense, "Yun Shishi, that is too much! Do you think you can get away with it just because you are given preferential treatment? You are such a bully!"

Gu Xingze frowned at their accusation and looked at Yun Shishi, who looked calm and collected in his arms. He was about to confront the two, but she stopped him.

Holding on his arm, she calmly told the rest, "I am not a bully."

Li Jiuxian did not believe her. "Why did you do this to her, then?"

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"That's right! Why did you do that to her? You probably want to embarrass her."

"Hmph! Isn't the pot calling the kettle black? Both rookies are dressed to kill tonight. Such arrogance!" someone viciously commented from the side.

"I agree. She must've done something to make Gu Xingze be taken with her. I heard Director Lin looks highly to her, too. I wonder if the two of them have something going on..."

"..."

On the second floor, Mu Yazhe was observing the spectacle below from behind the banister with condescension. His eyes, cold and stern, were locked on to Yun Shishi.

His grip on the banister tightened when he saw Gu Xingze held her close in his arms.

Mu Wanrou was right next to him. Her brows furrowed as she watched the commotion.

“Thief!”

An icy voice could be heard from the hall.

Yun Shishi stared bleakly at Yun Na and repeated, “You are a thief!”

That accusation jolted Mu Wanrou. She stood rooted to the spot as her memories returned to that scene in the orphanage fifteen years ago. The past was re-enacting before her now.

At that time, the children in the orphanage sided with her as she haughtily and heartlessly accused Yun Shishi. ‘Xiaoshi is a thief!’

This was history repeating itself. She took an unsettling step backward as guilt flooded her from the inside.

I’m not a thief...

Mu Wanrou, slightly trembling, held her arms across her shoulders. Her face was grave and serious.

Mu Yazhe turned and looked at her, expressionless. Her eyes were bleak as she was caught up with the nightmare recessing in her memory.

In the center of the hall, Yun Na tried to deny unconvincingly, “I’m not a thief...” Her face was wan with fright and alarm as her steps faltered.

“You took my necklace and my evening gown, yet you dared claim that you are not a thief?” Yun Shishi shot her adoptive sister a dirty look. “Isn’t that called stealing?”

“No, that’s nonsense! I’m not a thief!” Yun Na was still desperately trying to deny everything.

Her adoptive sister tilted her head in a half-jest. “Are you calling this a slander, then?”

Chapter 151: Exposed in Public

“Are you calling this a slander, then?”

Yun Na started to panic.

She did not expect her sister to expose her in public!

Yun Shishi always doted and pampered her as if she were her next kin. On their father’s account, her adoptive sister had never once complained about their suffering in her and her mother’s hands.

Her sister was meek and full of endurance, so she did not expect her to publicly humiliate her like this. However, her sister just did the unthinkable.

Admit to thieving? How could she do that? She had yet to debut in any show. If she admitted to stealing, how could she survive in the show business from then on?

Li Jiuxian, who was oblivious to the truth, tried to defend Yun Na, “You accuses her of being a thief, but where is your proof?”

“Proof?”

Tang Yu warned forebodingly, “Yun Shishi, you’d better be careful with your next words. If you are found slandering, there will be serious repercussions.”

Yun Shishi was bemused. Lifting an eyebrow, she smilingly said, “That is an expensive gown. Coupled with the necklace on her neck, she is wearing an outfit that is worth over a few millions. They are just too expensive.”

She paused and then continued casually, “If this matter is turned over to the police for investigation, and due to the massive loss reported afterward, the punishment will be life imprisonment in accordance to the state regulation for cases involving 1.5 million yuan or more.”

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Life imprisonment ?!

Yun Na was truly shocked to hear that. Was her adoptive sister sending her to jail?

I don’t want to go to jail!

She greatly regretted her action earlier at home and quickly tried to cover up. “No, I am not a thief. I’m not – I’m not...”

Compared to her adoptive sister's strong and rational argument, her defense sounded lame.

Forced into a corner by her sister, she was steadily losing her footing.

“She looks guilty while her sister looks confident, right?”

“Did she really steal? Look at that face; she seems to be flushing with guilt. She must be feeling guilty after being cornered...”

The surrounding people whispered and pointed their fingers at the two sisters.

Li Jiuxian was about to rebut when Yang Mi pulled him to her side, chiding, “Why are you getting involved?”

“I—”

She cut him off with a harsh reprimand, “Keep quiet! Don't invite trouble.”

Yun Na was still trying to find excuses, but they sounded lame even to her ears.

Gu Xingze sneered. “Yun Na, who gave you that Secret Garden necklace?”

“I... bought it myself,” she cautiously replied.

“You bought that?”

Yang Mi found her claim comical and jeered without hesitation. “Do you know that this necklace is worth a few thousands of millions? Can you afford it?!”

Yun Na despaired when she heard the price. “No, no. I bought the gown. The necklace was a gift.”

“Oh? Who gave you this gift, then?” Even Tang Yu found her story suspicious. “This is a limited edition, and one and only in the world. Even gauging its actual price is a bit difficult. Who gave this to you?”

Yun Na helplessly looked at He Lingxiang, but the latter coolly averted his gaze.

Gu Xingze frigidly replied, “That necklace belongs to me.”

Everyone was shocked to hear that.

He continued further, “There is a warranty card for every piece in the Secret Garden series. I have it, do you?”

“I – I don’t have...” Yun Na was paralyzed with shock, trembling and collapsing to the ground defenselessly.

Li Jiuxian was also shocked to learn the truth. Did Yun Na really steal her sister’s clothes and jewelry? She looked so innocent and believable just then, so he took her side...

Tang Yu despised, “A thief is a thief. You are so low-handed!”

Chapter 152: The truth is out.

Yun Na bit her lower lip as she cried to her sister, “I didn’t do it on purpose! Don’t send me to the police. I’ll give you everything back, so don’t send me to the police...”

Her disgraceful look was revolting.

Tang Yu despised, “A thief is a thief. You are so low-handed!”

“She is so low-handed and will do anything to go up.”

“What a disgusting girl. Why did the concierge let her in?”

...

Gu Xingze glanced at Yun Shishi questioningly. “Do you want to send her to the police?”

Yun Na looked up in horror and tearfully knelt to the ground, begging her sister for mercy, “Don’t, sis. Don’t – Don’t send me to the police. I won’t do this again! No...”

Yun Shishi, with a frigid expression, said after a long silence, “I won’t send you to the police.”

Yun Na sighed in relief.

He coldly commanded, “Take off the clothes right now and get lost.”

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She turned pale from dismay by his merciless expulsion of her.

Did she do all that hard work just to be expelled this soon?

She tried all ways and means to get close to He Lingxiang so that she could get to know the famous directors and producers here. Getting expelled now would waste all her efforts.

Why? Why is everyone helping Yun Shishi? Why are the heavens so good to her?

She did not want to admit defeat now and bit her lower lip in frustration. She thought to herself, If not for that accident earlier, sister would've drunk that glass of wine. Everything would've been set by now!

She remembered that her steps were firm and steady, though. Something seemed to have tripped her...

Suddenly, she realized something and jerked her head up to look at Yang Mi. The latter was looking at her with loathing, and it hit her there and then.

It was no accident earlier. Yang Mi... secretly messed with me!

Mu Yazhe's brows twitched a little. With his face shrouded in gloom, he turned to walk away emotionlessly...

Yun Na was quickly booted from the hall to the second floor by the attendants once everything ended.

He Lingxiang was very unwilling to give up, but he could only follow her upstairs.

Gu Xingze told his partner, "You can't attend the gala like this. I may as well send you back."

“Eh,” she agreed. She was preparing to leave with him when an attendant called out to her.

“Excuse me; are you Madam Yun Shishi?”

Feeling astonished, she nodded and asked, “Yes, I am. What’s the matter?”

The attendant bowed respectfully and informed, “The venue has a dressing room for the VIP. Please follow me to change into another set of clothes.”

Gu Xingze and she exchanged a look of surprise.

“You go, then. I’ll wait for you,” he smilingly said.

...

The attendant led her along a long corridor.

The gala was held at Grand Palace Hotel, one of the properties under Disheng Financial Group.

It was the number one among the seven-star hotels in Asia. This could be seen in the style of the interior carved beams, exquisite frescoes, and expensive retro wall lamps. The hotel was next to the sea. Through the beautiful floor-to-ceiling windows, one could see the panoramic view of the sea at night.

“Here, please.” The attendant stopped at the door to one of the suites, respectfully and expertly opened the door, and gestured for her to enter.

“Thank you...” She smiled as she walked into the room. It was pitch black.

Under the faint moonlight, she could vaguely make out the room as a luxurious, presidential suite.

Chapter 153: Wrong Direction

Under the faint moonlight, she could vaguely make out the room as a luxurious, presidential suite.

When she entered the room, she made out the lavish decor, rose-embellished European arches, and expensive Saxon rugs; there was also a king-size bed for five persons in the suite.

A refreshing evening breeze was blowing from the slightly ajar windows. It set the crimson curtains fluttering and flipping.

“Hmm... Did I enter the wrong room?”

She hastily turned around and was surprised to find the door locked. She twisted and turned the doorknob to no avail; it would not budge.

Is the door locked from the outside?

Alarmed, she banged the door hard and shouted for help, “Is anybody there?! Why is the door locked?! Is anyone out there?!”

There was no reply.

Silence.

Her heart raced fast at being trapped in total darkness. She had serious night blindness, which rendered her incapable of differentiating the directions in the dark. Moving and touching her way around the room, she tried to find the switch. She gave up in the end.

The dead silence surrounding her filled her with dread and insecurity.

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She blindly made her way to the windows and flipped the curtains open, causing the luminous moonlight to filter in.

This was when she became aware of something moving behind her. It was as if there were another presence in the room.

She held her breath in fear. A series of calm footsteps, which was accompanied by aggression, approached her in the darkness.

She was in full alert mode and was about to turn to leave when, in the next second, a cold hand reached out and effortlessly covered her eyes.

Before she could struggle and resist, her hands were held captive. She was easily held captive.

Soon after, she felt a towering presence close in on her, and then her back was pushed onto the cold window pane.

She sucked in a deep breath in terror.

She could tell that it was a tall and lean man. She only reached up to his chest. As she was preparing to yell in confrontation, the man bent down and blocked her mouth.

He launched his attacks in rapid succession, like water released from the dam, and effortlessly prevented her from reacting at all.

Deeply embarrassed, she struggled to escape. She yanked her head to look at her attacker and was stunned on the spot by a pair of seductive and mesmerizing eyes staring back at her. It was Mu Yazhe. His handsomely sharp features and well-defined contours confronted her eyes under the dim moonlight.

This was her first time seeing him up close and personal.

His eyes were tilted long and narrow, like an almond seed, and his eyelashes were thick and long, like the wings of a black phoenix. All these added to his charm.

He had a unique scent that was not from a deodorant. It was a scent that could only come from a man.

She lost her composure and stared at him dumbstruck. Her back was on the windowpane, which the coldness of could not compare to the chill in his eyes.

He looked so regal and proud, just like a mighty tyrant.

Their two pairs of eyes locked onto each other. He forcibly hugged her closer, slightly lowered his head, and lightly pecked her lips.

Chapter 154: Do you like to flirt around?

He forcibly hugged her closer, slightly lowered his head, and lightly pecked her lips.

She faltered involuntarily, but he refused to let her go, drawing her even closer, instead.

His eerily charming face was so near hers. The tip of their noses touched as he brushed his thin lips lightly against hers. It was a seductive touch that was warm and arousing.

He seemed to have taken some wine earlier. His sexy lips held a faint aromatic scent and his intoxicated eyes, which were bewitching, held unspoken meaning.

This man was born with a kingly aura. His every look and every move commanded others' submission.

She clenched her hands into fists as her entire body shook with fear.

On guard against him, her nerves wound into a tight ball. The man's mouth curled into a bemused and haughty smile upon seeing her reaction.

His charming smile only put her on defense even more.

“It's... you!”

In the next moment, she turned quiet and showed a frightened expression. She saw something hot and dangerous flickering in his eyes, which he did not bother to conceal.

She was deeply alarmed; not even their warm breaths could soothe her uneasiness.

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“You... What do you want?” she warily asked, but he kept quiet.

The dead silence was suffocating in the spacious room.

She lowered her eyes and looked away. Her body was stiff with fear like a scared and helpless prey.

He reached out and fondled her lips with his slender fingers. Without warning, he grabbed her chin and forced her to look into his eyes. In his deep-set eyes, she could see his desire for plunder.

She was beginning to grow desperate inside.

In the next second, his lips pressed and locked on hers again.

She hastily reacted and subconsciously bit his lower lip hard.

Slash!

He frowned and licked his painfully bitten lip. She took this chance to push him away and dash for the door. It remained tightly shut.

Hurried footsteps could be heard from behind her.

He was like a predator chasing after the prey. His tall and imposing presence pressed closer and pulled her back by the sleeve as he pressed her against the door.

He dwarfed her back with his towering body, which exuded the dangerous scent of a beast.

He was prim and proper on other days, but, tonight, under the illumination of the nightlights, his beastly allure was on full mode and evident.

He casually leaned on her frail and thin body, sandwiching her between the door and his broad chest.

“Ahh!” she cried out in pain as her head forcefully knocked against the door.

Following this, her gown was lifted by the man’s big palm.

Panicking, she broke down and screamed, “No!”

He caught her resisting hands above her head and, with his warm lips touching her sensitive ear, bit her soft earlobe hard.

“Where are you running to, eh?”

She could no longer hide her fear. With a crumbling voice, she asked, “What do you want from me?!”

“What do you think?”

He grabbed and nudged her flawless chin to his face. At this moment, there was rage burning in his eyes.

“Do you like to flirt around?”

“I don’t!”

Chapter 155: Sky-high Penalty Cost

“I don’t!”

“No?” Mu Yazhe gazed at her hard as he brushed his harsh and cool lips against hers. “I think you should be clear on your place.”

She gave him the death glare and retorted, “I know very well; it’s you who don’t! You have a fiancée, yet you keep on coming at me!”

“I’m coming at you?”

He laughed chillingly. His handsome face was next to hers when he stuck out his tongue to coyly lick her earlobe as he evilly asked again, “Woman, who is the one not knowing their place?”

“It’s – It’s you! Let me go; don’t touch me!” She panted with embarrassment and despair at his taunting.

“Are you hiding something from me?”

She tried to hide the panic welling up inside her by licking her lips.

“No...”

“Eh, no?” He slowly took out his phone and flashed a picture before her eyes.

She saw the image on the phone and her heart sank to the bottom of the pits...

It was a photo taken of Youyou and Yun Yecheng at a Ferris wheel in an amusement park.

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The two were hugging as Yun Tianyou innocently smiled at the camera.

“You—” she blurted out her son’s name but quickly clenched her mouth shut.

She watched him, terrified. “You...”

He took his time with his words. “You had a pair of identical twins six years ago. The doctor said that the younger brother was not breathing when he was born. My assistant then took away the elder brother, and, subsequently, the younger one vanished...”

“No...”

The worst had finally happened.

He found out about the child. Even though she wanted to deny it, the two’s blood ties could not be concealed.

Youyou looked dashing in the photo and clearly took after his father.

No one could deny their father-son relation. Moreover, Youyou looked exactly like Little Yichen. That was the best evidence.

Oh, god... Is he going to take away Youyou? Is he going to take Youyou away from me?

“The doctor only said that the younger one was not breathing when he was born. He did not confirm the boy’s death.” He smiled and asked, “Don’t you find that fishy, too?”

She kept mum and merely bit her lower lip. Her chest heaved from fear. Under the moonlight, one could see glistening tears welling up in her eyes.

“Youyou... is still alive.” She took a deep breath and admitted this to him with a trembling voice. “I took him away...”

“Why did you take him away?”

He nabbed at her chin with such force, and the pain caused her tears to well up again.

“Because... I couldn’t bear to let go.”

“We have a contract in place.”

His eyes formed into a foreboding thin slit. “You violated the contract and tried to conceal this.”

She turned around slowly. She leaned on the door lifelessly and slipped to the ground in tears.

“I’m selfish I know. Youyou is my flesh and blood, after all; I couldn’t bear to let go, so I did it...” she timorously confessed.

“You took away my son and disappeared for six years. Tell me; how should I punish you?”

She refused to answer and merely continued to bite her lower lip with a face flushed with agony and embarrassment.

“Miss Yun, do you remember the penalty for when there’s a breach of contract?”

Yun Shishi retracted her shoulders as she solemnly replied, “If there is a breach of contract regarding the child’s custody, the violator will have to pay a billion yuan as monetary penalty.”

Chapter 156: I want you; are you willing?

“If there is a breach of contract regarding the child’s custody, the violator will have to pay a billion yuan as monetary penalty.”

She bit her lower lip hard before saying, “Please give me some time; I’ll pay the penalty.”

“Eh ?”

He crossed his graceful legs as he sat on the sofa and asked casually, “Can you really gather one billion just by yourself?”

“Please believe that I’ll pay up.”

“Not at all,” he coldly said, “I’m planning to regain custody of the child.”

“No!” She lost her voice as her heart squirmed with sorrow at the thought of losing her son. “Please! Please don’t take Youyou away from me.”

“Give me a reason not to.”

She tearfully replied, “I love him, and he can’t bear to leave me too!”

He pondered for a moment before saying coldly, “I won’t take him away.”

She stared disbelievingly at him, not having expected for him to agree so easily.

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“But...” he hedged, his pair of eyes regarding her more deeply.

“But?” Her heart hung in the air.

“You have to stay by my side.”

“...”

She drew in a sharp breath.

“Stay... by your side?”

He asked with a smile, “Why? What’s the matter with that?”

“Mr. Mu, are you joking—”

“Be my woman.” Before she could complete her question, the man tyrannically and coldly cut her off.

She looked at him, feeling lost. Under the moonlight, the man leisurely spread himself out on the couch like an ancient king – ruthless, cold-blooded, and domineering.

“What?” His thin lips formed a smile at her startled look and he asked, “I want you; are you willing?”

“Miss Yun, I think you have no foresight.” he jested, “Many women are willing to line up from here to Paris just for my attention, yet you aren’t willing even when I want you. Aren’t you playing hard to get?”

She sneered inwardly at his words and wiped her tears away.

While she was still worried, his taunting somehow calmed her down.

“If that’s the case, why don’t you choose from them?”

He coldly chuckled. “You don’t know men at all.”

“I...”

“If you aren’t willing, the door is over there. Help yourself out.” She was surprised at his words.

He’s letting me go?

“You are really letting me go?”

“I am not imprisoning you. You have your legs.”

She pondered, lifted her chest high, and told him before heading for the door, “I’ll pretend this didn’t happen.”

The man quietly added as she turned to leave, “The lawyer’s letter will be served tomorrow after you walk out of the door.”

That stopped her in her tracks. She stood rooted to the spot, her spine tensing from shock and fear.

This man was undoubtedly serious.

Can I win ?

Can I fight against the Mu family ?

She was powerless against such a mighty conglomerate.

Her eyes fumed with anger, and she turned to him with a stricken face. “Despicable!”

His lips glaringly arched into a deep and provoking smile.

He knew her too well. He knew she would be unable to walk out of this door.

“I do anything to get what I want,” he squinted and said provocatively, “and the same goes for women.”

Chapter 157: You are banned.

“I do anything to get what I want,” he squinted and added provocatively, “and the same goes for women.”

Clenching her fists, she bit her lower lip hard as she struggled to come to a decision. Finally, a reply was heard lamely, “... What do you want me to do?”

“Come over here.”

He commanded her softly, yet it weighed on her heavily.

She drew a sharp breath and took the first step toward him. Her every move was like a step into the abyss.

Each step was slow and heavy.

“Come over here.” He frowned in irritation.

Her every action seemed heavy as she looked at the man’s handsome profile. Before she could react, he caught her wrist with a raise of his arm and pulled her to him.

Ahh...

Her vision spun for a second as she fell into his embrace.

He used his palm to hold her in place. She was now straddling him in an embarrassing position.

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Her face burned hot. She tried to resist but was stopped by a painful pinch on her waist.

She glared at him. “Shameless!”

“Miss Yun, who is the real shameless one here?” he smilingly asked her back, “Who stole my son and tried to cover the truth but got discovered? You owe me a billion, so I am technically your creditor.”

Pausing for a bit, he eventually continued with a look of mocking intolerance to her ignorance, “You owe me money; is this the attitude you should show your creditor?”

“I’ll pay that one billion. I’ll work and definitely pay you back!” she solemnly declared, not at all cowed by his threatening words.

“Let’s count the interest for this penalty in the past six years, then.” He shrugged uncaringly as a lazy smile formed on his lips.

She stared at him in disbelief, protesting, “You mean there’s still interest?”

He arched a brow and looked at her deeply. “It’s all in the contract. Haven’t you read it carefully?”

She could feel her face burning hot from his look. “I...” she started to say but failed to find the right words to continue.

Many clauses were indeed in the contract, which she knew she should have read. However, back then, she was too eager to receive the money that would help tide her father over the financial crisis and did not foresee the subsequent events, so she did not pay close attention to that part in the contract about the breach of it.

“How much... is the interest?” Her voice started to shake again. In fact, she was rather reluctant to hear his answer, fearing that the sum would be astronomical.

He looked slightly displeased now. “Why are you so adamant to make things clear with me?”

“I don’t like to owe others. What I owe you, I’ll return to you fully.”

“Oh...” his voice trailed off. Following a long silence, his lips curled into a faint smile.

His eerie smile made her shudder and caused her breathing to turn ragged.

This man can be so evil.

Just like a king, his every look and smile commanded others' submission.

She subconsciously straightened her spine, so she would not lose to his presence.

He suddenly lifted his eyes, closed in on her face, and muttered in her ear, "What if you get banned from showbiz; what will happen, then?"

"What if you get banned from showbiz; what will happen, then?"

His voice was sexy and dreamy, just like aged wine.

Her facial expression changed. "You—"

He slowly continued, "Huanyu Entertainment is under Disheng Financial Group. If I am to ban someone, what do you think will happen?"

What would happen?

One word from him and she would be thoroughly eradicated.

Banning her was just a simple matter of opening his mouth. As Disheng's CEO, his words were law. No one would dare defy him.

“Despicable...” she muttered through clenched teeth, her eyes rimming red.

He casually held her cheek with his hand. His palm gently lifted her chin to his. She was forced to look into his playful eyes.

“You know what you must do now, right?”

Domineering and tyrannical! This man had always put himself above the rest. Every word was a command, and if he wanted her to do that, then she had to obey it.

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She was fuming inside. Logically speaking, this man was indeed beautiful to the point of being faultless. He was good-looking, charismatic, and haughty like a god. No woman could possibly resist him.

No other woman would want to refuse such a man.

What was all this about, then? Why her of all women? Did he really want her, or was he just enjoying the thrill of her submitting to him?

Although she had had intimate contact with him before, she still could not accept the idea of being his kept woman or serving someone without mutual love!

He wanted her only because she was different from the rest of the women!

What if she were like the others? Would he get tired of her, then?

Silence. Icy dead silence.

Her eyes turned sunken like a puppet without a soul. She looked at him and asked, “What do you want me to do?”

This was her way of telling him that she had finally succumbed to him.

He nonchalantly replied, “Pleasure me.”

Panic flashed across her face, but she regained her calmness in the next instant. She bit her lower lip and straddled him, slowly spreading herself out.

Her small, pretty face slowly moved to his face without any emotions.

She knew she could not run away this time.

In this world, the weak were eaten by the strong. She did not have the rights to refuse him and had to do whatever he wanted.

He regarded her coldly as he lay on the couch motionlessly.

What she did not know was that this was his first time being near a woman.

In others’ eyes, he was proud, noble, and untouchable. Many women wanted such a man.

Many bachelors like him were known to be playboys.

However, no one knew that, just like his detached persona, his emotional world was a blank.

If he had to pinpoint a woman whom he had an emotional attachment with, he could only point at her. She was his one and only.

He had serious issues with pretentious women, especially those like the flirtatious Han Yuyan with her heavy makeup.

Yun Shishi was different from the rest, though. She even looked lovely today.

Under the room's dim lights, her beautiful face was more mesmerizing than the moon to him.

He took the liberty to enjoy the sight.

Chapter 159: He is not the only one.

Under the room's dim lights, her beautiful face was more mesmerizing than the moon to him.

She was pretty. She had a porcelain melon face, almond-shaped eyes framed by long and curly eyelashes, thick and glossy hair resembling a mixture of fine black feather and a fluttering butterfly wing, perfectly angled high nose bridge, and snowy-white skin – all these made her look ravenous.

She was already 24 yet still retained her youthful beauty. As she had given birth before, her body was well-developed, causing her naivete to seem like a forbidden temptation!

She was honestly a very beautiful girl, who seemed to have walked out of a painting. She had this ethereal aura that was untouched by this world.

Just like six years ago, when he first met her, her innocently curled-up form in bed immediately attracted him.

She was the beautiful prey and he was the eager hunter.

Unfortunately, the little face currently inching toward him was frozen and stiff, and that greatly displeased him.

“Is that how you should look when pleasuring me?”

His sarcasm was like cold water splashing on her; his mocking tore her last strand of dignity, and she felt extremely embarrassed.

He was out to make a fool of her, and she had no way to resist.

She felt walled in, with no place to run or hide. Was she not walking into despondency?

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Her confusion and uneasiness aroused his interest. “Don’t tell me that you don’t know how?”

“What—”

“Don’t know how to pleasure a man.”

“I...”

Her face turned scalding red.

He was evil, though. “Yes or no; answer me.” He caught her face and refused to let her eyes look elsewhere. “Am I your only man?”

He held her gaze. Her pleasant face glazed with a look of innocent embarrassment which aroused his body even more.

He was so blunt and explicit that her face burned even hotter this time.

How to pleasure a man... Besides him, where else could she find another man?

After giving birth to two sons for him, she kept Youyou by her side. The news of her illegitimate child spread through school like wildfire.

She had tried explaining it away but did not deny it. As such, all the men were disappointed with her and avoided her like the plague.

She was the campus belle and had good grades, so she was popular with the boys and incurred the wrath of many girls. The girls made up slanderous stories about her once they caught wind of Youyou’s existence and humiliated their mother-son pair in campus. In the end, she was advised to withdraw from her studies by the principal. Yun Yecheng had to pull strings, and he eventually settled the matter. She only managed to graduate because of that.

Her youth was steeped with so much embarrassment, yet she regretted nothing about her decision.

Youyou was her spiritual sustenance.

She rejected all suitors and stilled her heart for him.

Right now, not only did this man recklessly offend her, he also cruelly pointed out her inability to pleasure a man...

She was extremely embarrassed.

He felt relieved at her mortified look.

This woman only had him ?

Chapter 160: I' ll Teach You

This woman only had him ?

Mu Yazhe was quite surprised.

He thought she had married or even had another man.

Thus, the man pinched her face while harboring a bit of mischief. It was extraordinarily smooth and supple to the touch, as if it were free of any cosmetics.

“Come; I'll teach you.”

He clutched her hand and moved it toward his collar. His long fingers held hers upright and hooked them on his bowtie. He carefully guided her. “Untie it.”

Untie it...

Yun Shishi’s eyes went vacant, just like a soulless doll. As if she were possessed by a demon, she tugged at his exquisite bowtie.

“Untie.”

She inhaled a deep chilling breath and gulped. She placed her hands on his chest and, taking her sweet time, she clumsily undid the buttons of his shirt.

Dissatisfied with her slow movement, he bit her lower lip in punishment.

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She only lowered her flushed face. Her fingers, as fair as jade, undid his buttons one by one.

Everything he wore was commissioned and was made to the finest detail. Every button was securely fastened, so it was hard to take off.

She pursed her lips, her cheeks gradually becoming scalding hot. When she looked up, she only saw raw desire in his eyes.

“You—”

Before she could finish her words, he grabbed her wrist and pulled her into his embrace.

He lifted her chin with his long fingers and, with eyes slanted, he kissed her exploringly. He pushed into her slightly parted lips and entwined her sweetness with his.

The taste of red wine lingered in their lips.

Her heartbeat suddenly accelerated, and a scarlet flush crept into her cheeks.

He supported his half-seated body with one hand and circled her waist domineeringly with the other.

He adjusted his body and leaned on the sofa more, proceeding to pull her into a sitting position on his lap. With one hand on her waist, he held her nape with another hand and mashed their lips together more deeply.

He traced her lips lightly, smoothly, and softly. A tiny jolt of electricity seemed to have flown through with his touch. A heart-quivering sensation then spread to her limbs and bones, and her body unknowingly heated up in response.

She seemed to be in somewhat of a loss, as she did not know how to react to the kiss. Slowly, even her breathing became erratic and labored.

The Creator was simply magical. The masculinity of men and the femininity of women came together in perfect harmony.

His kiss had a frightening charm, as it could remind her of the memories she had buried deep inside her.

The man gave an evil smirk. His long, icy fingers removed her shoulder straps, indifferently took off her clothes, and barely ghosted up her nape.

Her heart slightly clenched, and she reached out to grab his hand.

A faint smile crept across his mouth. He flipped his hand around to grab her fingertips and led them to the front of his body.

As her fingertips met his buttons, her face instantly turned red.

With the tip of their noses touching, he licked and kissed the side of her lips and said in a gentle voice, “Help me.”

...

His kisses traveled downward to her eyes, the tip of her nose, the side of her lips, and her chin. Thereafter, he gently wrung open a button on her blouse and, with his teeth gnawing at her sash, he loosened it slowly.

He then raised his face, his smoldering eyes gazing penetratingly and his lips grinning sinisterly.

He unbuttoned her blouse indifferently.

She tried to regain her sanity as she pushed his shoulders away with whatever strength she had, but her mind became increasingly hazier as it fled elsewhere...

Chapter 161: Dogfight

In the event hall, Gu Xingze mingled in the crowd with his mind elsewhere. He turned a deaf ear to the people that were trying to exchange pleasantries with him.

More than 15 minutes had passed since Yun Shishi went upstairs, and he was starting to worry.

The gala had yet to officially start, but everyone was already socializing with one another. This could also be considered as part of the event's schedule.

Unfortunately, he had lost the desire to participate in this.

As the gala's attendees entertained one another, he expressionlessly remained seated on one of the VIP seats by himself. Looking from the side, his handsome eyes seemed to be sealed in ice.

With knitted brows, he lowered his eyes and narrowed them. He held a glass of red wine, which had not been drunk on for a while, and sat still for a long time.

Yang Mi saw him sitting alone and immediately left the starlets engaging her in a pleasant talk. She tidied herself up and sashayed toward him.

Halfway there, someone bumped into her shoulder and her body tipped over. She staggered and almost lost her footing.

The glass in her hand nearly smashed onto the ground.

Her face was clouded with anger. With furrowed brows, she looked to see who had crashed into her and realized that it was Han Yuyan.

The animosity she felt was somewhat reduced at the sight of her, and a polite smile blossomed on her lips instead.

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“Yuyan.” She pursed her lips in disdain. She was feeling indignant but had no way of venting it on the other.

The present Han Yuyan had a booming popularity, and with the Shao Group as her backer, her career was currently on an upward path. Yang Mi did not dare offend her because of these.

Han Yuyan regarded her coldly and poked fun at her, “Yang Mi, you look so wonderful and dazzling tonight!”

Yang Mi forced out a smile to conceal the awkwardness on her face and complimented her, “How can I compare to you, Yuyan? With your soaring popularity and thriving career, I’m really happy for you!”

She raised her glass and toasted to her after saying this.

Han Yuyan merely rolled her eyes and ignored her toast.

Thus, Yang Mi’s hand, which was holding the glass of wine, awkwardly hung in mid-air.

“Don’t think I don’t know what you are scheming. How can you even match up with Xingze?”

Yang Mi innocently widened her eyes and said with a smile, “What are you talking about? I don’t understand... I just really look up to Xingze!”

“Don’t you dare resort to any underhanded means. It’s disgusting.”

“What?!” she cried out in discontent. Feigning innocence, she continued, “I really don’t know what you are talking about!”

Han Yuyan mocked, “Hmph. You think I don’t know that there’s something wrong with the wine you are holding?”

A trace of fluster crept across her face, but she quickly schooled her features in fake composure. Acting confused, she asked, “What can be wrong with it?”

“Whether there’s something wrong with it or there’s none, you’ll know when you take a gulp, right?” Han Yuyan sarcastically countered.

Yang Mi’s face instantly flushed, and she was at a loss for words.

Surveying her with ridicule, Han Yuyan sneered. “What a schemer. You think Xingze won’t be able to see through you?”

Yang Mi nonchalantly placed the glass aside and replied coolly, “I’m just copying you.”

“What did you say?!” Han Yuyan flared up.

“Everyone in this industry knows how you got to your current position – by using this same trick. You think we are all fools?” she asked with contempt.

Back then, Yang Mi was originally the female lead for a drama, but her role was forcibly taken away by Han Yuyan. The latter had also relied on a glass of wine to settle everything with the investors.

In the end, with the drama becoming that year's blockbuster, she blazed her way through the movie festival and successfully clinched the title of Best Actress. She even bagged an offer to act in a Hollywood movie!

Crowned with the title of Global Female Star, Han Yuyan's popularity went through the roof!

All those things should have been hers. As such, Yang Mi bore a grudge against Han Yuyan. The two had been secretly competing with each other ever since.

Chapter 162: To Her Defense

As such, Yang Mi bore a grudge against Han Yuyan. The two had been secretly competing with each other ever since.

Han Yuyan threatened, "Hmph. Yang Mi, you'd better be more respectful toward me. You try to be funny again and I'll expose your affair with Li Jiuxian to the paparazzi!"

"You—" She broke into a smile. "Alright, then! I'll also expose all your past affairs to the media. I doubt you have more to expose than me."

"What do you think? Do you think you can win against me?" Han Yuyan was unfazed by her threat and provoked further, "If you insist on fighting with me, let's just wait and see!"

Yang Mi gritted her teeth in anger. As much as she hated to admit it, she knew that she could not win a fight against Han Yuyan.

Han Yuyan sneered as she stormed off.

Going back to her, Han Yuyan quickly approached Gu Xingze in her high heels after smoothing her hair. With a gentle pout, she asked, “Xingze, why are you alone? Where is your partner?”

She looked around.

He furrowed his brows but did not comment or even look at her.

She seemed to be holding a hunch and whispered while concealing a grin with her hand, “Did she ditch you to drink with the big boss?”

His expression shifted a little, but he still maintained his silence.

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“I don’t want to be nosy here, but you’d be better off keeping your distance from her. The entertainment industry is filled with dirty women like her that will do anything to get ahead of the competition. Drinking and sleeping around are nothing new. You’d better be careful!”

Hell-bent on destroying Yun Shishi’s image in his mind, she did not restrain her words.

She could not stomach him being exceptionally kind to an undistinguished newbie. He was aloof and haughty to everyone including her. What she could not have, she would not let Yun Shishi have, either.

She continued her slandering, “I can see that this Yun Shishi is very ambitious. She plans to use you as a stepping stone by partnering with you tonight. Every person here is someone distinguished and important. What does that make you when you bring in a nobody like her? Besides, I heard that she’s—”

He suddenly turned to regard her with displeased eyes. “That’s enough, I say.”

“Xingze...” She looked at him wistfully. “Why are you looking so mad now?”

“Bigmouth.”

Bigmouth?

Her face turned red with anger and embarrassment. “Why are you criticizing me? I’m saying this for your good, you know? She is only using you, don’t you understand?!”

He could not be bothered with her. “I’m willing to be used by her.”

“Don’t tell me you like that kind of women?!”

“What kind? Your kind?” He did not hide his revulsion to her as he sarcastically spat, “Like what you did before when you slept with an investor in exchange for a role in Shanhe Beauty?”

She gasped when she heard that.

“Not everyone is as shameless as you,” he added coldly before skimming past her.

She chased after him and bitterly asked, “Xingze, how do you know that she’s not like that? How much do you know about her?”

Seeing him ignore her, she took a few steps forward and unrelentingly asked, “She could get such a big role even before entering the show business; do you really think she’s that innocent? Why are you defending her all the time? Is she worth it?”

He stood still, pondered for a while, and then recalled Yun Shishi’s beautiful and innocent face. The corner of his lips curved into a smile as he replied, “She’s worth it.”

“She’s worth it.”

Han Yuyan was stunned. His answer was a big blow to her.

Shao Dong had been searching for her and was displeased to see her with Gu Xingze.

Gu Xingze saw him as well and jeeringly asked, “Master Shao, can’t you even keep an eye on your woman?”

Shao Dong’s face sank upon hearing his words. “What do you mean?”

He snorted. “She’s been flirting around. You’d better watch over her, or you may be made a cuckold.”

He strode off with that.

She was absolutely infuriated.

Shao Dong was even more so. Audibly sneering at her, he stormed off.

“Shao Dong, listen to me...” she rushed to explain.

Behind, Yang Mi was laughing derisively. “Hmph. Go for wool and come home shorn. Really shameless!”

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...

It was eerily quiet along the corridor.

Gu Xingze was getting worried.

The entertainment industry was materialistic and chaotic.

A woman like Yun Shishi would be akin to a sheep in a wolf’s den in this industry. She would be devoured if left unprotected.

He should have stayed by her side. He had been careless!

He thought of that attendant who had taken her away to change clothes and realized how fishy it was now.

While there were restrooms and first-aid rooms at a place like this, dressing rooms were unheard of. What would also be here were VIP suites for the important guests that needed to ‘quench the fire’.

When an investor set his eye on an actress, he would present her with a glass of wine laced with drug.

Once the drug began to take effect, an attendant would be instructed to bring the actress to a VIP suite. He was not thinking straight earlier, but once he had a chance to ponder about it, he became worried.

There was once a sweet young thing who had attended a grand occasion like this for the first time. Her naivete quickly appealed to a few investors who had her drugged and brought to a room...

It was said that the starlet was pillaged by seven or eight men that day and almost went mad. She was later rushed to the hospital, barely breathing.

Those men were big shots and managed to keep this matter hush-hush.

This industry was that cruel.

The more he thought of it, the more alarmed he became.

He could not see the end of this long corridor.

His footsteps were hasty. As he passed by one of the rooms, he indistinctly caught a few intermittent moans and groans. The sounds were real despite them being indistinct.

He stopped abruptly. Cold beads of sweat appeared on his forehead.

Alert by nature, he was able to catch the muffled sounds coming from inside the room despite its good soundproofing.

He walked with fear toward the door. From within the room, a woman moaned in agony amid a few men's unbridled gasps and wild laughter. The noise seemed to pierce his eardrums as he listened.

D*mn!

He gritted his teeth and, wasting no time, rapped his knuckles on the door.

No one seemed to hear that.

“Shishi... Shishi!”

He grabbed the door handle and screwed it hard. The door remained shut, however, as it was locked from the inside.

He had no more patience. He took a few steps backward, leaped into the air, and did a perfect flying kick to break down the door.

The room was filled with a decadent musk as he walked in.

He could see clothes strewn all over the floor under the suggestive warm lights. The men’s evil laughter and the unpleasant sound coming from the bedroom warned him of what was going on inside.

He frowned. With his nerves drawn taut in agitation, he took large strides toward the bedroom. The immediate scene that greeted him when he reached it made his face sink...

Chapter 164: His Sullen Anger

Yun Na was all tied up in the middle of a large bed; her four limbs were bound to each corner of the bed posts. It was extremely unsightly.

Her clothes were torn apart. She was shamefully covered in red bite marks, purplish bruises, and alcohol. She looked absolutely degrading.

She was no longer pretty. Her exquisite make-up was ruined with her messy hair spread about the pillow; her cheeks were flushed red and her eyes looked lax and disoriented.

A few old men were sitting on the bed, looking listless and exhausted; only He Lingxiang was still riding her hard.

Hearing a foreign sound, he turned to look angrily and was surprised to find Gu Xingze standing there.

“Gu Xingze?! How did you get in?!”

“The door is not locked.”

He answered calmly. Seeing that it was not Yun Shishi on the bed, his heart eased. In any case, this Yun Na was not a decent woman. Her ambitious nature and despicable ways had led her to these bigwigs.

He was no stranger to such debauchery and knew very well that it took two hands to clap for this to happen.

These men got high and aroused before the official kickoff, so they were looking for some entertainment.

Yun Na came at the right time. She attended this gala with the intention of entering the show business through any means, but she, instead, ended up being booted out by Gu Xingze before the event even started. She did not want to leave without achieving her goal, so,

in desperation, she agreed to He Lingxiang's request. She did not expect to meet a pack of hungry wolves, though.

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She had drunk the spiked drink by mistake, and it took its effect on her. She was no match for the drug's potency; the men proceeded to plunder her through and through.

“Do you want to do it, too?” He Lingxiang asked as he heaved a huge sigh. He patted Yun Na's face with much satisfaction. “This woman isn't that bad.”

“Not interested,” Gu Xingze coldly rejected and turned to leave.

He Lingxiang called out to him from behind.

“Where is your lady partner?”

That stopped him in his tracks as his back turned stiff.

He Lingxiang did not care to read his expression or notice his menacing aura and merely continued with enthusiasm, “If the sister is this good, Yun Shishi should be good, too!”

“Director He, didn't you mention earlier that there'll be a good show coming up?” the man beside him asked with interest, “What show is that?”

“Gu Xingze, your lady partner is Yun Shishi, right? She's a rarity; I like her type. Why don't you bring her over now before the gala starts? We can do with some entertainment here.”

Gu Xingze turned around. With his eyes flashing a dangerous look, he warned, “No one is to touch her.”

“Why should we listen to you? I like that woman!” He Lingxiang’s face turned sullen. He threw Yun Na aside and got up off the bed as he viciously said, “Who are you to stop me from wanting that woman? The powerful get what they want here. I, He Lingxiang, get whichever woman I want—”

Before he could finish his words, Gu Xingze, with an icy look, shot to him like an arrow and grabbed him by the crown of his hair. He yelped in pain.

“What are you doing?! Are you mad?! Ahh!”

Gu Xingze’s lips curled into a bloody smile. Clutching his hair, he dragged him for a few meters before he yanked him up.

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Chapter 165: His Skills

Gu Xingze’s lips curled into a bloody smile. Clutching his hair, he dragged him for a few meters before he yanked him up.

Tears from pain rolled down He Lingxiang’s face as his scalp got ripped from being jerked upward using his hair.

He used to secretly scoff at and call Gu Xingze a gigolo for only having good looks. What he did not expect was for the latter to actually be this strong!

He staggered as Gu Xingze dragged him along while ignoring his fearful cries and smashed his face against the wall!

Before he could comprehend what was happening, he was dragged by the hair across the floor and hurled mid-air. He could feel a strong ripping sensation from his scalp that made him tear up profusely.

“Ahhh! Help! Help!” His face was bashed against the wall. He grunted softly as blood came pouring down from his head.

Gu Xingze’s wrists were strong and powerful, and he did not hesitate to use them on him. A deep and ugly slash appeared across the latter’s head, and blood spurted out to cover half his face!

He struggled to stand with his wobbly feet. He could feel sticky blood covering one side of his face while the slash on his forehead, where he was hit, burned hot and felt painful. That went to show how vicious Gu Xingze’s attacks were!

He was lost for an instant. This Gu Xingze was for real!

Once this young man revealed his skills, others would have no way of retaliating. He Lingxiang was shocked and scared beyond words!

Bang!

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His head was smashed against the wall, but, this time, his nose was crushed, instead. He Lingxiang could feel the world spinning as a wall of white flashed across his eyes. It was too painful to even cry out. The image of a vicious man and a pretty face overlapped before his eyes as the concussion slowly wore off.

Through his bloody gaze, he could see Gu Xingze staring at him with a chilling smile. The latter then asked him with spine-chilling gentleness, “What did you just say, eh?”

He panted heavily but did not dare to reply. He was numbed from fear, and his teeth were chattering uncontrollably. He could only look at Gu Xingze in terror.

The few men beside him were also in deep shock.

He might be a superstar, but he was just an actor to them. Meanwhile, they were the paymasters, so his survival depended on them, yet he was so bold to stomp on their pride now?

“Gu Xingze, how dare you?! Do you really think that I can’t ban you?!” One of them pointed angrily at his nose in warning.

“Oh, ban me?” He snorted loudly. “Alright, then. Bring it on!”

With that, he glanced coldly at He Lingxiang, pulled the latter’s shoulders over his raised foot, and slammed the foot hard on his belly.

“Ahhh!” He Lingxiang yelled in pain; his face had turned pale and white. He fell backward and hit the back of his head against the floor. He went giddy again; he was in so much agony this time he could not even cry!

“Ohhhh... Save – Save me...”

His face contorted when Gu Xingze lifted one of his legs and stepped on his face expressionlessly. Screwing his face left and right with a foot, the man then ordered, “Shut up.”

He Lingxiang immediately stopped his painful sobs at his command. He dared not breathe another word again as the dusty sole of the latter's shoe stepped all over his face.

Chapter 166: Gunshots

The young man with scanty gaze looked at the blood-muddled face of He Lingxiang, who was lying on the floor. Gu Xingze then elegantly crouched beside him, held him up by the strip of his hair, which was heavily stained with blood, and asked in a hollow voice, "Is it painful?"

He Lingxiang heard him clearly and shook his head hurriedly.

"Oh? Is it not painful," he smilingly asked, "or have I been merciful?"

The man on the floor could only gulp in fear. Should he nod or shake his head at that?!

Those around the two were currently shaking in fear. Gu Xingze, in contrast, did not realize how terrifying he was right now. His usually dignified and restrained self was nowhere to be seen, as his vicious personality had taken over and was now dominating all four corners of the room. Silence reigned among them; no one dared to make a sound!

He stood up and coldly ordered, "Answer my questions, understand?"

He Lingxiang vigorously nodded his head!

“Where is Yun Shishi?”

The man on the floor croaked, “I don’t know—”

“I want the truth.”

“Xingze... That Yun Shishi is the woman whom Mr. Mu has his eyes on. Give up! You can’t win against him...”

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His voice trailed off, wary of incurring the superstar’s wrath.

“Oh...” Gu Xingze’s face regained its warm smile. “Go on; where is she?”

This sent a shiver up and down everyone’s spines.

They realized only then that some smiles could be fatal!

“She should be with... Director Mu.”

“How dare you?!”

Yang Shoucheng was outraged.

He was the head of Hong Kong’s entertainment industry and the president of Euro King Entertainment. He was standing at the pinnacle in Hong Kong a decade ago, and many movie stars made it big under his wings. Hong Kong’s film industry could still have a firm footing in Asia at present mainly because of him.

Moreover, Euro King Entertainment held a pivotal role in China's film industry.

He glared at Gu Xingze; displeasure was evident on his face.

In this industry, artistes were merely money-making commodities and had no rights to speak.

In his eyes, no artiste should be outrageous, not even Gu Xingze with his superstar status.

He had once helped a newly minted artiste become an award-winning actor, who eventually turned into a diva to him. As a corollary, he ordered one of the actor's fingers to be chopped off. Before his acting career could fully flourish, he was already destroyed by him.

He also had connections with the Hong Kong mafia, and this was among the reasons Euro King Entertainment had stood the test of time.

The young chap gave him a baleful look. "You have no rights to speak here."

"What do you mean by that?! Watch this, then!" Gu Xingze's remarks aggravated him into flashing out his trump card on the table. Everyone was shocked upon taking a closer look.

It was a gun!

He Lingxiang lost his fear at the sight of the gun. He looked at the actor provocatively. He was waiting to see what he would do next.

“Oh? Is Boss Yang trying to threaten me with this?” He jeered in return and kicked the man by his feet to the side.

“Hmph! Ignorant fool. Let me show you the real deal!” Yang Shoucheng firmly pointed the gun at him as he closed in.

“Oh, no!” He Lingxiang pretended to cry out in fear. “Gu Xingze, did you know who you have just offended? Boss Yang is the king—”

“Really? I’d like to see what he can do.” He flashed an insincere smile. His face was devoid of fear.

Bang!

A loud gunshot echoed in the room.

BANG!

The sound of a gunshot resonated across the room.

Yun Shishi was jolted out of her dazed state and returned to her senses.

Recovering, she managed to pull back some of her wandering thoughts. She looked at the man already embracing her for who knew when.

Her hands were holding on to his shoulders. They looked quite intimate.

“Ah!” she exclaimed, somewhat shocked by what was happening.

Why... She gritted her teeth in embarrassment. She was clearly disgusted at her discomposure a while ago, so why had her body unknowingly gone out of her control ?

Was this man knowledgeable in enchantment ?

“Why didn’t you continue ?” Mu Yazhe looked at her mischievously and provocatively.

“I...”

“Getting shy, huh ?” He lifted her chin and pinched it. His fingertips gently stroked the outline of her lips. “You clearly took the initiative just now.”

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“No, I didn’t!”

“Lies.” He hugged her. “Continue.”

She was shocked. She carefully pushed his shoulders away with her hands and tried to escape from his confinement by turning to the side. “Just now, there was a gunshot...”

“You don’t have to care about other people’s things! Look at me,” He pulled her face upright. With his thin lips, he spoke in an unruly but charming fashion, “Kiss me.”

The sensation he felt from kissing her just then nearly made him lose his soul.

Kissing her was enough to make him lose his control and even lose himself. He could not wait to snuggle her into his embrace – into his blood and bones – as they became one.

This woman had the resources to bewitch any men!

How could he let go of her?

“I don’t... don’t want...”

“We’re already halfway through. Why not continue?” He leaned closer to her. Her whole face, including her earlobes, was blushing now.

He was delighted at her response. In a charmingly soft voice, he said, “Look; you are also enjoying it, hm?”

Her face turned even rosier; it was now beet red!

This man exuded hormones from head to toe. He was simply irresistible.

He was different from Gu Xingze.

The latter was a very gentlemanly man. His every movement gave off the elegance of a person from high society.

The former, meanwhile, was the embodiment of nobility. He was domineering, alluring, and akin to an absolute ruler.

If he were born in the ancient times, he would undoubtedly be an emperor!

Xingze... Gu Xingze...

He was still waiting for her!

A tinge of uneasiness surfaced in her eyes as she felt slightly worried. At this very moment, Gu Xingze's voice was heard from the corridor outside.

“Shishi!”

His voice sounded so close to her, as if they were only separated by a door. His voice came across clearly.

Yun Shishi bulged her eyes in astonishment. Following his voice, she shifted her sight in the direction of the door, only to hear a gentle voice from outside. “Shishi, are you here?”

“...”

“Don't be afraid. In future, no matter what happens, I'll protect you.”

She was totally paralyzed.

Mu Yazhe's expression changed. As if covered by a thousand-year layer of snow, he was suddenly full of hostility.

“Xingze...”

She suddenly felt embarrassed.

What was she doing actually?

Was she selling her body?

Was there a difference between her and those women?

If Xingze were to witness this scene, what would he think?

“Yun Shishi, I can’t believe that you are the same as those women.”

He would definitely regard her coldly, mock her, and degrade her.

“No... I’M NOT!”

She abruptly turned away from Mu Yazhe’s body and slightly staggered toward the door.

“Stop right there.” Mu Yazhe gazed at Yun Shishi with a gloomy face. The entire room was just like an ice cellar.

Chapter 168: Didn’ t Want to Be Looked Down Upon

“Stop right there.” Mu Yazhe gazed at Yun Shishi with a gloomy face. The entire room was just like an ice cellar.

As if she had heard nothing, she was fixed on walking toward the door.

She did not want to be looked down on.

She was not a woman like that...

She bit on her lower lip with force. Her hand had just touched the doorknob when, from behind her, he came up to her in large strides, held her by the waist, and carried her up.

“Ah!” she cried out and struggled. “Mu Yazhe, let go of me!”

“You want him to see the you now?”

He held her cheek firmly and maintained eye-contact with her fear-filled eyes. He asked emotionlessly, “I’ll let him in to look at the you now, hm?”

“No...”

She was so flustered she was at a loss.

She shuddered at his threat. She did not wish for Gu Xingze to enter the room and was even more unwilling to face him in this manner!

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This was her last straw of pride!

“Mu Yazhe, you can’t do that!”

“I hope you understand now!” he announced, “I never take ‘no’ for an answer. If I want something, one has to give it!”

After he said this, he forcefully threw her onto the large and soft bed!

Her body lightly bounced on the bed. The man’s towering body then inclined and pressed down on her as it blocked the luminous moonlight.

She was so shocked she felt suffocated. She started to struggle in anxiety. Her hands furiously hit his chest, but the man did not budge for even an inch. No matter how hard she pushed and shoved, it was futile.

Why was this man so domineering?

And this forceful?!

He kept her under his control and planted a kiss on her with his chilly lips.

It was a nearly aggressive kiss – a kiss that did not seem to contain any affection.

Her face instantly paled in color. She was so afraid she clenched her teeth and her shoulders slightly trembled!

He was sometimes gentle, sometimes careful, and sometimes crazed, just like a tempest sweeping across.

He kissed her softly, but she was clenching her teeth.

He looked at her with dissatisfaction. His long fingers pinched her cheek, and he said in an attractively hoarse voice, “Open wide.”

She panted nervously, but her jaws remained tightly shut.

The man was disappointed. Slightly narrowing his eyes, he held her cheeks with his large hands and pinched them hard. This pinch hurt her, and she sucked in a breath of chilling air.

Taking this opportunity, he swept her away gently.

She was somewhat taken aback by his vigorous passion.

He was domineering, overwhelming, and unaccepting of defiance!

She could not help but retreat with a flushed face. Her body was stiff, as if it had been jolted by electricity.

She raised her eyes to meet his deep ones. She involuntarily let out a small, furtive yelp!

The man was examining her.

The places he laid his handsome eyes on made her tremble uncontrollably!

He did not know how this small person below him could spark some excitement in him. He especially liked to see her flustered look. It was truly and extremely entertaining!

It was just like spotting a cute prey; he had an interest to play with her.

He surveyed her face once more; half of it seemed to be dyed in the color of peach blossoms. This girl clearly had a pretty and flirtatious appearance – a living fairy whom people would be head over heels for – but her aura was just too pure and clean. There was no conflict when these two traits merged. On the contrary, there was more of a forbidden allure to it!

This was just like a spell, and no medicine could undo it!

This girl, as charming as she was, was overly youthful!

Chapter 169: Was This Considered as Love?

This girl, as charming as she was, was overly youthful!

She probably had no knowledge of this: sometimes, the harder a woman struggled, the stronger the desire a man would have to dominate her!

Mu Yazhe willfully pressed down on her and quickly covered her supple lips. He held her nape with one hand and gently caressed her back with the other. As if electricity were flowing through them, his long fingers went along her shoulders and traveled downward as they slowly moved to other parts of her body...

Yun Shishi felt slightly awful at being suppressed. To be precise, she was feeling uneasy. However, sensing the cold and strange touches sweeping across her stomach, she suddenly forgot to struggle.

A strange sensation made her entire body freeze and shiver!

“Don’t!”

She knitted her brows in discomfort. She had just spouted a word when a distinct and strange sensation – those traces of pain – made her scalp tingle instantly.

Fragmented memories from that night suddenly flashed before her eyes, and her shoulders uncontrollably shuddered!

Firmly pressing on her mouth, he let out an evil laugh. He grasped her cheeks with force and furiously bit her lower lip.

She was too thin, her waist seemingly able to fit his one hand.

She wanted to reject his advances time and again, but that strange instinctive feeling inside her stopped her each time.

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Similarly, he was an irresistible man.

He had a handsome face and a body one was unable to nitpick at. Amidst her futile resistance, her body intuitively yearned for affection. Her desires and rationality were in constant conflict, and she nearly wanted to break down!

“Look; you want it as well, hm?”

The man smirked and took his time unbuttoning her clothes. However, as he looked up, his eyes met with her half-closed yet flustered pair.

Yun Shishi shut her eyes in despair as he lightly pecked her cheeks.

“Be good; I won’t hurt you.”

He usually carried himself well in bed. He was never impatient with his prey – a gentility that he seemed to naturally possess – but, right now, his body was extremely taut!

His large hand supported her waist, and he drowned her into the endless night...

Outside the corridor, Gu Xingze heard her indistinct voice from a room with his keen hearing.

“Shishi?”

He turned to glance at a magnificent door.

It was the only presidential suite – the most glamorous room – in the hotel.

Rumors had it that this suite was never open to the public.

He suddenly seemed to have figured it out.

He Lingxiang's words rang in his ears. 'That Yun Shishi is the woman whom Mr. Mu has his eyes on. Give up! You can't win against him...'

Gu Xingze pursed his lips. He was not a man that had seen only a little of the world. He naturally understood what was happening inside the room.

His eyes darkened, and he clenched his fists. His legs could barely move for the longest time.

He actually lost the courage to break the door open.

He Lingxiang's questioning earlier still echoed in his ears. 'Why are you so concerned with Yun Shishi? Could it be that you are in love with her? She's not even yours, so on what grounds are you making indiscreet remarks?'

Love?

Did he love her?

Gu Xingze was suddenly a little confused.

He had never loved a woman before, so he did not know what it was like to be in love.

Being nervous, worried, and protective – were these considered as being in love?

Were these considered as being in love?

He had an indecipherable feeling toward her the first time he saw her.

The girl was so elegant and ethereal that she appeared to be out of this world. He wanted to properly keep her away from the influences of this world.

During the audition for the role of Yin Xiachun, Yun Shishi had made an impact to everyone present with her very realistic portrayal. Even he was naturally brought into Yin Dongyu's character by her performance to the point of him wanting to protect her from any harm in his embrace.

Her every expression was deeply imprinted in his mind and they could not be removed.

Was this love?

If it were not, then why did he care for her? Was it simply because she had the talent and potential to be a future star?

He suddenly had a splitting headache. He leaned his back against the wall and buried his face in his hands. His heart was plunged into chaotic misery...

He did not know how long he had waited; it just felt so long it almost seemed as if time had stopped.

He wanted to break into the room time and again, but whenever he reached the door, something would make him retreat.

He was thus in for a long, torturous wait. This was when he heard people approaching from one end of the corridor.

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He looked toward the source of the footsteps and saw a group of waiters holding up trays, making their way over to the presidential suite slowly and respectfully. A few pieces of new and gorgeous gowns, along with exquisite accessories, were laid on the trays.

Walking in line with this group was Alan.

He was shocked to see him. With his eyes slightly shifting, he asked, “Xingze... why are you here?”

“What are you here for?” Gu Xingze glanced sharply at him and knitted his brows.

“The CEO summoned me here to prepare a lady for the gala...” Alan was a smart man. Noticing his heartbroken expression, he suddenly had a foreboding feeling. “That lady inside, could it be... Miss Yun?!”

“SHUT UP!” Gu Xingze snapped as he suddenly flew into a rage.

Alan quickly shut his mouth and dared not ask further.

Women were indeed poison. An example was this; Yun Shishi was able to make Gu Xingze, an elegant and unapproachable man, react irrationally. Who was she exactly?

Sounds suddenly came from inside the room.

Gu Xingze returned to his senses in that instant, and his face was colored with shock. He looked over just in time to see Mu Yazhe come out of the room.

The man was already clad in an exquisite suit. No traces of intimate activities could be observed on his person; he was still that imperial elite in everyone's eyes.

He shot Gu Xingze a cold look. He did not seem to be surprised by his presence there. He emotionlessly cast his eyes over to Alan and ordered in a low voice, "Get in."

"Yes, sir."

Alan, who had stood there quietly without looking sideways, led the waiters into the room.

The door was then shut. Gu Xingze proceeded to march toward Mu Yazhe and grabbed his neatly ironed tie. He questioned him bitterly, "What did you do to her?"

Both men's presence was equally domineering, and they continually gave off a dangerous vibe.

Mu Yazhe's height towered over Gu Xingze's, though. Thus, he was looking down at him when he gave a vague answer, "What do you think?"

"Shameless!" Gu Xingze paled in anger. Without warning, he threw a straight punch at him.

Mu Yazhe slightly turned to the side with a calm expression and caught his swift fist firmly. He did not seem to have moved an inch.

Shock was observed in Gu Xingze's eyes.

“You are quite skilled. Looks like Gu Mochen has taught you well.”

Mu Yazhe forcibly shook his hand off and Gu Xingze involuntarily took a few steps backward. The man took large, graceful strides toward him, lowered his eyes, and emotionlessly squinted at him. “I didn't expect that Gu Xingze would also lose his composure over a woman.”

Chapter 171: She will fall in love with me

“I didn't expect that Gu Xingze would also lose his composure over a woman.”

Gu Xingze countered with a solemn look, “Composure? This goes for you, too, CEO Mu. Aren't you ashamed of using such methods just to get a woman?”

Mu Yazhe's eyes dimmed and he coldly replied, “I'm a businessman. I get what I want, and this includes her. She's my woman; I won't allow anyone to covet her.”

His tyrannical warning stunned Gu Xingze.

He suddenly realized that the man was possessive of Yun Shishi to the point of being cruel to her.

The man had always been ambitious and would use whatever means necessary to get what he wanted.

He saw the danger of losing her.

He had even forced her to take off that evening gown at the boutique store earlier because he disliked seeing her being glamorous for another man.

In this gala, she was outstanding and radiant. Every man present was besotted with her.

He also saw her reliance and trust in Gu Xingze.

As a man with keen business acumen, he easily understood that he would lose his chance with her if he did not do something about it.

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He wanted her so badly he would clip off her wings to prevent her from flying away. He would cage her to his side so that others would not have a chance with her.

He could give her unlimited amount of love and pampering, but she could only have this in his embrace and no one else's. He was such a person.

“Your woman?” Gu Xingze had a disdainful look. “What about Mu Wanrou, then?”

“Oh, don't you know?” He sneered. “Her presence is inconsequential.”

“Inconsequential?” Gu Xingze was unable to mask his surprise.

Not much was known about Mu Yazhe, except that he had a childhood sweetheart for a fiancée. They were engaged with a son. Still, there were rumors of Mu Wanrou being infertile, and even world-renowned specialists could not fix her congenital issue.

It was said that their son was from surrogacy.

Gu Xingze inhaled sharply at this thought...

Surrogacy...

Mu Yazhe looked penetratingly at the other man and smiled slightly upon sensing his suspicion. He then coldly confirmed, “Little Yichen’s biological mother is Yun Shishi.”

“...” Gu Xingze was badly shaken by this news and stared disbelievingly at the man.

Mu Yazhe causally asked, “Is it wrong to go after my child’s mother?”

Gu Xingze recalled those shocking details. That boy he had seen beside her indeed possessed the same features as Little Yichen.

If this was the case, everything could be explained.

She was the surrogate mother chosen by the Mu family back then? Why? What did that mean to him now?

He did not mind her past.

Gu Xingze gazed up at him and determinedly said, “Love goes both ways, right? She will not fall in love with you!”

“She will.” The man lifted his head. With his proud chin held high, he resolutely declared, “She will fall in love with me.”

His words were spoken aloofly and tyrannically. This was confidence only a business tycoon could have. No one could fight with such charisma.

He strode off after saying this.

Gu Xingze stood rooted to the spot...

Chapter 172: Panic

In a dimly lit hotel room, Yun Na opened her sleepy eyes. The aching pain that shot through her body reminded her of what had just happened.

She drank the wine given by He Lingxiang despite knowing where it would lead. The men were looking for some fun to pass the time prior to the show's start.

She had nowhere to go and was desperate to find any means to stay put. She did not want to leave the gala without achieving her goal.

If there was a chance, regardless of its form, she would grasp it.

It was her ultimate dream to become a star. Consumed by her desire, she would do anything for a chance.

She opened her eyes and sat up on the bed. This was when she saw the mess on the floor.

She hurriedly switched on the lights and was shocked at the sight before her.

Shirts were strewn all over the bed, and, beside it, He Lingxiang was lying unconscious on the floor with a few men. Meanwhile, Yang Shoucheng was spread lamely on the couch and was moaning in pain. Blood oozed from a gaping wound in his arm, which heavily stained his shirt.

She was thoroughly shaken.

She was clueless as to what had caused this gruesome sight, for she had lost her consciousness earlier. She only woke up to it.

She grabbed her clothes and crept toward the door barefoot. In her hurry, she stepped on to something hard, which caused her sole to curl in pain.

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She looked down and saw a bloody pistol.

Ahhh!

She inwardly screamed in fear. Her brain seemed to have exploded with a bang.

Why is there a gun here ?!

What happened in this room earlier ?

“D*mn!”

Yang Shoucheng's painful whispers could be heard from behind her.
“D*mn you, Gu Xingze... I'm gonna kill you!”

Gu Xingze ?

She hid herself in one corner, her face paling with fear. She could see the man painfully struggling to get up off the couch from where she was. Mustering his remaining strength, he kicked He Lingxiang.
“Wake up!”

“Ah...” Jolted out of his unconsciousness, he was shocked to see him in an awkward state. “Director Yang, what happened to you?!”

“Quickly get me help! I'm shot... and losing a lot of blood!”

“Who is that Gu Xingze exactly? I previously thought that he is just a gigolo, but he turned out to be a martial arts expert!” He sounded incredulous as he supported Yang Shoucheng.

Earlier, Yang Shoucheng had removed his pistol's safety catch and threateningly pointed it to Gu Xingze. He was just trying to instill fear in the young chap.

In a split second, Gu Xingze unexpectedly leaped at him, wrestled the gun from his hand, and fired a bullet at his arm...

His series of actions was smoothly executed. That could not happen without professional training.

“Director Yang, how do you plan to deal with this?”

“What's my plan?” He laughed chillingly. “I'll teach that chap a lesson, of course!”

He Lingxiang nodded in full agreement.

Yun Na drew a sharp intake of breath when she heard this. It was so scary!

Yang Shoucheng caught the faint sound and cried out, “Who is that?!”

That got her scrambling out of the room as she hid her appearance in the shadows.

Frightening!

Yang Shoucheng indeed had powerful connections among the mafia. The rumors circulating on the internet were true, after all!

The more his words echoed, the more fearful she became.

Before she could tidy herself up after her flight from the room, she met Yang Mi, Han Yuyan, the two’s entourage, and even Lu Jingtian, who had arrived late.

Chapter 173: Meeting by Chance

Yang Shoucheng had powerful connections in the mafia indeed. The rumors circulating on the internet were true after all.

The more his words echoed, the more fearful she became.

Before she could tidy herself up after her flight from the room, she met Yang Mi, Han Yuyan, the two's entourage, and even Lu Jingtian, who had arrived late.

Tonight was Huanyu Entertainment's annual gala. Lu Jingtian's father was one of the company's largest shareholders, so naturally she had to be present.

However, when she reached the venue, she did not see the person that was on her mind. It was only expected that she would feel disappointed. She, thus, ended up following Yang Mi and the others to the lounge for a respite.

At the entrance to the elevator, however, their group bumped into Yun Na.

Caught off guard, Yun Na froze to the spot. She was intending to leave without being seen by anyone, but she unexpectedly bumped into them. She felt so awkward meeting them in her current state that she was overcome with shame.

She was presently in tatters, especially with those exposed areas being filled with traces of intimacy.

Her face, which was applied with exquisite makeup before, now looked haggard. She was in her most sorry plight in that instance, but it was exposed to others, and she felt extremely embarrassed.

Yang Mi disdainfully inspected her before snorting scornfully.

Li Jiuxian, who was standing by her side, could not help but furrow his brows.

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Tang Yu spat, “B*tch, what a disgrace!”

Even Lu Jingtian had disgust written all over her face when she looked at her. She scoffed, “Where did this crazy b*tch come from?”

“Jingtian, this is something you don’t know; this woman is a thief! She passed off somebody else’s gown as hers and attempted to sneak into the venue to curry favor with those in power. She was just exposed by Xingze. She probably used some underhanded means and climbed up a certain big shot’s bed to gain status!”

Yun Na pursed her lips in embarrassment and rage when she heard this. She put on a pitiful image. If those who were in the dark saw this, they would go soft-hearted for her.

However, everyone here knew of her true colors, so naturally, they did not fall for her act.

Even Li Jiuxian, who had taken care of her before, showed a disgusted expression, as if he had swallowed a fly.

Yun Na felt even more indignant when she observed this scene. She thoroughly hated that mouth of Yang Mi’s; if she could, she would tear down that mouth full of gossips!

“It isn’t what you think it is... All of you are being deceived by Yun Shishi! She isn’t how she projects herself to be...”

She buried her face in her hands and cried miserably. She looked so pitiful she did not seem to be acting at all.

Yang Mi sneered, “If she isn’t what we think she is, then what is she truly like?”

She wept, “This is all Yun Shishi’s scheme! I didn’t steal her gown; she gave it to me. She said that she dislikes it. I didn’t expect for her to lie and say that I stole it. I... There’s truly nothing I can do to clear my name!”

Yang Mi creased her brows at her words and she went silent for a moment, seemingly thinking of something.

Han Yuyan suddenly asked, “What you said; is it the truth?”

“Yes! I was originally coming to the gala with Director He—”

Jeers traveled through the group at the mention of He Lingxiang. Those in the entertainment industry were very aware of how the man was as a person. Anyone linked with him would have a big discount on their image.

She felt even more wronged at this. Tears flowed out from her eyes like a broken string of pearls. She sobbed pitifully, “Really, everyone; please don’t just believe Yun Shishi’s one-sided statement!”

Chapter 174: Defamation

“Really, everyone; please don’t just believe Yun Shishi’s one-sided statement! I’ve been wronged. I’m really not a thief, as I’ve never stolen anything from her!”

Han Yuyan raised an eyebrow in disbelief and questioned, “Why should we believe your one-sided statement, too?”

Yun Na trembled all over as she answered, “Do you all believe her one-sided statement, then? She’s always acting innocent when, in fact, she’s the most cunning!”

She paused for a while before continuing, “You all saw what had happened earlier. She’s obviously a rookie, but she dressed up in glamour and sought the limelight. She’s clearly here to push herself forward and create hype! I’m sure everyone doesn’t know of this; she grew up in a welfare center!”

“Welfare center?”

Yang Mi suddenly spoke with an underlying intention, “I heard that those children who grow up in a welfare center are very mature. They already know how to strive for favor...”

“Yes! My dad adopted her at a very young age, but, as you can see, whether it be food and clothes, she’s treated better than me! At home, she knows how to curry favor through trickery. My dad treasures her, yet she still did this to me...”

Once again, she paused, and then she started crying piteously.

“She’s just an unwanted child. If it weren’t for my dad adopting her, she’d surely have a hard time, but she doesn’t even know how to repay gratitude with kindness and, instead, requited us with ingratitude...”

Everyone started gossiping about this.

“Is this true?”

“I couldn’t tell at all that Yun Shishi is a woman like that...”

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“Sigh, I think what she said is the truth. Some women look very innocent on the outside but are actually really shrewd on the inside!”

A streak of success secretly flashed across her eyes at their reaction. Soon after, she showed yet another pitiful expression. “I was leaving the venue after changing my clothes when she came over to pass me a cup of tea. I didn’t suspect a thing, and when I woke up, I am already in this state...”

She sniffled and hugged her shoulders helplessly while she choked on tears.

Li Jiuxian felt upset for her. As an androcentric man, a ‘weak’ and ‘meek’ girl like her easily ignited his desire to protect.

He walked over and hurriedly placed his coat on her, hiding her shameful body.

“Thank you!” she said in an appreciative tone, “Jiuxian, thank you for believing me!”

Yang Mi squinted and sneered, “Jiuxian, do keep your distance from her. What if she’s deceiving you?”

Men were different from women in that they did not usually bother to think too deeply into things. Frankly speaking, after being in this line of work for years, he still did not understand rivalries in the entertainment industry.

Yang Mi and Han Yuyan were different, though. They were considered as ‘veterans’ in the industry and have seen the execution of many types of tricks.

Han Yuyan just needed to look at Yun Na once, and she could tell what she was plotting.

She did not expose her simply because the latter was not in a conflict of interest with her.

Her defamation of Yun Shishi was exactly what Yang Mi and the others wanted.

‘The mantis stalks the cicada, unaware of the oriole behind.’ She wanted to see what would happen if the sisters fought!

Li Jiuxian heard her advice and, from his expression, he had a forethought. He cast his eyes down on Yun Na and asked her skeptically, “Yun Na, is what you said all true?”

“Yes! What I said is the truth! I swear to god!” Giving her reply, she even held her palm up to take a solemn vow.

Chapter 175: Target

“Yes! What I said is the truth! I swear to god!” Giving this reply, she even held her palms up to take a solemn vow.

“Alright, I’ll believe you!” Li Jiuxian smilingly said.

She broke into grateful tears.

He continued angrily, “Yun Shishi is too much. You are her younger sister, and your father raised her, so how could she do this to you?”

Sob... sob... sob... She pretended to cry in grief, though she was feeling smug inside.

She did not reckon for him to believe her story until now. He was just too naïve and simple-minded.

As long as she had his backing, she could get out of this bad situation!

“She may look innocent, but she’s actually very calculative. She must’ve used tricks to bewitch men.” Her words only made the others angrier.

Everyone saw how Gu Xingze had shielded her earlier.

That woman must be a vixen reincarnate, or why would the men be so eager to protect and please her?!

“Stop crying, your eyes are already swollen! It’s all in the past. She’ll get her retribution one day!” He patted her shoulder consolingly.

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“Thank you, Brother Jiuxian,” she thanked him amid her sobs.

She looked at him with such pity-inducing sorrow; her cheeks flushed as tears glimmered in her eyes. She knew this would hit his weak spot.

Yang Mi did not expect him to go to such length to protect a newcomer.

Does that mean he likes this kind of woman?

“You are good with your acting. How do we know if you are truly an unwilling party in this affair?”

Lu Jingtian did not mince her words. “You can find all kinds of women in this industry. They’ll stop at nothing to get ahead of the competition! You’d better get lost quickly! It’s revolting to see you like this.”

Li Jiuxian frowned in annoyance and wanted to rebuke, but he kept quiet when he saw Yang Mi glare at him.

Is this stupid man going to throw away his rice bowl for a woman?

Who was Lu Jingtian?

She was the daughter of the biggest shareholder in Huanyu Entertainment, and it was his agency as well as his source of income. If this woman was antagonized by him, he might be unreservedly banned.

Li Jiuxian was a top idol, and gossips regarding them made for a hot topic now. She needed to protect their soaring popularity.

“Who did you fool—” Yang Mi blurted out but quickly caught herself and corrected, “Who did this to you?”

Yun Na’s face was fearful and embarrassed when she heard that.

Was Yang Mi trying to embarrass her?

Everyone was suddenly interested to hear her answer.

Everyone wanted to know who could be so sadistic to leave so many bruises and bite marks on her!

“That’s right; who did this to you?”

“No... I can’t say that; I don’t dare to tell...”

She trembled when she recalled Yang Shoucheng’s sadistic ways and threats.

It was truly terrifying.

Yang Shoucheng and He Lingxiang were of the same kind. They were ferocious in bed and out to do anything for fun. They almost broke her bones when they were at it.

It was terrifying.

It was terrifying.

When she displayed that terrified expression, Li Jiuxian naturally took pity on her again.

“Why are you afraid? You can be truthful here; we’ll back you up!”

Han Yuyan was also keen to find out who had tortured Yun Na to such an extent.

“No... That person told me not to breathe a word, so I don’t dare to tell...” she could not stop shaking.

The rest imagined differently based on her words, however.

The person must be someone powerful to make her quake in fear.

However, if one was to think of a man in this gala who would fit this bill with his elite background, then it could only be...

“Oh! Where is CEO Mu? He was here a while ago—”

Someone voiced out that little suspicion, but before the words were completed, Mu Wanrou appeared on the scene with Little Yichen at her heels. They took steps toward the elevator and were startled to see the crowd before them.

Little Yichen, who was disinterestedly holding and sucking on a lollipop, quickly hid behind his mother in fear when he saw them.

He had been hidden from the public's eyes by Mu Yazhe since his infancy.

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He was not afraid of strangers, but he disliked being gawked at by a crowd.

This was the rest's first time to see him in the flesh, so everyone was curious to check out this little lad, who would inherit the Mu Group in the future.

Their stares, which held curiosity and surprise, made this boy very uncomfortable.

This was especially true for Lu Jingtian, who was looking at him with mixed emotions that included jealousy. Her stare could end him.

Isn't this the son whom Mu Wanrou bore for Brother Mu?

Hmph! I'll marry into the Mu family one day, and my child with Brother Mu will be the rightful heir, instead!

The little lad was getting displeased with the attention. He coldly glanced over at the group and hid himself further behind Mu Wanrou.

Mu Wanrou was getting unhappy with the commotion and asked with a warning look, "Why is everyone crowding here?"

She saw them glancing at Yun Na whom she immediately showed her revulsion for. "Why are you still here? You've been kicked out!"

Yun Na's eyes displayed even greater horror when she saw the woman speaking to her.

This only made the rest speculate further.

Someone made a daring assumption.

Could it be... that she had an illicit affair with the president of Disheng, Mu Yazhe?!

There were no unruly gossips associated with the man before, and neither could the paparazzi find many rumors about him. Did he have... a fetish for such a woman?

If... that was indeed true, then Yun Na had landed herself a good deal, and she would be heading for fame and fortune soon, would she not?

Oh, god! This is big news!

One had to understand that CEO Mu could get his hands on any woman he desired.

Even Lu Jingtian was mistaken, and her eyes instantly burned with wrath!

She did not believe – would not believe this!

Yun Na was also shocked by everyone's expression.

Did they realize that it was Yang Shoucheng?! God, this was a bigwig she could not afford to offend!

Just as everyone was second-guessing each other, leisure footsteps were heard from nearby.

Mu Yazhe's tall and handsome figure appeared in their vision when they looked over.

His charisma was evident as he strode over in his smart suit. The women swooned.

Lu Jingtian's heart also skipped a beat when she saw him, and she tried desperately to find any 'evidence' of that alleged affair.

Chapter 177: How Filthy

Lu Jingtian's heart also skipped a beat when she saw him, and she tried desperately to detect any 'evidence' of that alleged affair.

She refused to believe that Brother Mu would have an illicit affair with a woman like Yun Na!

Her gaze stopped at a coyly hidden hickey on his collarbone. It looked more like a bite mark than a love mark. A line of teeth imprint was visible, and it was obvious that it was there not too long ago.

This was like a lightning strike for Lu Jingtian, and she stood rooted to the spot.

A surge of excruciating pain welled up within her.

She once more eyed Yun Na's body that were full of suggestive bite marks, which could not be concealed. Her grievance and fury were immeasurable!

Brother Mu... disliked any woman touching him. He would not permit any physical contact even with her, so what did this woman have that... would make him allow it?!

“Oh, god...”

“Is it really him? The one who had an affair with this b*tch...”

“Shhh! Shut up. Can't you see that Young Mistress Mu is present as well? Young Master Mu is around, too; watch your mouth—”

“What Young Mistress Mu? She is engaged to him only in name!”

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“Keep quiet, don’t you know that Lu Jingtian also likes CEO Mu ?!”

Everyone was privately discussing with one another. Despite keeping their volume to the lowest, Yun Na still managed to catch what they were fervently talking about. Her eyes lit up with glee as an idea struck her.

These women mistook the man in question to be CEO Mu ?

If she could ride on his coattails, she would not need to fear He Lingxiang or even Yang Shoucheng and would not even need Li Jiuxian at all!

Besides, CEO Mu would not waste his time clarifying such a small matter, right ?

This was just the right opportunity for her!

She straightened her back as she plotted along. She then subtly and silently slipped away from Li Jiuxian’s arms...

Mu Yazhe emotionlessly swept his eyes across the crowd as he walked toward the elevator doors. It was at this moment that a shadow flew by and ‘accidentally’ fell into his arms.

This was Yun Na.

She made it look as if she had tripped over something and caused her to stumble in his arms.

He did not bother to look at her and just pushed her away with an ominous expression.

She looked up and was taken aback by his chilly expression. She cried out to him, “Sorry, CEO Mu, I – I haven’t said anything! Please don’t be mad!”

Haven’t said anything? Is it true between them, then?

Everyone was guessing again.

Her words obviously had a hidden meaning.

His eyes had turned hard and cold by then. He did not know what game she was playing, but he hated conniving women.

The rest were gasping in shock at this, especially Lu Jingtian. Her face was sullen from fury and her eyes were filled with deep loathing. She would tear Yun Na apart if there were no people around them.

Mu Wanrou’s face looked even more terrible. She did not know what the girl up was to, but the action was enough to infuriate her.

Does this shameless rookie have any respect for my title as the Young Mistress Mu?

Mu Yazhe apathetically took out a handkerchief and wiped himself vigorously before pushing away her hand. “How filthy.”

She stood stunned and embarrassed. This man was more arrogant and crueler than rumored.

“Sorry...” She walked up and tried to clean him.

“Don’t touch me; you are filthy.” He cruelly threw his handkerchief at her.

Chapter 178: I Will Destroy That Face of Yours

“Don’t touch me; you are filthy.” He cruelly threw his handkerchief at her.

“Daddy! Daddy!” Yichen ran to the man and asked gloomily, “When will the gala start?”

His face softened a little as he looked at his son. Gently taking his small hand in his, he replied, “Right away.”

“I wanna drink grape juice...”

“Okay!” He always granted Yichen’s every request.

The love he had for his son was beyond words.

Only after witnessing this scene did Mu Wanrou smile. She stepped forward to lock arms with him. “Zhe, the gala is about to begin.”

Mu Yazhe had no change in expression, and the trio slowly entered the elevator.

Lu Jingtian wanted to follow but retreated at the stare Mu Wanrou gave when the latter turned around.

Her heart and soul were shaken by it. She clearly got scared by her menacing look. She only regained her composure after the elevator doors were firmly shut.

“Yun Na, was it really Mr. Mu?”

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Li Jiuxian’s voice came from behind.

He fixed his eyes on to her and asked in desperation, “Was it really Mr. Mu?”

“I – I am not telling you!” she sobbed meekly, “I don’t know anything; don’t ask me anymore...”

“B*tch!”

Lu Jingtian could no longer repress the raging fire in her heart and vengefully ran up to her. She managed to clutch her hair at once and pulled it with all her might. “B*tch! A lowly b*tch!”

Smack! A resounding slap was heard, and Yun Na’s cheeks immediately swelled, leaving behind a palm imprint.

Everyone around was shocked speechless.

Li Jiuxian could not bear to see this but he did not have the courage to step out.

Offending her meant offending Huanyu Entertainment. He was not stupid to that extent.

“Who are you?! Why did you hit me?!” Yun Na glared at her with tears all over her face. She could not fathom where this woman had come from and why she had hit her.

“Who am I? You don’t have the rights to ask me that! I hit b*tches like you, you vixen!”

Lu Jingtian was aflame with rage. She slapped her repeatedly without giving her a chance to speak.

“Ahhh—stop... HELP!”

Seeing this, Han Yuyan spun around and spoke to the crowd, “Everyone, scatter. Miss Lu isn’t happy today. Let’s head back to the event hall; the gala is about to start.”

“Yes. Why are we all gathered here? No eyes for the situation,” Yang Mi added.

The crowd cleared out right away.

Yun Na felt as if she had fallen into an ice cellar when she saw this. Lu Jingtian’s livid face was enlarged before her.

“You are ‘Yun Na’, right? Why are you this despicable? Have you not seen a man before that you don’t know whom you can and cannot touch?”

Yun Na bolstered her courage and threatened, “Don’t go too far! I – I will get you for this! Do you know who I am?!”

“I don’t care who you are, but do YOU know who I am?!” she countered and then shoved her toward the stairwell, furiously aiming her kicks at her chest.

It had been ages since Lu Jingtian had any form of training in taekwondo, but the strength in her legs remained formidable. Yun Na suffered from her vicious kicks and nearly coughed up blood.

“Cou – Cough! Stop kicking; I – I won’t do it again...” she spoke incoherently. She did not have the strength to fight an opponent like her.

“Is there a use for pleading now? You went around hooking up with men left and right with that face of yours, right?” She squatted before her, took out a brow knife from her leather pouch, and then used it to apathetically threaten her into a corner.

“I’ll destroy that face of yours for good. Let’s see how you can still go hooking up with men!”

“Ahhhh... NO!”

Yun Na’s heart-wrenching cries echoed throughout the entire building.

Chapter 179: The Tear of Roses

Yun Shishi slowly opened her heavy-lidded eyes.

The room was already in order at this point. She blinked her eyes lethargically, and her vision gradually regained its focus and clarity. A glamorous ceiling was the first thing that entered her sight.

She slowly shifted her eyes to her side. The bed was empty save for her in this extremely spacious presidential suite.

Her body unbelievably ached all over, and she had a splitting headache, which felt as if her brain were going to explode the moment she opened her eyes. She sat up in bed while holding her forehead. She wearily leaned on the headboard with lifeless and vacant eyes.

After an eerie silence, she thought of something and hastily threw back the clean covers. She glanced at her body and saw that it was now covered with a fresh bathrobe. Seeing her flesh totally free of any bodily fluid, she felt refreshed.

She was shocked to see her body entirely covered with eye-catching, purple hickeys, which interlaced with one another. She recalled every scene of their earlier intimacy, and her face instantly became scalding hot.

“Miss Yun, you’re finally awake.”

A somewhat familiar voice sounded nearby.

Astonished, she looked at the voice’s origin and saw a grinning Alan and a group of waiters lining up one side of the room.

“You... Why are you here?”

“Under Mr. Mu’s orders,” he replied and then asked kindly, “Miss Yun, is your body alright?”

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Hints of awkwardness could not be hidden from his words.

It was extremely embarrassing to have other people see her in this state. She had never felt this humiliated before.

“Mr. Mu has instructed me to send you home to rest if you are feeling tired,” he said.

She was secretly glad that the man was at least thoughtful; he had specially instructed people to prepare a set of comfortable clothes for her and to bring her home if she was not feeling well.

“No need. Someone is still... waiting for me.”

She pursed her lips when she thought of Gu Xingze and loneliness flickered in her eyes.

Alan was dazed for a moment before he said with a smile, “I understand. Then, if you’ll excuse me, I’d like to request Miss Yun to step down from the bed, so that I can help you with your clothes.”

“Thank you.”

Yun Shishi got out of the bed and sat in front of the dressing mirror.

Shock flashed across her eyes once she caught sight of the rose-colored gown on the tray. “This gown, isn’t it that...”

The treasure of EMPRESS.

Alan explained, “Mr. Mu said that only you are fitting of this gown.”

“Then why did he...”

She was about to continue, but her voice hitched at her throat.

That man was always difficult to decipher.

He had clearly and resolutely ordered her to take off this gown earlier at EMPRESS.

A man’s thought was impossible to grasp, just like finding a needle at the bottom of the sea.

Alan was a professional stylist. Combined with Yun Shishi’s naturally beautiful face, which required little to no touch up, an exquisite appearance, like a painting, appeared in the mirror in a jiffy.

Earrings, headwear, gown, hairdo, and high heels... Dressing up a woman was always a huge undertaking.

Half an hour later, Yun Shishi stood in front of the French dressing mirror and looked at the beautiful woman in it. Clad in an elegant silky red gown with a matching shawl around her shoulders, her perfect figure was made apparent.

She flawlessly depicted what was elegant and charming.

Alan walked to her and revealed an exquisite jewelry case. In it silently sat a refined ruby necklace.

In that moment, the entire room seemed to sparkle.

The necklace was inlaid with nothing except for a brilliant ruby. The dazzling ruby, in the color of pigeon's blood, appeared to be an accumulation of actual blood. It was sparkling and magnificent and gave off a fascinating glow.

It looked like a flame ablaze in the night sky, and it looked like flowing blood as well. It was strikingly vibrant.

The moonlight reflected the beautiful hexagram on the ruby.

She was slightly startled.

So beautiful...

Rumors had it that rubies were extremely rare; there were only few of them in this world, so they were seldom seen. Of this rarity, the pigeon's blood ruby was the most precious.

“This is...”

“This necklace is called ‘The Tear of Roses’, and it is the only piece in existence.” Pausing for a moment, Alan then slowly informed, “This is Mr. Mu’s prized possession.”

“Prized possession?”

She arched an eyebrow in surprise and questioned, “Then... Why did Mu Yazhe give this to me?”

“Mu...”

She actually called him by his name.

Alan was astonished and looked at her as if she were an alien.

Yun Shishi was just too unique to be true!

No one, including the elites in the capital, dared to call him directly by his name. Everyone would respectfully address him as Master Mu; even then, this term was reserved for a select few.

Most people would address him as CEO Mu or Director Mu.

This Tear of Roses was one-of-the-kind. It was his personal keepsake and held great importance to the man, so Alan was surprised when he had him hand it over to Yun Shishi for use at this night's gala. Did it mean that this woman had an exceptional place in his heart?

He was not being calculative here. However, if she was Director Mu's woman, he naturally had to serve her with extra care. She was not someone to be offended.

Fortunately, Yun Shishi was easy to get along with. She was elegant and humble. Compared to most of the big stars he had served before, she was much friendlier.

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“Miss Yun, you are really different from the rest when you call Director Mu by his name.” Alan chuckled admiringly.

Resigned, she commented, “He is not a king, and we are not in the Feudal Age. Why can't we address him by his name?”

Just who is this Mu Yazhe, and why is everybody, including those in power in the capital, so afraid of him?

Alan smilingly said, “Ha ha, Miss Yun, do you know how powerful Director Mu is with his family assets? Common folks like us have no idea.”

He proceeded to put on his gloves as he said this and then carefully held the precious necklace in his hands.

“Miss Yun, this necklace goes with your outfit perfectly. Please don’t move when I put it on you.”

“I don’t want his thing. I don’t!”

She firmly rejected, recalling that the man was her nightmare.

“Miss Yun... please let me do my job! My task is to make you look perfect for this gala. If anything goes wrong...”

He desperately tried to persuade into cooperating.

“... Alright.” She raised her hands and gave in.

...

“Perfect!”

Once he finished doing her makeup, Alan stood before her for a final check. Seeing her in full glamor, he could not help but exclaim, “Oh, god, Miss Yun! You are simply the most beautiful woman I’ve ever seen!”

“Thank you; I’m flattered.” She blushed as she looked at her reflection in the mirror.

Gu Xingze had keen foresight when he realized that this stunning gown would look exceptional on her with her ethereal beauty.

His gaze fell on the necklace on her neck. The pigeon's blood ruby complemented her snow-white skin as it seductively sparkled and shone under the moon's illumination.

“It's absolutely beautiful! Miss Yun, the gala dinner is about to begin; let me show you the way!”

He slowly opened the door for her, and she carefully made her way out of the room while holding the hemline of her gown. She bumped into Gu Xingze who was waiting outside.

She was startled to see him, and a flush of embarrassment soon spread across her face.

He was momentarily stunned by her glamorous appearance but quickly saw fatigue in her blood-shot eyes. The pain in his heart for her seemed to grow by the minute.

“Shishi...”

Chapter 181: Are you willing to be my partner?

“Shishi...”

“Why are you here?” she mumbled softly before he could continue speaking.

“How can I leave you alone? I'm worried about you.”

She hung her head miserably.

If it were like before, she could be his partner and openly hold his arm while receiving the artistes' and media's questioning looks without qualms.

Right now, however, she felt that there was suddenly a chasm separating them.

He saw her dejection and went quiet as well.

The room turned cold with their silence.

A century seemed to have passed before the man walked up to the lady, and like a true gentleman, proffered his palm to her with his head bowed. "Beautiful lady, are you willing to be my partner?"

She glanced at him in surprise and then slowly put her hand in his.

"I'm willing..."

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Both smiled at each other.

...

A large chandelier hung in the center of a magnificent dining hall and illuminated the dance floor with its brilliant crystal lights.

Yun Tianyou looked around curiously, but his eyes were full of disappointment.

"Is this where my Mommy is going to attend the gala?"

“Yes, Director Yun, it’s here. Do you want me to bring you to a room for a respite?”

“No.”

In an elegant balcony on the second floor, Yun Tianyou, who was casually sitting on Li Hanlin’s lap, sipped the bubbling cola through the straw and roamed his eyes around.

A few major shareholders of Lezhi Holdings were also invited to this gala hosted by Huanyu Entertainment. Li Hanlin, as a chief board member, was naturally among those invited.

Yun Tianyou was not interested in such events, but he wanted to see his mother in her glamor, so he had Li Hanlin arranged for him to be present, too.

He was wearing an iron-pressed black bib over a simple white shirt with a matching cute bow tie. The round spectacles on his face made him look adorably dashing.

He criticized the hotel’s interior design, “This style is outdated!”

His agent gingerly explained with cold sweat littering his forehead, “Director Yun, this is the most prestigious hotel in Asia. There’s none comparable to this.”

The boy frowned without changing his critical tone. “The style is too low-class.”

There was a little commotion just as he spoke.

He raised his brow, jumped down from his agent's lap, and ran toward the banister. With his head between the two banister beams, he stretched his neck to take a closer look; Yang Mi, Han Yuyan, and other artistes slowly entered the event hall.

He frowned and pouted disappointedly, mumbling, "Where's mommy?"

Li Hanlin had followed him to the barrister and knelt beside him, totally unaware of his inappropriate behavior on this grand occasion.

"Director Yun, your mommy hasn't come in yet."

Yun Tianyou agreed, "Yes! The most important person is always the last to enter."

"This is the biggest gala Huanyu Entertainment has ever organized. You can see so many first-rated stars and elites here. This company is truly influential."

"Hmph, these people are plain and crass. They look dull," the boy said with a pout.

His agent looked at him furtively and did not comment.

He knew that the boy only had eyes for his mother. In his heart, his mother was the most important.

Chapter 182: Mommy is like a fairy.

He knew that the boy only had eyes for his mother. In his heart, his mother was the most important.

The reason Lezhi Holdings had branched out into the entertainment industry by heavily investing in the upcoming ‘The Green Apple’ movie was this boy.

When he dug deeper, Yun Tianyou only explained briefly, “My mommy is the female lead in this film. No one on the set is allowed to bully her.”

The production team initially had many considerations for the movie’s female lead role.

Lin Fengtian wanted Yun Shishi, but supporters of Yang Mi and Yan Bingqing would unfortunately not give up. Yan Bingqing especially had the support of Yang Shoucheng, and it was hard for the assistant directors to turn down this bigwig. They did not want to offend him.

The role was eventually given to Yun Shishi after much tussle.

One could only imagine the cat fights that had happened in the process.

As the biggest investor, Lezhi Holdings had the final say in that lead role, and since they chose Yun Shishi, not even Yang Shoucheng could interfere in that decision.

Lin Fengtian was obviously very happy with this outcome.

The fighting, thus, ended with that.

Li Hanlin was astonished at the extent of the boy's love for his mother. He had seen filial children, but he had not encountered anyone like Yun Tianyou before. He was a Mommy Demon Protector.

(vit(function()){)

This boy is the New Century Model Mommy's Boy!

When he led Yun Tianyou into the venue earlier, a few stars found him handsome and adorable and went up to play with him.

The little lad did not have the patience to mingle with them, but they were so enchanted by his cuteness that they refused to leave. He eventually indulged them with a typical childlike innocence, showering them with praises, "Sister, you are so beautiful. You look better in person than on TV!"

His warm and loving smile could melt anyone's heart.

Once he turned around, though, he reverted to his cynical self. He commented with a snort, "Are they trying to suffocate us with their deadly perfume? Their makeup is so ugly that they can't even match up to my mommy's one finger."

At one side, Li Hanlin was breaking out in a cold sweat.

He gave him a sudden instruction, "Agent Li, take a few beautiful photos of my mommy when she appears later."

"Yes, I understand," he accepted the task.

However, almost immediately, the boy cast doubt on his ability. “How’s your photography skills?” To this, he replied, “Er... I should be considered as better than an amateur.”

That satisfied Yun Tianyou as he went, “Good.” His eyes then revealed a rare moment of loving gentleness.

“The photos must turn out beautiful; make her like a fairy! But...”

His tone turned acerbic as he warned, “If the photos don’t turn out beautifully, I’ll deduct a month’s worth of your salary.”

“Director Yun...” He winced anxiously.

Isn’t he making things difficult for me?

The little lad coldly continued, “If she looks uglier than other women in the pictures, you can forget about your annual bonus, too.”

“Director Yun!”

He gave a forlorn cry. He was about to protest when he saw Yun Tianyou tensing as he locked his gaze on to something in the distance.

He followed suit and was equally alarmed by what he saw.

There was a loud commotion at the center of the hall.

Chapter 183: The Son’s Affirmation of His Father

He gave a forlorn cry. He was about to protest when he saw Yun Tianyou tensing as he locked his gaze on to something in the distance.

He followed suit and was equally alarmed by what he saw.

There was a loud commotion at the center of the hall.

In the crowd, Mu Yazhe could be seen holding Little Yichen as he walked toward the seat of honor.

The man was straight-backed and lean. He had a handsome, chiseled face, a pair of penetrating eyes, which was currently scanning the hall, and a high nose bridge. These attributes, coupled with his aloofness and coldness, which would only disappear when he looked at his son, accentuated his nobility.

With soft hair, beautiful suit, and haughty look, Little Yichen was a small aristocrat in his father's arms.

The father and son were indeed cast in the same mold with their similar look and expression.

Camera flashes fired rapidly the moment the duo appeared at the venue, causing the hall to become as bright as daylight.

Mu Yazhe hardly appeared in the news except in high-end financial publications. Little Yichen was even more seldom seen. Not one of his pictures had made it to any media outlets before.

The Mu family, or more appropriately, the Mu Group, held great influence not just in the capital but also across Asia.

This family had always been secretive, and the reason why this gala was so different from those held in the past was that Mu Yazhe, as Mu Group's heir, would officially be appearing before the media for the first time.

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Mu Wanrou, who was also dressed for the occasion, proudly walked beside him and clung on to his arm in a silent declaration of power.

As the future mistress of the Mu Group, she was hated and envied by many socialites and elites. Once she married into the Mu family, she would be entitled to a lifetime of fame and fortune.

The nearby Lu Jingtian was loathingly watching the scene. She was green with envy and clenched her fists in sheer frustration.

This scene also stung Yun Tianyou.

He flicked a disdainful look at the threesome, especially at the impressive man in the middle.

This was his daddy!

Mu Yazhe...

His tensed face relaxed a little. From a superficial perspective, he was happy with how his father looked.

A child would always hold their father in high regard. In a son's eyes, his father would be steady and strong – irreplaceable by any man.

Putting aside all the complex emotions he felt toward his father, Mu Yazhe's kingly presence and charisma had affirmed the image of the imaginary father in his heart.

The little lad sneered evilly. "He's not bad!"

"Er? What do you mean?" his agent asked in surprise.

He held his head proudly before replying, "A man who has me as his offspring is definitely made of good stuff."

His tyranny perfectly resembled his father's regal haughtiness.

"Still... Is that child really my brother?" he pondered as he stroked his chin.

"Agent Li, do you think that kiddo looks like me?" he asked resentfully as he eyed the cold and proud boy sitting on his father's lap.

"That kiddo? Director Yun, you are a kiddo, too."

Li Hanlin solemnly studied the two for a while and, with beads of sweat littering his forehead once more, answered, "... You two look alike."

It's, in fact, very alike!

They were twins in the first place; their eyes were especially identical.

The only difference was their aura.

Chapter 184: A Relationship That Does Not Exist

They were twins in the first place; their eyes were especially identical.

The only difference was their aura.

Little Yichen, although childlike, tended to look serious and haughty, which fitted his identity as a rich man's son. He was detached and not easy to get close.

Li Hanlin was muttering to himself at this juncture, "He lacks maternal love, after all."

Yun Tianyou asked with a raised brow in return, "Does that mean that I lack paternal love?"

"Even without your father, Director Yun has managed to grow strong and steady."

Agent Li had other thoughts in his mind, though. It isn't actually strong and steady but abnormal growth, instead – a genetic anomaly to be precise. He has super brain and is already so scheming at this tender age...

Yun Tianyou frowned and looked concerned. "I'm just worried that, because he's been deprived of motherly love at such a young age, he'll develop psychological abnormality."

"Not to worry, Director Yun—cough, cough..."

No one can be as psychologically abnormal as you, Director Yun...

You have genetic anomaly! Young Master Mu should be the normal one!

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“Agent Li, what are you thinking about?” Yun Tianyou turned around and gave him a look.

He might only be six years old, but his observation skill was exceptionally sharp and alert; he could tell what the other party was thinking of with just a glance.

Li Hanlin stammered, “It – It’s nothing important. I’m just thinking that Director Yun really cares for his brother!”

“I care for him?”

Yun Tianyou raised his brow in half-jest as he forlornly shook his head. “Don’t be mistaken, Agent Li. I don’t feel much for this father and brother of mine.”

The listener was stunned momentarily.

“Why do I want to acknowledge them?”

His voice trembled slightly, and he gripped the railings so tightly his knuckles turned white.

This unusual behavior of Yun Tianyou caused him worry.

From what he knew, this little lad had always been calm and collected, and before his mother, he was innocent and childlike, looking after her without complaints.

No matter how challenging an obstacle might be, he was always that warm and kind Youyou. He was his mother's support at her weakest point in life.

However, upon removing all those visages, Yun Tianyou was just a lonely boy standing alone at an obsolete corner. The child's loneliness affected the adult so much he began to ache for him.

“Director Yun... What do you mean by your words?”

The warm and elegant smile had been eradicated from Youyou's face. His face turned wan as he pursed his lips; he seemed to be struggling to keep his pain in check.

“Blood ties are useless stuff. Why should I call a stranger ‘daddy’ and a child ‘brother’ when they haven't done anything for me in these past six years? Why should I care for them?”

Li Hanlin, who could no longer hold off the aching pain, walked up to the boy and held him tightly.

Youyou regained his composure thereafter and quietly went on, “Agent Li, my stupid mommy is really useless, isn't she? She's always being bullied and always giving in. No matter how heavy the grievances she faces, she's always smiling when she's at home. She wants to be the invincible mother before me. Isn't that stupid?”

“Your mommy loves you dearly. She’s willing to give in for your sake.”

“Yes, you’re right... Stupid mommy.”

Youyou’s eyes looked distant and hollow as his thoughts dwelled on his nightmarish days.

From as long as he could remember, he was a child without a father.

Chapter 185: The Little Lad’ s Charisma

From as long as he could remember, he was a child without a father.

He was not bothered at first by the absence of a father figure. His father only existed in his mind. His mother, on the other hand, was very much real and had been by his side, loving and indulging him.

Children were sensitive, so even if the memories were hazy, they could still subconsciously feel their parents’ love for them.

Growing up in a single-parent household, he inadvertently invited gossips. His mother had him when she was still studying, and news of her illegitimate child somehow spread through school like wildfire.

Many took this chance to slander her. The girls in school, who were jealous of her, ganged up on her and petitioned for her dismissal.

His mother was suspended from school for half a year because of this.

After much persuasion by Yun Yecheng, the principal unwillingly agreed to let her stay, but she lost the chance to further her studies.

When Youyou became older, he had cried for a daddy then.

He had seen his classmates with their loving parents in kindergarten and was envious of them for having both their father and mother.

That was when he realized the significance of having a man to hold up a family.

If there was no man in it, a household would be despised!

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Their pair of single mother and illegitimate child was always getting bullied; he could not forget the shame and despise he had to endure when he was younger.

Oftentimes, his mother would sit by his bed and cry her regrets of keeping him by her side while he pretended to be fast asleep.

“If I hadn’t selfishly taken you away back then, you would not be suffering like this and would have a happy life, instead.”

With his eyes shut, he felt droplets of tears falling cold on his face.

“She’s been enduring all the grievances in silence just to protect me. She thought she can fool me, but I know everything!”

He took a deep breath; his eyes revealed pain and resolve that were unusual for his age.

“Mommy is not strong, so I’ll be strong for her! The household doesn’t have a man, so I’ll be one!”

He gazed up at Li Hanlin as he was saying this and saw the latter looking at him wretchedly, deep in tears.

Youyou was taken back. “Agent Li, why are you crying?”

“Director Yun, you had such a terrible experience; I didn’t expect...” he turned teary-eyed again as he replied.

He gave a disdainful look at his agent. “How can a grown-up man cry so much? It’s embarrassing.”

Li Hanlin was dumbfounded.

“Director Yun, I feel sorry for you!”

Youyou coolly replied, “If you really feel sorry, make sure you take the best pictures of my mommy when she comes out later.”

“How...”

Yun Tianyou turned around and looked annoyingly at Little Yichen with his perfect side profile. “It seems that I can’t bear to share my mommy with another child,” he commented resignedly.

His mother was his and his alone. He was unwilling to share her love to anyone, not even to his father or his twin brother. No one!

Inside the dining hall, the camera flashes would not relent.

Little Yichen was blinded by the glaring lights. They hurt his eyes too much.

He reached his little hands to rub his eyes. His father caught his movement and immediately signaled the assistant to restrain the desperate media reporters.

“No more pictures!”

“Daddy...” Little Yichen suddenly rubbed his chest, his brows forming a deep crease. “My chest is a little stuffy.”

Chapter 186: Taking Everyone’s Breath Away

“Daddy...” Yichen suddenly rubbed his chest, his brows forming a deep crease. “My chest is a little stuffy.”

“What’s wrong?” There was a slight distress on Mu Yazhe’s face.

“Why is your chest stuffy again?”

Yichen shook his head in confusion. Acting coy, he pouted and answered, “I don’t know. It’s just stuffy. Really stuffy and aching. It’s awful.”

He caressed his son’s small head. At that moment, there was another commotion at the entrance.

“Oh, god! How beautiful...”

A passionate crowd of media reporters subsequently congested the other end of the red carpet.

Yun Shishi, wearing an elegant and attractive smile, had her arm linked with Gu Xingze’s as they gracefully entered.

The moment they appeared in the spotlight, countless eyes, filled with surprise, jealousy, disdain, and doubt, cast on them from near and far.

People specifically laid their eyes on her eye-catching and glamorous gown and that dazzling ruby necklace on her collarbone.

Yun Shishi, in a luxurious red gown, was as beautiful as a stalk of fresh, tender rose. She was in possession of a delicate and lively face.

When she stood together with Gu Xingze, they were admittedly extremely compatible.

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The man was all along a darling of the fashion industry; he had a tall frame and an attractive face. It did not matter which female star stood beside him; they always paled in comparison and had attention taken away from them.

However, Yun Shishi was different from the others, in that when she stood next to him, not only was she not overshadowed by his presence, she was even more outstanding, and media reporters whispered to one another in their excitement.

“I – I... I... I recognize her! Isn't she the one who came with Gu Xingze?”

“Yes, yes! She's Yun Shishi! I got a hold of her name a while ago. I heard that she's a really talented rookie and that her acting is superb!”

“I heard that she’s the chosen female lead of Director Lin! You guys know about his eye for things. Tsk, tsk. He’s extremely stringent!”

“Since she managed to get Director Lin’s approval, she should not be underestimated!”

Astonishment and praise came crashing toward them like raging waves.

Yun Shishi felt a little overwhelmed, but her face maintained its charming smile. She coordinated with the media reporters’ requests to stop and stay and to link hands with Gu Xingze as they received a shower of flashes.

Mu Wanrou immediately caught sight of that vibrant red hue on her collarbone. Her eyes widened in shock. She clenched her fists tightly in disbelief and then gradually shifted her doubtful gaze onto Mu Yazhe.

She would not mistake that ruby necklace; that was his personal keepsake, and it was the only precious thing his mother had left behind for him.

When she saw that necklace in the past, it was kept securely in a dainty and delicate crystal case which he carried around with him, never once leaving his side.

She was not allowed to touch it.

Let alone others.

That necklace was priceless; its value could hardly be gauged.

And yet he had actually casually... given it to Yun Shishi?

Fake! That necklace was definitely fake – a good quality counterfeit! Otherwise... How was it possible?

Her complexion gradually lost its color. If the situation permitted it, she wanted to rush to her in large strides and shatter her bones into ashes!

The gala had yet to commence, but the atmosphere had reached its zenith because of Gu Xingze and Yun Shishi.

Glances were exchanged in the luxurious hall.

Yun Shishi did not even notice the hatred radiating from Mu Wanrou's eyes.

With her in the limelight tonight, those crazy camera flashes constantly shone on her, and it was uncertain how many rolls of films were being used up to capture her beauty.

Chapter 187: The Possession He Regarded as His Life

It was uncertain how many rolls of films were being used up to capture her beauty.

Even Li Hanlin, who was observing the scene from the second floor, was stunned.

Yun Tianyou stepped on his feet hard and asked sternly, “Mr. Li, did you forget what I have tasked you to do?”

“No!”

Li Hanlin gave an immediate reaction, but perhaps he was overly shaken, so he fumbled in agitation and nearly smashed the pricey SLR on the ground. He was so shocked he broke into cold sweat.

“Stay calm.” Youyou stared at him exasperatedly, as if he were mocking him for his inexperience in life.

“Boss, oh, god, Madam Yun is so beautiful – so beautiful that time almost stopped!”

He was stunned to the core by her beauty and hurriedly held up the camera. He still did not forget to exclaim, “The Creator is such a mystical being! So beautiful! So beautiful...”

“Of course, my mommy is precisely a fairy that has descended on Earth!” With a knowing smile, Yun Tianyou gazed at his mother lovingly. His eyes were filled with gentleness and warmth, nearly to the point of spoiling her rotten.

“Jingtian, isn’t that... Yun Shishi?! God... Her gown is so beautiful!”

At the VIP seats, Tang Yu exclaimed while looking over at Yun Shishi. She pushed away Lu Jingtian, who was toasting to others, in her disbelief.

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The latter turned around in frustration and snapped, “What are you making a fuss of? Haven’t you seen enough of this?! Seriously.”

“Do you still remember her? She’s the rookie that Director Lin has been pushing recently. The necklace around her neck is so pretty. It’s actually a pigeon’s blood ruby!”

Lu Jingtian was startled and then followed the direction Tang Yu was looking. She could not help but be shocked as well.

The necklace looked very familiar, as if she had seen it somewhere before, and she felt deeply about it.

Her mind had a sudden recollection.

“Ah... that! Isn’t that—” A piece of memory flashed across her eyes, and, thereafter, a flame of jealousy was lit within her.

This necklace was an orphan work – the only piece in the world. Thus, before this, she had only ever seen it in the hands of Mu Yazhe.

She heard that the necklace was very meaningful to him and he regarded it as his life.

In the past, she had taken a great liking to this necklace and pleaded him to part ways with it by giving it to her, but she accidentally angered him, instead.

At present, she did not dare show much interest in the necklace.

Rumors had it that The Tear of Roses was the last orphan work of top Italian jewelry designer Jeanne Tumosa last century.

After its creation, many jewelry designers created numerous The-Tear-of-Roses-inspired exquisite diamond necklaces. Despite

this, pigeon's blood rubies were rare in the world, and The Tear of Roses could be said to be the 'Queen of Gems' by the end of the last century.

Why was it on her?

There was increased suspicion in Lu Jingtian's eyes but hidden beneath them was more of pure jealousy.

She was about to hug all the limelight at this gala.

However, this Yun Shishi took away her role and even her spotlight.

Lu Jingtian laid her eyes on Gu Xingze and thought that this was even more unimaginable.

She was actually his female partner?

She had invited him to be her male partner for tonight, but she was mercilessly rejected, saying that he already had a partner.

She had been very disappointed, but she consoled herself with the thought that his partner must be a world-famous female actress.

... In the end, it was Yun Shishi?

A rookie who had yet to debut?

What was this?!

Her heart could hardly settle down.

As Yun Shishi was about to walk past her, she sneakily stuck out her foot under her gown...

Chapter 188: Stepping on you!

As Yun Shishi was about to walk past her, she sneakily stuck out her foot under her gown...

Unbeknown to her, the lady in red, perhaps due to her eyes' evil glint while plotting, was already on guard against her.

Once bitten, twice shy. Yun Shishi saw how Yang Mi had made a fool of Yun Na, so she was doubly observant of where she put her foot.

Gu Xingze betted his reputation to pave an entry for her on this important occasion, so she treasured this chance very much and was adamant to be at her very best, whether in manner or expression.

Thus, Lu Jingtian's dirty look alerted her to watch her feet, and indeed, she discovered her ploy.

However, she pretended not to notice anything fishy as she glided past her with Gu Xingze.

On her feet were seven-inch heels; she eyed the right moment, and then she steadily lifted a foot and expertly brought a thin heel crashing down on top of the schemer's foot.

“Ahhh!” Lu Jingtian did not see her enemy flip the table on her, so her foot was summarily maimed. She shrieked from the pain coursing through her, and she was swiftly covered with beads of cold perspiration.

Yun Shishi's stilettoes were well-formed with their thin, long heels, while Lu Jingtian's were a pair of open-toed fish mouth heels, which went well with her outfit tonight.

Moreover, she deliberately aimed for her exposed toe, so it was hardly surprising for the recipient of her vicious attack to get a cracked toenail.

Lu Jingtian dropped on the floor from the sheer agony radiating from her broken toe.

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She had opted for a short gown, and for no apparent reason, did not wear an underwear, so as she fell backward in full exposé, the media did not waste time in snapping photos of her disgraceful look before the guests.

Without caring for her public image, she howled ostentatiously and loudly. Perspiration drenched her back as she became short of breath; tears flowed freely on her cheeks.

“Yun Shishi!”

Following that loud scream, Tang Yu jumped up and pointed an accusing finger at her. “Did you do this on purpose?!”

Yun Shishi was equally startled by this ‘accident’. She stood motionless, covering her lips in confusion and helplessness.

A big commotion ensued as a result.

Gu Xingze protectively pulled Yun Shishi to his back as he warningly glared at Tang Yu, asking, “What do you mean?”

His stare was unusually caustic; in an instant, the atmosphere became charged with tension.

Tang Yu faltered at his coldness. She toned down her harsh words but did not stop her complaint. “This newbie is downright disrespectful when she stepped on Miss Lu’s foot!”

Miss Lu was Lu Jingtian’s honorific in Huanyu Entertainment. Only first-rate stars like Yang Mi and Han Yuyan could directly address her by her name.

Tang Yu was considered as a third-rate actress, so she could only call her Miss Lu.

Gu Xingze was unfazed. “Did Shishi really step on Jingtian’s foot? Did you see it for yourself?”

Tang Yu admitted quietly, “No...”

Meanwhile, Yang Mi and Han Yuyan, who were standing at a far corner, did not show any intention of intervening.

They did not want to be entangled in such murky situations with Director Mu and Young Mistress Mu present.

“Yes... She’s the one who stepped on my foot!” Lu Jingtian appeared wretched as she said, “She’s so vicious. Brother Xingze, I think I have a broken toe...”

Chapter 189: Seniority Mix-up

“Yes... She’s the one who stepped on my foot!” Lu Jingtian appeared wretched as she said, “She’s so vicious. Brother Xingze, I think I have a broken toe...”

“I – I didn’t...” Yun Shishi frantically tried to explain, appearing flustered and helpless.

Inwardly, knowing how much force she had used in her attack earlier, she was sure she had broken Lu Jingtian’s toe.

She might be meek and giving in the past, but that was only for the sake of Youyou. She was no weakling and did not intend to welcome any bullies.

She knew subconsciously that Lu Jingtian was not one to be trifled with, but the latter was the one who had tried to do some funny business to her first. She was only returning her due justice and nothing more.

What of her stepping on someone else’s toe? She was not the first one to do so tonight.

Gu Xingze frowned. While he was not close to Lu Jingtian, he knew of the latter’s reputation as a spoiled and pampered princess. What she said could largely not be trusted.

Hence, he did not believe her and merely dismissed her claim. “I’ll get someone to send you to the medical room!”

“Brother Xingze, why are you so protective of her?! This b*tch did it on purpose!”

Mu Yazhe, meanwhile, was staring at Yun Shishi with furrowed brows.

He had been unhappy since her arrival.

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He reckoned she would know her place at this point, yet she still appeared in public with Gu Xingze.

Concurrently, Little Yichen, who was standing by his side, was wearing the same expression. He had a vantage point of where Lu Jingtian had fallen.

Since Yun Shishi's arrival, he had focused all his attention on her.

Just like his father, he was unhappy that the pretty sister was by another man's side.

However, what followed next stumped this young boy.

That Lu Jingtian actually stuck out her foot to trip the pretty sister. He saw and could not stop it in time.

He did not expect the event to unfold like this...

The commotion downstairs was clearly seen from the second floor.

Yun Tianyou only heard Lu Jingtian's hollering and unreasonable accusation at his mother. His mother was at a disadvantage, and he was truly worried and angry.

“How dare that woman bully my mommy?! Agent Li, who is she?!”

Li Hanlin could only stammer, “I – I don’t know.”

“... Haven’t you done your homework before coming here?”

“None of the stars whom I like belongs to Huanyu Entertainment.”

He explained in a sorry tone. Looking rueful, he continued, “Director Yun, I’ll make sure to do a thorough investigation after this gala.”

Yun Tianyou leaned on the banister and took another long look before he decided anxiously. “No, this won’t do; I’m going down.”

He quickly restrained the boy by scooping him into his arms.

“Director Yun, please stay calm; you can’t go down there! Your identity... can’t be exposed yet.”

“No—”

“Pretty sister didn’t step on you!”

Just as he was fidgeting over his mother, a young and naïve voice was heard from below.

Dark-faced, he turned toward that voice and saw Little Yichen looking unhappily at Lu Jingtian. “Pretty sister was doing fine, but you just had to put your foot out to trip her! It’s your fault!”

Yun Tianyou looked more irked when he heard this.

Pretty sister?

That boy actually called his biological mother... 'pretty sister'?

That really threw him off. His lips uncontrollably twitched on his usually calm face.

Then... Going by this logic, what should he address me?

That boy actually called his biological mother... 'pretty sister'?

That really threw him off. His lips uncontrollably twitched on his usually calm face.

Then... Going by this logic, what should he address me?

A mental image of Little Yichen calling him 'uncle' in his naïve and tender voice appeared before him...

Yun Tianyou was visibly shaken by this imagery.

He really despised this stupid brother of his.

However, he despised their father, Mu Yazhe, even more...

He could not understand; why did his brother only have subpar level of intelligence despite sharing the same genes?

From a certain perspective, Yun Tianyou could consider himself as their household's pillar, holding up the intelligence quotient among them four.

He paused and corrected himself harshly — What family of four am I thinking of? I am not about to acknowledge this father and brother!

In his family, there was only his mommy and him.

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The rest could not be counted!

Lu Jingtian was unprepared for Little Yichen's comment; her face turned dark as she shamefacedly gave a dry laugh. Inwardly, she was cursing the child for speaking out of nowhere.

She would have given it to him if he were someone else's kid.

Unfortunately, this was Young Master Mu's son, Mu Yichen. Standing behind the boy was the love of her life, Mu Yazhe, so she had to treat this child gently no matter what.

The Mu family was known for doting on him. She might need to get along with him when she married into the Mu family.

She had to get him to be on her side, or he might become the stumbling block to her plans of marrying into the Mu family.

Hence, she smilingly told him as she bore the pain on her foot, "Little Yichen, baby boy, you must've been mistaken! I won't do such a despicable thing!"

He disdainfully looked at her and continued in his tender voice, "Daddy has taught me to be a gentleman since young; I have to be responsible for my action. I didn't lie; you did put out your foot to trip the pretty sister!"

Yun Tianyou almost fell over after hearing his brother's juvenile accusations. He had assumed that his twin would have the same elite genes as him, yet his speech was only at the level of kindergarten despite his smart and aloof look.

He covered his face in silence.

As for Li Hanlin, who was standing beside him, was eagerly nodding his head. That's the behavior a six-year-old should have! Director Yun, your IQ and EQ are really too abnormal!

Little Yichen's words had sparked a debate among the guests.

“A child doesn't lie. Plus, he's from the important Mu family. He must have a strict upbringing. As Young Master Mu, he can't lie.”

“That's right. I also feel that Lu Jingtian is aiming at Yun Shishi. Women are prone to jealousy. Yun Shishi has hoarded the limelight tonight, and many are unhappy with that. I'm sure there are some who want to put her in an awkward position.”

“There's always pressure on a newbie, especially for someone like her who has no track record. It's natural for her to be ostracized...”

“I feel so sorry for her...”

...

Lu Jingtian was close to tears again; this time, prompted by anger, she said, “I did not!”

“Oh, really? There's a video surveillance over there.” Little Yichen pointed to the video surveillance at the side and continued, “I think it is facing your direction. We can replay the scene and find out the truth, then!”

Chapter 191: His aloofness is only superficial?

“Oh, really? There’s a video surveillance over there.” Little Yichen pointed to the video surveillance at the side and continued, “I think it is facing your direction. We can replay the scene and find out the truth, then!”

The little lad then pointed a finger to Lu Jingtian and, acting mysterious, continued, “The truth will prevail.”

He looked smug after saying this. Apparently, he was feeling pleased with himself for coming up with such a cool statement.

Everyone went silent.

Yun Shishi was flabbergasted and tickled at the same time. She was not prepared for Little Yichen’s cheeky remark.

Likewise, Mu Yazhe was unable to keep his usual calmness; his stern face had a rarely seen slight smile in it.

On the second floor, Yun Tianyou was fossilized by what he had just heard.

... Is my brother trying to be funny?

Gu Xingze sniffled and then chuckled uncontrollably; he was amused by Little Yichen’s interesting look.

“Ha ha ha!”

The guests were also tickled by this cute child’s antics.

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His biological mother, who was in the crowd, looked at him with complex emotions. She wanted to laugh but could not.

Was her child trying to shield her earlier?

She did not expect it at all.

The mother-son pair had not seen each other since he was born. Despite that, there seemed to be fetters that bound them both. The saying, 'Blood is thicker than water,' was true, indeed; their bond could not be easily erased.

Is this a connection?

What did he address me earlier?

Pretty sister?

She could not stifle a chuckle this time.

When she first met this child, he looked aloof and detached. He gave her the same impression as his father – someone whom no one could draw near – yet this child just showed her an adorable side tonight.

Youyou and this child were twins, but their temperaments were unlike.

Youyou was gentle, naïve, idealistic, and warm. Sometimes, he would be surprisingly mature and adult-like, which made him very dependable.

Little Yichen seemed to take after his father. He held a cool and deep demeanor, yet he could exude such a rare display of loveliness, too.

He should be a smart boy, right?

One of her biggest regrets was missing out on the first six years of her other child's life.

The tense atmosphere had somewhat relaxed.

A chuckling Gu Xingze signaled the assistant by his side with a look. The assistant took the hint and approached Lu Jingtian with the intention of bringing her to the medical room.

She was uncooperative at first but eventually had to succumb to the assistant's skillful persuasion.

“Miss Lu, I believe you don't want to bring unwanted attention to yourself now. That surveillance camera is facing your direction, and the earlier event should've been recorded by it clearly. Unfortunately, I've caught sight of what you did, too. Xingze is creating a diversion for you now, so I highly recommend that you take this chance to get out of this situation.”

The assistant paused and then asked, “Do you really want to embarrass yourself in front of the media?”

“I...” Lu Jingtian was speechless for a while before she tried one last ditch, “I don't like the attention she's receiving from everyone. Why is the world revolving around her?”

“Miss Yun Shishi is Xingze’s partner in this gala. He holds her in high esteem, but you are kicking up a fuss over her. Are you trying to create trouble for him?”

“I’ve nothing against Brother Xingze!”

“Xingze is creating a chance for you to back off now, for the sake of your father as well. Please don’t do this again next time.”

“Sorry!” she relented and apologized, allowing the assistant to help her to the medical room.

This finally put an end to the drama.

The gala, thus, peacefully started.

Chapter 192: Self-inflicted punishment deserves death.

As Jin Yu, who was Gu Xingze’s assistant helped Lu Jingtian into the medical room, she saw a pool of blood on the bed next to the door.

There was an unconscious lady lying in the bed inside the room.

She was taken aback by the horrifying scene. “Gosh, what happened to this woman?”

While she could not recognize the poor, disfigured woman lying in the bed, Lu Jingtian knew very well who the person was. It was her doing that Yun Na ended up in this sorry state, after all.

The latter's face looked hideous with the bloody wounds covering it. Despite the efforts to stop the bleeding, the wound continued to ooze traces of blood.

This medical facility was ill-equipped and could only provide basic treatment. She would need extensive medical treatment at a hospital.

She was, thus, irrevocably disfigured.

For a woman, such a fate would mean the end of a plausible career in the entertainment industry.

This was a dinner that destroyed her bright future.

Lu Jingtian, in a fit of anger, was vicious in her earlier attacks. She was a little alarmed and a little regretful when she saw Yun Na again in the medical room. Only now did she realize how fiendish she had been.

Seeing the poor woman when she opened the door to the medical room, she felt somewhat guilty.

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She did not want to hurt anyone, but this woman was bitchy at the time and provoked her into losing her sensibility. By the time she regained her composure, Yun Na's face had already been disfigured.

The eyebrow shaving knife might be small, but it was extremely sharp. The cuts on the face were not deep, but they were bleeding profusely. The bloody cuts densely crisscrossed one another, making the face look horrifying.

She had already called her father who would be sending someone to settle this matter soon.

To prevent this matter from getting out to the public, her family was prepared to cover up with a few millions in compensation. This should satisfy the victim and their family and suppress any further issues from cropping up.

If Yun Na did not give up, she would just make use of a scapegoat, and that should settle the matter as well.

It was easy and simple to settle someone without power and status.

She turned toward Jin Yu and said, “Can I trouble you to get me an ambulance? This place is repulsive; I can’t stay here long.”

“Alright.” The assistant did not suspect anything fishy with the request and stepped out of the room to call for an ambulance. Lu Jingtian’s request suited her intention, too. She was pretty sure that the former had a broken toe, which would need medical attention.

After all, her toe was stepped on with a seven-inch sharp heel.

When Lu Jingtian saw that no one else was in the room anymore, she mustered her courage to walk up to where Yun Na was motionlessly lying. She gingerly shook the woman in the bed with the tip of her toe and frowned worriedly when there was no response. She remembered she had hit a few vital spots when she was teaching this woman a lesson. Could it be that she had died from her ferocious attack?

She put out a finger to check for breath and sighed in relief when she detected short pulsating breaths from the nostrils.

“B*tch, don’t blame me for being vicious. You brought this on yourself!”

She muttered and moved to pull back her finger when a bloody hand suddenly grabbed her wrist in a vice-like grip!

Lu Jingtian gasped with fear in her eyes.

The woman in the bed abruptly opened her blood-shot eyes. She looked like a demon from hell, with her hideous face and large beady eyes, as she faced her attacker. She was terrifying!

“I’m going to kill... kill you! I’ll kill you!”

Yun Na seemed to have been jolted out of a nightmare as she held tightly onto Lu Jingtian’s wrist and cursed through her gnashed teeth, “I – I won’t let you off even when I’m a ghost! Arghhhh!”

“Let go! Help! It’s a ghost...”

“Let go! Help! It’s a ghost...”

Lu Jingtian panically raised her hand and slapped Yun Na’s face to pry herself loose. As she frantically limped and pulled herself toward the exit, she bumped head-on into Jin Yu, who had returned after calling for an ambulance.

The latter saw her frightened look and asked in bewilderment, “What happened?”

“Quickly send me to the hospital; hurry!”

Jin Yu found her behavior strange but did not probe further.

Some things were better left unknown.

...

The castle-like retro dining hall, with its exquisite frescoes and hollow dome between carved beams, gave one the illusion of being in a lavish palace.

Once the guests of honor finished giving their opening speeches, it was time for the dance.

The soothing classical music pervaded the air of the spacious hall.

After an eventful start, Han Yuyan and Yang Mi learned to behave themselves.

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They were experienced actresses and knew the importance of doing the right thing at the right time, so they did not try to find faults with Yun Shishi again.

Lin Fengtian was late, though once he arrived, he was quickly surrounded by actresses with their curtsies and wine, hoping to get him to notice them.

He had to expend much effort into returning their favor, which ended up spoiling his good mood.

However, when he saw Gu Xingze gracefully approaching him with Yun Shishi, he was elated and could not stop praising, “Shishi, oh, god. You look stunning tonight!”

The two producers and assistant director that were standing behind him also lavished her with praises.

“Thank you for your thoughtfulness, Director Lin! Producer Li, Director Meng, how are you?” she reciprocated with a smile and calmly asked.

“Miss Yun, you still remember our names!” Producer Li was evidently surprised and pleased.

“You were present with Director Meng during the audition, and it is common courtesy to remember the name of the judges.”

Director Meng smilingly said, “Director Lin, you have good taste! This newcomer is humble and polite. With her beauty and talents, she’ll have a bright future ahead of her!”

“Of course; when have I ever disappointed you with my choices?” he asked back, looking smug.

Gu Xingze was smiling, too. “Shishi is a polite girl. This is what I like about her as well.”

This is what I like about her, too.

Her cheeks flushed red upon hearing that for no apparent reason.

“That’s right! This is praiseworthy, indeed. There are some newcomers who are proud and rude just because they have a good background.” Director Meng changed the subject suddenly. “I have to warn you, Miss Yun, though; you must be mentally prepared for Director Lin. He can be very critical and demanding at times. Before Han Yuyan gained fame, when she debuted in his first film, he made

her cry with his scolding. He is known as the Demon Director in this industry, and many starlets have been badly criticized by him in the past.”

Gu Xingze also shook his head, admitting ruefully, “Yes, I’ve been scolded by him before, too.”

“Oh?” She was really surprised to hear that. “Xingze, your acting is consistently good.”

He could only smile wryly at that.

Director Meng interjected with a chuckle. “That was when Xingze was still relatively new in the show business. He missed a cue during filming, and he got it from Director Lin after that.”

Lin Fengtian snorted. “He should be thankful that he met me; that’s why he is so popular now.”

“Director Lin is demanding because he respects his career. It is necessary to be demanding to your actors in order to produce a good movie,” she commented.

Chapter 194: The Competition Inside the Dance Pool

“Director Lin is demanding because he respects his career. It is necessary to be demanding to your actors in order to produce a good movie,” she commented.

The rest shared her opinion. Their look at one another indicated their approval of this newcomer; she was good.

After exchanging pleasantries, Gu Xingze pulled Yun Shishi to one side and gently whispered to her ear, “Shishi, let’s go dance.”

“Sure, but I can’t dance. I’m going to be clumsy.” She was a little concerned.

He blinked mysteriously at her. “Why don’t you trust your teacher here to teach you well?”

“...”

Without waiting for her reply, he took her hand and brought her to the center of the dance pool, and after giving her some basic instructions on posture and tempo, he held her waist and gently lifted one hand in readiness to start.

She followed his guidance and did the same as she put one hand on his shoulder.

They were the center of attention inside the dance hall.

The man was handsome and the lady was glamorous. Together, they were picture-perfect.

This beautiful couple made the lavish surroundings dim in comparison.

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Sensing the concentrated attention on them, she instinctively retracted in fear.

“Xingze—”

“Don’t worry, and just follow my tempo.”

...

At the VIP seat, Mu Yazhe, who was holding a wine glass, gazed coolly at the couple in the dance hall. His eyes gradually dimmed as his knuckles on the wine glass turned white.

Little Yichen, who was sitting beside him, was also staring at the same pair of dancers. He seemed to dislike the man somehow.

He annoyingly crossed his arms, unhappiness was written all over his little, handsome face.

“Zhe, shall we dance?” Mu Wanrou walked over to Mu Yazhe and asked, her hand resting lightly on his shoulder.

“... Er,” he agreed after a quick thought.

He took her hand and led her to the dance floor. The guests’ attention was diverted to the new couple once they joined in the dancing, too.

Compared to Yun Shishi’s clumsiness with her simple basic dance steps, the Mus were elegant.

As an upper-class aristocrat, manners and dance etiquette were part and parcel of their early childhood education.

Mu Yazhe, in his well-tailored and smart-looking suit, looked tall and elegant as he gracefully moved with the melodious music. His grace swooned many in the audience.

“Oh, god, Director Mu is so cool! He’s the elite of the elites, indeed. He dances so well!”

“He has the face of a Greek god; how can anyone be so perfect? Ohhh... I’m so envious of the woman beside him. I want to dance with him, too!”

“Ha! Him dancing with you? Just who are you? Dream on!”

Yun Shishi could not help but be distracted when he appeared. She threw him a sidelong glance, her expression turning hazy and flighty.

While she was looking at him, he was not doing the same.

His side profile looked handsome and proud – almost untouchable.

Without realizing it, she stepped on Gu Xingze’s shoe tip.

“Oops!” she cried out. Her face turned red from embarrassment as she apologetically looked at him and said, “Sorry!”

“It’s painful, Shishi.” He raised his brow forlornly. “Where are you looking? You must concentrate when you dance, or you’ll miss your footing.”

She nodded absent-mindedly, no longer wanting to continue dancing. Her heart skipped a beat and missed its rhythm when she saw Mu Yazhe.

Her heart and mind had been robbed by him since he arrived on the dance floor.

Chapter 195: Mu Wanrou’s Embarrassment

It felt as if her soul was taken away entirely by that man.

Staring blankly into space, she accidentally committed the same mistake, and history repeated itself.

Yun Shishi hung her head low to look at Gu Xingze's handmade leather shoes, which she had trampled on twice, and the guilt in her eyes seemed to be on the brink of flowing out.

“Shishi, you zoned out again.” Gu Xingze creased his brows and eased off the pace.

“I – I didn't...”

Lacking the strength to explain herself, she also felt very frustrated.

Why was she suddenly out of sorts?

The scene of Mu Yazhe and Mu Wanrou dancing together was like a thorn piercing into her heart; it was painful and numbing.

She looked up. She was still puzzling over on how she should explain herself, when she spotted Mu Yazhe walking toward her while holding Mu Wanrou's hand from her peripheral view.

Before she could express her shock, she saw him gently and conveniently push Mu Wanrou away by her waist, naturally extend his hand to hold hers, and then pull her into his embrace.

Mu Wanrou was unable to react in time and was pushed into Gu Xingze's side. When she finally returned to her senses, Mu Yazhe was already with Yun Shishi at the center of the dance floor.

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She was in a fit of rage, but it would be unbecoming to show her temper here. After all, many important guests were present. She maintained her smile, albeit with difficulty, and turned to face Gu Xingze with her hand out.

Gu Xingze, however, was not looking at her. His numb eyes were on Mu Yazhe and Yun Shishi, as his facial expression gradually turned frigid.

“Xingze...”

Mu Wanrou could not help but feel a little awkward.

At least, they should continue to dance!

Otherwise, it would be so embarrassing to be abandoned by their partner at the dance floor!

This was even more so when she was the center of attention until a while ago. If she were to leave with her tail between her legs after being abandoned, she would definitely become a laughing stock for everyone.

Feeling somewhat panicky, she urged, “Xingze!”

He turned his cold face over to Mu Wanrou’s outstretched hand, which had stiffened in mid-air, and looked into her eyes, which were constantly giving him signals. He then said expressionlessly, “Pardon me for being unable to keep you company.”

After that, he left the dance floor and Mu Wanrou awkwardly stood in the same spot, as she stewed over leaving or not leaving. He did not look back even once.

“This... ” What was the meaning of this ?!

Was he purposely making her life difficult ?!

She seemed to hear all the guests’ merciless mockeries.

“She’s been abandoned...”

“So much for being the young mistress of the Mu family!”

“Yun Shishi is prettier than her. Any man will want to partner with a beau like her on the dance floor! Poor her. So much for being the fiancée of Mr. Mu!”

“She’s just a fiancée; they’re not officially married yet. It’s just a title. She can be abandoned anytime...”

Those bitter and offensive whispers and ruthless mockeries deeply pierced her heart.

She glared at Yun Shishi’s back resentfully.

YUN SHISHI!

At that moment, everyone on the dance floor had stopped dancing and encircled it in jealousy or surprise. They were mesmerized by the beautiful couple dancing gracefully at the center.

This beautiful and eye-catching scene truly made heaven and earth drown in color.

Mu Yazhe's dance form was very graceful, and who knew how he had managed to make Yun Shishi, who was previously clumsily swaying with Gu Xingze, grasp dancing completely?

Regardless of dance steps or melody, they were in perfect rhythm.

Mu Wanrou held her fists tightly in hatred. She wanted to hack Yun Shishi into pieces so badly.

Chapter 196: Sinful Debt

Mu Wanrou held her fists tightly in hatred. She wanted to hack Yun Shishi into pieces so badly.

Aaron noticed her awkwardly standing alone on the dance floor and went to her right away. Just as he reached her side, he easily caught a whiff of her fragrant smell and was momentarily swayed by it.

Suddenly, that scene appeared in his mind.

In the assistant's office at Disheng Financial Group's headquarters, he thoroughly took control of her.

The exhilaration he felt as their body fluids mixed together – that lovely and corrosive sensation – was unforgettable.

His feelings for her all these years could only be expressed in his mind, but, on that day, all his dreams suddenly came true.

The tension and thrill of their clandestine love affair triggered his hormones to the maximum; finally, he no longer had to restrain himself.

It was just a pity that, following their carnal tryst, her treatment of him turned lukewarm, and in fact, she completely ignored him.

Using every trick in the book, he tried getting close to her, but she always found an excuse to avoid him. What happened that day seemed to be a one-time thing.

This was not the first time he had scoffed at himself; was she disregarding him because he no longer had any value?

“Madam... if you don’t mind, may I have this dance?”

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He was just being nice and wanted to ease that extreme awkwardness she felt. Abandoned by Mu Yazhe on the dance floor and ignored by Gu Xingze, in her situation, she would definitely feel very awkward.

“What dance?! I’m not dancing!”

She turned to leave the dance floor in annoyance, with him nervously tailing after her.

“Don’t follow me!” she hissed in frustration, chasing him away heartlessly.

“Madam...”

She reached a secluded corner and then suddenly spun around to glare at him.

“Go away; don’t disturb me!”

“Wanrou!” He gathered his courage, clutched her wrist when they reached a corner of the long corridor, and held it tightly!

She was a little stunned. That overly intimate address shocked her. Once she returned to her senses, she pivoted to throw him a slap.

SMACK . The sound was loud and clear.

“Why are you calling my name?! Aren’t you afraid of others overhearing you and gossiping about this?!”

He replied with confidence, “I’m not scared!”

“I AM!”

She tried to suppress the frustration in her heart and calmly spoke, “Aaron, you need to be clear of your status. I am still the fiancée of your CEO, and you are my fiancé’s assistant. Please be more respectful!”

Aaron fixed his stare on her with glittering eyes, but he remained silent for the longest time.

“Let go! You – You let go!” Mu Wanrou was flustered, and she reached out to break the contact. She lost her temper. “What exactly do you want?!”

Aaron replied gloomily, “You want to sever ties with me now? Who did you treat me as?”

As if she were struck by lightning, she cried, “That... That incident, forget about it!”

“Forget? It did happen, so how can I act as if I lost my memory? Didn’t you enjoy yourself that day as well? It wasn’t acting, was it? You really wanted me too, right?”

He bombarded her with questions, his bold words making her shudder in fear.

“STOP TALKING!” She wanted so badly to give him another slap until he sobered up.

She might be Mu Yazhe’s fiancée, but she was only his fiancée in name. Putting aside matters in bed, basic intimacies that happened were few and far between.

She was also a woman, and for matters between a male and a female, she of course had demands for them and needed to relieve herself as well.

That day, she had indeed enjoyed herself. For many years, she had not savored that joyful sensation, and it made her body and soul indulge.

However, afterward, she was in deep remorse.

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Chapter 197: The Desperate Struggle of a Trapped Beast

Once Aaron confirmed that all information about Yun Shishi and Yun Tianyou had been destroyed, she snubbed and shunned him, as if that day did not happen.

He asked bitterly, “Have I lost my value? That’s why you abandoned me, or is it because I didn’t show enough sincerity, and that’s why you don’t trust me—”

“Keep quiet!”

Mu Wanrou explained resignedly, “I can’t leave him, so you’d better give up. It’s impossible between us.”

What they had shared was a forbidden affair, and though it had sprouted, she desperately wanted to nip it in the bud.

“Wanrou, I’m not looking for status. I just want to be with you, even if it means keeping it a secret. I’m not afraid!”

“You know very well what Mu Yazhe can do. Do you really dare to betray him for me?” She suddenly had a thought, and her eyes lit up.

She could still make use of this man.

In fact, she could use him several times. Until she totally eradicated Yun Shishi, she would need his help.

Aaron lovingly confessed, “For you, I am willing to go through hell and fire. I’m willing to do it for your sake.”

“Really?” Her eyes gleamed. She had a faint, eerie smile on her face as she coyly asked, “Are you willing to do anything for me?”

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“Er, yes!” He nodded seriously.

“That’s good!” Her tone turned harsh as she continued, “Yun Shishi is the thorn in my flesh. Get rid of her for me; I want to see her ruined!”

His eyes shone with similar animosity, and like a bewitched servant of a demoness, he was willing to do anything for her no matter how dangerous it was, even to the point of falling down the abyss.

“Wanrou, what do I do? What do you want me to do?”

“One senior management wants her on his bed tonight. Bring her to Director Li’s bed. Remember to do a good job; keep it clean!”

He nodded with a firm look in his eyes.

“I want her to be utterly ruined this time!”

She declared with a sneer and then turned to glance up at him flirtatiously. Her back was on the door, which she had opened to reveal a bedroom suite. He walked toward her as she signaled him with her index finger.

She reached out to embrace the man with a cheeky smile and slowly drew him into the suite. She closed the door behind them, knowing that they were alone now.

The woman gave him an inviting smile as she reached up to encircle his shoulders seductively. Standing on her tiptoe, she kissed his frail lips and panted, “Aaron, quickly hold me tight...”

She could not wait to get started. Mu Yazhe had never touched her – not even a finger of hers – that she had even wondered once if he had performance issues.

However, six years ago, that woman bore his children. This was when she finally understood that he did not want her.

Perhaps, he isn't mentally prepared? She tried to console herself with this.

The woman could not let this matter rest, so she vowed to turn his heart toward her again.

This was a smokeless battle; one that was fought between the elites. She had to win this war.

Aaron was visibly aroused under her seduction. He took this to mean that she was still interested in him and had retained some feelings for him. If that were not the case, this would not be happening again!

The two were lost in the world of physical pleasure.

A man in a suit stood outside the door. He held a tape recorder in his hand and only pressed the 'stop' button when he heard a sweet groan coming from behind the door.

He adjusted the spectacle frame on his nose bridge as a contemptuous look crept into his smart-looking face.

“Boss is spot-on, indeed; Aaron has betrayed him!”

He sniggered as he fingered the tape recorder in his hand. “Er... This is a good piece of evidence.”

With that, he turned around and walked away.

Chapter 198: Like a Fragile Hedgehog

The music continued in the dance hall.

Mu Yazhe took a graceful step forward and started dancing to the mellow music, holding Yun Shishi's hand in his. His soulful eyes fixed on her shy and drooping face.

He was bemused. Since he took over the dance, she had not once looked up.

She could not forget what he had done to her earlier, so she was unable to concentrate on the dance, let alone look him in the eyes.

In contrast, he felt relaxed. His calm expression was telling her that everything was in his control.

He was very possessive, especially...

Her face blushed scalding red as she recalled their seductive embroilment earlier. She was really upset and wanted very much to shake off his hand to escape from him.

He appeared in her world without warning, messing her and disrupting her mind, and then he leisurely sat back to watch her be confused and panic.

How bad could this man get?

As her thoughts wandered, her dance steps inevitably went wrong.

He lowered his eyes to her and calmly remarked, “Miss Yun, you are too stiff.”

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She bit her lower lip and told him off, “I don’t know how to dance in the first place; I only know these basic steps! You can laugh at me all you want.”

He raised an elegant brow and smiled faintly. “You are covered with thorns; just like a hedgehog, there’s no soft spot at all.”

“Yes, I’m a hedgehog,” she retorted, “and I’m armed to the teeth to protect myself.”

Doing this would indeed protect her, but it would also hurt those who wanted to love her.

As the man continued to look at her, she slowly let go of her edginess; her eyes, though, continued to regard him with great vigilance – ready to retaliate if he so much as moved the wrong way.

In alert mode, she strongly resembled an injured kitten. Fear and suspicion could be seen in her eyes. Her guarded demeanor monitored all who tried to get close to her.

What a strong yet vulnerable woman. She was full of contradictions.

“Relax and follow the rhythm. Dancing is very simple.”

Yun Tianyou unhappily watched them from the second floor and stomped on Li Hanlin's foot in vexation. The latter picked up the boy and told him ruefully, "Director Yun, stepping on my foot is not going to relieve you of your anger."

"That man is out to chase my mommy! I won't allow that; I'll never allow that!"

He was going to stop that man.

His mother belonged to him and him alone. He would not allow anyone to override and step into their world.

On normal days, Yun Tianyou was always calm and collected, with everything under his control.

He would lose his cool only when it involved his mother.

He might be detached and composed in other people's eyes, but before his mother, he was just a little lad who had yet to grow up. He wished to be her little sweet and homely buddy forever.

"Director Yun, stay calm..."

In the VIP seat, Little Yichen finished his fruit juice in one gulp. He looked depressed as he stared at Yun Shishi in the middle of the dance hall. How he wished he could grow up quickly and be as tall and strong as his father so he could dance with the pretty sister, too!

Just as he was feeling down, he caught sight of Yun Tianyou, who was fussing angrily in Li Hanlin's arms. The sight of his identical brother jolted him out of his seat, his face turning red from shock.

Chapter 199: A Game of Hide and Seek

Fragments of his dreams appeared and drifted through his mind. He seemed to be led by his thoughts.

In his sleep, he saw a little boy of his age. That boy had the same features as him – soft hair and beautiful arching brows – but his pretty face seemed to be a little indifferent.

In his dreams, that boy always stood far from him and looked distant. With his back to him, he silently walked away, looking far ahead.

It felt so real it was almost touchable.

He desperately chased after that boy, but no matter how much he walked or ran, he could never catch up.

His heart beat faster and faster as the boy walked further and further away; he would wake up at this point.

He woke up in a cold perspiration, physically exhausted from the realistic dream.

There were a few times when, in the dreams, his soul would get sucked into the body of that boy as he lay paralyzed in bed.

A woman sat next to the bed, and he could faintly make out her side profile. The image was not clear, but he could see the gentleness in her eyes.

She kept caressing his face, her eyes as soft as water.

One of such dreams was long and tormenting. When he woke up, his limbs felt heavy and his head spun badly.

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He caught a high fever from an unknown origin that even their family physician could not explain properly with the diagnosis.

As Little Yichen emerged from his thoughts, Yun Tianyou's face overlapped with that boy in his dream. He looked unblinkingly at his twin.

“It's you!”

He cried out in surprise.

He was not loud, so his exclamation was easily drowned by the music in the dance hall.

However, Yun Tianyou, as if there were an unseen thread connecting them, somehow heard his voice and turned to look at him. Little Yichen, who was already on his feet, quickly took flight up the stairs leading to him.

Yun Tianyou was momentarily flabbergasted. What is that chap doing? Why is he running over here? Is he coming for me?

“Director Yun, Young Master Mu may be coming for you.”

He might be unable to catch the action, but Li Hanlin, with his height advantage, could easily see that Little Yichen was running up the stairs in pursuit of his brother.

“Let’s go; don’t bother with him.”

He spun around and quickly took off as soon as he said this.

Li Hanlin’s footsteps followed closely behind his.

When Little Yichen saw them hurrying away, he waved for them to stop while panting. “Don’t – Don’t run...”

Why are they running away? I’m not a ghost; are they trying to avoid me?

He stomped his feet in annoyance and continued his chase for his brother.

Youyou was physically fit and strong, so he was startled to see Little Yichen gaining on them when he looked over his shoulder. “Little short legs, you can run, can’t you?”

His agent, who was holding his little hand, wryly questioned, “Why are we running away, Director Yun?”

“I don’t want to see him,” he retorted unhappily, “as I don’t want to acknowledge this stupid brother.”

Li Hanlin could not stop giggling. “Director Yun, I realize that you can be rather cute when you throw tantrums.”

“I’ll dock your pay if you have more things to say.”

Agent Li quickly kept quiet and dared not comment again.

Yun Tianyou grew breathless as he ran. He did not have a good sleep last night, after all. He told his man, “Agent Li, carry me.”

Li Hanlin obediently bent down and scooped Youyou over his head. He sat on the man’s shoulders, held on his two ears, and ordered seriously, “Run faster and shake him off!”

Agent Li, with his height and long legs, took long strides that could easily outrun Little Yichen’s by three times. In a matter of seconds, he managed to shake the boy off their trail.

Little Yichen dolefully stood at a spot with his arms akimbo, panted heavily, and eventually said while stomping his feet, “Sh*t, I lost them!”

Who is that boy exactly?

Can he be my brother?

Chapter 200: Happy Beyond Words

“Boss, I did it according to your instructions.”

At the VIP seat, a man in a suit handed over an exquisite recording pen to Mu Yazhe as he stood respectfully beside him.

He gave this man a sidelong glance, remained silent for a while, and then asked, “Which room?”

“208.”

“Er.” He put the recorder into his breast pocket, his thin lips arching into a smile. “The little fish is hooked now, yet the big fish is quite still.”

He swirled the wine in his glass before commenting lazily, “This big fish has been waiting for many years. Its patience should run out by now; it’s about time for it to surface, right?”

The man nodded. “It’s hard to predict what the folks in the consortium are up to these days. The director board is concerned about your—”

“Director Mu!”

A crisp voice interrupted their conversation.

Mu Yazhe looked up in displeasure and saw Tang Yu walking toward him with a glass of wine in her hand. She wanted to take advantage of her intoxication to get close to him.

“Director Mu, why are you sitting here all by yourself? Isn’t Young Mistress Mu with you?”

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She flashed him her best smile as she spoke and seductively twirled before taking a seat next to his.

A strap of her gown unexpectedly slipped off her shoulder, baring the fair flesh underneath.

The alcohol had boosted her courage, indeed.

She saw him approach Yun Shishi for a dance and reckoned he was not as unattainable as she had previously thought!

If that newbie could be his dance mate, then any woman could be his bed partner.

If I can get in bed with him, I can quickly gain fame, right?

She was rather confident of herself; she had this youthful look and, most importantly, good figure going for her. Several bosses expressed their like for her, but they were not good enough for her.

She was not ambitious, unlike Lu Jingtian who wanted to marry into his powerful family, and only wanted to ride on his coattails for a quick success.

She had been acting for a long time, but her fame was always suppressed by Yang Mi.

The latter had an influential sugar daddy backing her, but what about her? She had been waiting for a man of abundant value to strengthen her position in the entertainment industry.

Right now, she was eyeing Mu Yazhe.

She audaciously sat down next to him. With Mu Wanrou nowhere in sight, she could openly flirt with him. Her every expression and action was seductive and suggestive.

“Director Mu, is no one drinking with you now?”

He watched her with pursed lips and expressionless face.

The henchman at the side wanted to chase her away but was stopped by him. The mild surprise on the bespectacled man's face made her elated.

Does this mean... Is it safe to say that he is interested in me?

She could not wait to crawl on him once she thought of this possibility.

“Director Mu, why don't you say something? If not, I'll drink with you, what do you think?”

Anyone would get goosebumps from her saccharine tone.

He was firm and steady, though. Coyly fingering her hair, he asked, “Do you have any reservation tonight?”

“No! Director Mu, do you mean...”

Her heart was pounding fast from nervousness.

He looked so handsome up-close. She was ecstatic at the thought of this man being interested in her.

He smiled and said, “Accompany me tonight, then.”

She stared at him, flabbergasted; happiness was palpable on her face...

Chapter 201: Incapable of Drinking

Unknowingly, it was already halfway through the gala.

The showbiz reporters had cleared out and headed back to burn the midnight oil preparing for tomorrow's news.

At this moment, the entire venue was stripped off of its glamorous façade, just like removing a mask, to reveal a voluptuous appearance.

In that instant, the curtain was raised for the real gala, and the official event got into the true agenda.

The people who came to participate in this gala included many powerful and influential investors. With the help of some liqueurs, they started going around the venue to look for prey.

By this time, many female artistes, who could not hold their alcohol, were already tipsy. Giving them no chance to refuse, the investors directly took away whoever they chose.

Many rookies were ignorant of how the entertainment industry worked. Gulping down a few glasses of the specially prepared wine, they were soon in alcoholic stupor.

Yang Mi also had a bit too much to drink. She stuck close to Li Jiuxian, and they stayed together, cheek to cheek. She was much more daring in the absence of paparazzi, intimately circling his shoulders and exchanging whispers with him.

Han Yuyan shot a glance at them and secretly used her phone to capture a few pictures.

Yang Mi and Li Jiuxian had a scandal. It was rumored that they got together during filming, but both denied the affair, claiming that it was merely the media's speculation.

However, in reality, the relationship between a man and a woman was not that simple in the world of show business.

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Falling too deep into the act and turning fiction into reality were not uncommon. If Yang Mi were to acknowledge the relationship, this could take a blow to her popularity.

She was not foolish. She was simply using Li Jiuxian's amazing career development to create hype for herself.

At a tranquil VIP seating, Yun Shishi leaned on the sofa, her entire vision somewhat hazy.

She did not take in a lot of alcohol tonight, but her capacity was surprisingly small. One sip, and her face was already red; one glass down, and her vision spun.

Coming down from the dance floor, Lin Fengtian led a few investors to her; he wanted her to give them a toast. Yun Shishi dared not refuse. Knowing how Lin Fengtian was as a person, she trusted him. She only needed to drink a glass of red wine, yet that one glass was enough to make her stumble about.

Lin Fengtian was so shocked his face turned pale upon witnessing this.

He assumed that Yun Shishi could hold her drink for quite a bit. Never did he think that just one glass down would make her this drunk.

He hurriedly helped her up to one side and called for Qin Zhou.

Qin Zhou was in the middle of helping Gu Xingze with his alcohol intake. As the latter chugged down glass after glass of liquor, Lin Fengtian rushed over and told Qin Zhou that Yun Shishi was completely drunk; he rolled his eyes.

“No way! Her alcohol capacity is this poor?”

He was entirely devastated. He sure had a terrible life as a manager. Forget Gu Xingze having poor alcohol capacity, now he also had to save Yun Shishi from her predicament.

He sighed, but he could do nothing about it.

He was quite fond of Yun Shishi. He rushed over, and as expected, she was already disoriented.

“Take her back first!” Gathering his thoughts, Lin Fengtian ordered this in exasperation.

“Alright. Then, I’ll have to trouble Director Lin to help me cope with this.”

Lin Fengtian waved at him in disgust.

Qin Zhou helped Yun Shishi out of the hotel, and a man, appearing to be a concierge, immediately came to them and cordially asked, “Sir, may I help you arrange for a vehicle?”

“Yes, please arrange for one to send this lady home!” he agreed without much pondering.

The concierge took out his walkie-talkie right away and proceeded to arrange a vehicle for her.

The vehicle swiftly arrived; it was a black Santana. Qin Zhou had wanted to help Yun Shishi board the vehicle, but he was stopped by the concierge.

Chapter 202: A Forbidden Affair

The vehicle swiftly arrived; it was a black Santana. Qin Zhou wanted to help Yun Shishi board the vehicle, but he was stopped by the concierge.

“What’s the matter?” He knitted his brows and thought it was a little fishy.

The concierge smiled politely. “Sir, please let me help this lady into the vehicle. May I ask where she lives?”

He shot him a look and smilingly pondered. “So considerate in your service?”

“This is a must, sir.”

He looked down at Yun Shishi, who was knocked out in his arms, and felt a little worried.

He thought it was best to send her back home himself, as he was really worried for her.

Still, Hotel Imperial's top-notch services were renowned; knowing that he could trust them, he no longer held any suspicions.

He had read her resume before, so he was able to supply the concierge with her address.

“Gold Star City International Apartment. Please safely send her home and, when you get there, help her inside!”

The concierge gracefully placed his palm over his chest and bowed. “I'm honored. I will take this lady home safe and sound!”

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Assured, Qin Zhou handed her over to him. The concierge helped Yun Shishi into the back seat and closed the door before sitting in the passenger seat. In an angle Qin Zhou could not clearly see, the man passed a name card to the driver.

“Head here!”

On the name card, ‘West Taihu Lake Valley’ was stated; it was Mr. Li's place, who was a higher-up in Huanyu Entertainment.

The driver got the message. He naturally knew which bigshot had chosen this woman in the back seat!

The Santana drove into the distance.

Qin Zhou gazed at the black sedan as it drove off and felt a little uneasy. He was somewhat regretful; he should have sent her back himself.

However, a few sponsors were still waiting to discuss something with him inside, and one of them was tonight's highlight.

He was probably overthinking things. From the driver to the concierge, they were all staff from Hotel Imperial. What trouble could come about?

He took a deep breath and headed back into the hotel.

The black sedan rode off at top speed on the highway. View of the streets outside flew by. It was extremely dangerous.

The concierge sitting in the passenger seat suddenly fished out his phone and dialed a number. A man's voice could be heard from the other end. "How's progress?"

"Mr. Aaron, Ms. Yun Shishi is already in the vehicle. Please be assured that your instructions will be followed."

Aaron warned, "Don't give yourself away. Make sure that it's settled properly."

"Yes!"

The concierge ended the call and peeked at the woman in the back seat, only to see her leaning on the window looking unwell with her brows furrowed. She was clearly feeling quite uncomfortable.

On the other side, Aaron hung up and turned to see Mu Wanrou carefully dolling herself up in front of the vanity mirror; she was reapplying her makeup meticulously.

Without turning her head, she asked, “Is everything put into place?”

“Yes, Wanrou. Rest assured; I’ve given the orders. There will not be any problems.”

“When the time comes, contact a reporter and tell them about this. Tomorrow, a scandal regarding her use of the unspoken rules will be everywhere.”

She smirked, her eyes gleaming sinisterly. “‘The new ‘Feng Girl’ secretly meets and sleeps with an investor – using underhanded means to gain status.’ Aaron, how’s this for a headline?”

“Truly perfect!”

He walked over to her and planted a kiss on her forehead.

She responded warmly and even let out a loving laugh. “Aaron, you did very well today...”

“In what way?” he felt extremely good and teased her.

Chapter 203: Blocking the Road to Take Her Away

“Aaron, you did very well today...”

“In what way?” he felt extremely good and teased her.

“Regardless of in bed or... he he...” Mu Wanrou pointed a delicate finger to his chest, looking sensual and dreamy.

He was unconsciously attracted to her charming appearance, and his body could not help but to lean toward her again. “Wanrou... may I ask for it again?”

“No, you’re being greedy. You just had me twice. Knock it off!”

“He he! Okay, okay, I’ll stop.” He obediently let go of her.

She stood up. With the careful re-application of her makeup, she remained elegant and dignified.

Yun Shishi, let me see how you escape this!

The Santana spurred on toward West Taihu Lake Valley.

However, sometime later, glaring headlights kept flashing from behind.

The intense roaring of a sports car’s engine could incessantly be heard. It was as if an enraged male lion with menacing eyes were chasing them.

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“What’s the matter with that car? It’s been following us for quite some time now!” The driver adjusted the angle of the rearview mirror. The constantly flashing headlights from behind were so bright they almost blinded him.

It was a limited-edition Bugatti Veyron, worth tens of millions. It went without saying that the car was expensive.

“Leave it alone. Just continue driving!”

The concierge was not in the mood to care about anything else and just ordered him to continue driving.

BEEP! The horn of the sports car behind them suddenly blared.

When the Santana did not show any signs of stopping, the driver of the Bugatti Veyron suddenly stepped on the accelerator, switched lanes, and overtook the other car with ease. Drifting to the front, the Bugatti Veyron stopped horizontally in the middle of the road and effectively blocked the Santana’s way.

The driver was startled into stepping on the brakes and brought the Santana into a screeching halt mere inches away from the sports car. He was so shocked he zoned out in his seat, his forehead beading with cold sweat.

The concierge was equally shocked, but before they could react in time, the door of the Bugatti Veyron in front opened, and a man with a tall frame walked closer to them in the opposite direction of the moonlight.

The driver’s mind was invaded with doubts. “Who’s this person?”

“Who knows? I don’t know him as well...”

Mu Yazhe walked to the side of the Santana. He lowered his head to peer inside and spotted a disoriented Yun Shishi slumped against the

back seat. Her eyes were tightly shut and her brows were deeply knitted – she seemed to be enduring some sort of discomfort.

He arched an elegant brow, his lips curling upward coldly.

The car window was lowered.

The driver stuck his head out and lashed out at him, “You careless pr*ck! What are you blocking the road for? Don’t drag others with you if you want to commit suicide!”

Mu Yazhe said, “Unlock it.”

“Huh?”

“Unlock the door.”

A figure came stumbling out of the sports car.

Tang Yu got off the car in a hurry and ran to the edge of the grass field, throwing up to her heart’s content.

She had drunk a lot earlier, and the car sped on the road at an unbelievable speed, even going past a few red lights. To maintain her image, she managed not to throw up in the vehicle.

“What are you doing? You’re not trying to hijack us, are you!” The driver was scared out of his wits.

This was an impossible supposition, though. He had never seen someone driving a car, which was worth tens of millions, hijack a Santana before!

“What are you trying to do?”

“My woman is in your car.”

The corner of his lips twitched. “Are you kidding me? Your woman? Who are you?”

“Don’t test my patience.”

“1...”

“2...”

The silence of the night was broken by the sound of a gun being cocked.

In the next second, the center of the driver’s brows was being aimed at with a gun point-blank.

The muzzle of the gun was emanating thick and cold smoke.

The driver instantly paled. He was so shocked his lips trembled. The door was unlocked.

The driver instantly paled. He was so shocked his lips trembled. The door was unlocked.

Mu Yazhe carried the stupefied Yun Shishi out of the car. She was so frail and light he could easily hold her in one arm. He hailed Tang Yu into the car with his other hand. With a click, the door was shut.

The driver was even more confused by now. “What’s going on?”

He simply said, “You’ve got the wrong woman. This is the correct one.”

“...”

The car door was shut and locked after she was thrown into the back seat. To her horror, she realized that the car door could not be opened, and she panicked.

She did not understand; why did Mu Yazhe throw her into a stranger’s car?

She frantically hit and slapped the car window, crying hideously, “Director Mu, what is the meaning of this?! Why am I thrown into this car?! Am I not keeping you company tonight?!”

“Start the car!”

He completely ignored her and coldly commanded the driver. The moment he said these words, the driver took off, feeling relieved to receive amnesty. The car throttled past his sports car, screeching away with Tang Yu’s desperate screams.

Poor Tang Yu thought she had clinched a good deal with Mu Yazhe to propel her to stardom. She was unfortunately just a bait in his eyes, though. To put it bluntly, she was just a scapegoat.

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A Phaeton was seen rushing over in the distance.

Min Yu adjusted the spectacle rim on his nose and stepped off the car. He saw Mu Yazhe carrying Yun Shishi in his arms. The woman was

intoxicated and lay lamely against his chest, her body shifting uneasily at the same time.

He asked in a hushed tone, “Boss, this is...”

“Yun Shishi.” His eyes revealed a tinge of gentleness as he muttered her name.

“She’s the one, huh!” He breathed audibly and sincerely complimented, “She is really beautiful she seems to have come out of a painting.”

His expression changed at his man’s words. He threw Min Yu a sidelong glare. “Do I need you to judge her looks?”

The dangerous gleam in his eyes sent shivers down Min Yu’s spine.

His boss was extremely possessive.

Mu Yazhe started eyeing him warily, as if he had the intention to covet her, when he merely glanced at her.

He would not dare to covet her even if he had more courage!

After all, he knew full well what his boss was capable of.

He had initially thought his boss was interested in Tang Yu and totally did not expect her to be just a scapegoat.

Scheming...

This was plain wickedness.

One should never ever offend his boss, or they would not know how they died in his hands.

Mu Yazhe carried her into the back seat and closed the car door.

Min Yu asked again, “Boss, where are we going?”

“Home,” he calmly replied.

Min Yu understood where was ‘home’, and it was not referring to the Mu house.

“After this, you continue to monitor.”

“Yes, boss. Don’t worry.”

Mu Yazhe acknowledged with a cool hum and then looked down at the tipsy woman in his arms.

At this moment, she was resting on his chest; her brows furrowed slightly with eyes closed into sparkling thin slits. Her tiny lips were pouting and muttering inaudibly.

Earlier, he saw Lin Fengtian brought a few investors to drink with her. She only had a glass before she passed out. Luckily, she was not a troublesome drunk, and she just curled up in a corner to sleep like a kitten.

Chapter 205: Bite Him?

Luckily, she was not a troublesome drunk, and she merely curled up in a corner to sleep like a kitten.

One of the investors was very interested in her. He sat next to her all throughout and eyed her like a predator would its prey.

He did no more than that, though. With Lin Fengtian around, he did not have the guts to do what he wanted and could only watch her.

How could Mu Yazhe not understand what the man was thinking? She was a lovely temptation; one that was within sight but not within grasp. He could touch her but not devour her. This feeling made one's heart itch and ache at the same time.

Lin Fengtian was especially protective of her, so the investor knew that there were limits.

However, this woman was just too rare and reserved for this occasion!

How could she get drunk with just a glass of wine?

She actually dared attend this kind of decadent party with her pathetic state of alcohol tolerance. This place was a dangerous wolf's den, and she was like a delicate lamb in a slaughterhouse.

His thoughts rumbled as he made a mess of her hair with much displeasure.

She unhappily lifted her face; her glistening, almond-shaped eyes stared fiercely at him before she clenched her fists and gave him a few flighty hits on the chest. She might have exerted her strength, but he hardly felt it.

“Hey... You are a bad guy! Bad guy!”

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This woman has her guts now, huh. It's true that I'm bad, though – thoroughly evil – but she hasn't seen the extent of my evilness!

The car stopped under the shade. With the night as his cover, he had a devilish smile as he hailed her on his lap.

As her frail and thin body unsteadily straddled his muscular frame, falling over every now and then, she innocently and charmingly laughed in such a way that hit his sweet spot.

He sat admiring her seductive tipsy state; in place of her naivete, she was alluring and coquettish.

He reached out his hand and lightly held her chin, his fingertip brushing her lower lip.

She blinked, and without warning, bit his fingertip. Her red lips fastened on his finger as her teeth grazed his knuckle in slow and fast motions.

He widened his eyes in surprise. Not only can this cat fight, it can bite, too! he thought with a raised eyebrow.

However, since she was still intoxicated, her bite was not painful. In contrast, it aroused his repressed sexual appetite.

He cradled her neck, bent down, and locked lips with her; Casually sweeping over her lip flaps, he slid into the seam between.

Startled, she hit his shoulders repeatedly in defense. Her brows furrowed deeply as her folded fists came down on him, muttering in her sleep, “No, no! I don’t want to! Let me go!”

He was a little amused and annoyed by her panicked refusal, especially when she said, “You are a bad guy! Don’t touch me...”

Interesting.

The man realized it would be fun to tease her in her current state. He snubbed her nostrils until she breathlessly curled her hands and feet.

She’s fun, indeed!

He was absorbed in teasing her; he playfully pinched her chin and cheeks, like a child fiddling with his favorite toy.

“Ah!” She threw him an irate look and pushed his playful hands away.

Suddenly, she opened her eyes, scooped his face in her small palms, and sat in rumination with her head tilted. Her stiff lips broke into a smile, mumbling, “Gu Xingze...”

Chapter 206: Who am I?

“Gu Xingze...”

As soon as she said this, Mu Yazhe’s expression darkened. It became stiff and emotionless in a short span of time.

The atmosphere frosted over. It was as if it had suddenly been plunged into frigid winter from a previously sweltering summer.

A tinge of rage appeared on the man's displeased face. His pair of phoenix eyes, resembling the bottom of an abyss, was dyed with shades of wrath.

She was clearly in his arms at the moment, yet another man's name came out of her mouth. This was undoubtedly an ill-disguised provocation to the prideful him.

This foolish woman actually called out another man's name!

“Whose name are you calling?”

He furiously pinched her waist with a suitable amount of strength, making her break into a silly fit of giggles.

“He he, it's so itchy! Don't bite me...”

Yun Shishi latched on to his shoulders as she giggled openly, her delightful laughter echoing in the wind like the ringing of silver bells.

She thought he was joking with her?! Damn it!

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He grabbed her cheeks emotionlessly and applied more force on his fingertips to make his pinch hurtful.

“Ahhh! That hurts!”

She exclaimed in pain. Because she was aching, she moaned like a kitty.

She tried to struggle but could not muster the strength. She could only form fists with her hands and futilely flung them toward his shoulders. Her vision was almost completely blurry, so nearly her every punch hit nothing but air.

“B*stard, let go of me!”

She bit her lower lip in distress and helplessness. She shifted to the left, wanting to be out of his grasp, but the man’s strength rendered her immobile.

It did not matter that she could not move, but when she was finally able to move, their bodies inadvertently came into contact, and it would inevitably lead to something bad happening.

In this moment, because she was intoxicated, her body was scalding hot. Her fiery hot skin seemed burning to the touch despite the layer of fabric covering it. Unknowingly, sweat was being expelled from his body. It trickled down and permeated through his clothes.

The woman was unaware of the scary consequences she had elicited from the man with her behavior.

If she were sober right now, she would clearly see the terrifying struggle for restraint on the man’s handsome face.

“Who?”

The man forced her face up to look into his eyes. He pressed on covetously, “Whose name are you calling?”

“Gu Xingze...” The lady glared up at him with wide eyes. An innocent and playful smile emerged on her face. She suddenly cupped his handsome face with her hands and rubbed it.

“What... Aren’t you Gu Xingze... Ohhhh...”

Her mind was fuzzy from intoxication. She was obviously quite drunk.

Still, he simply loved her drunken, languid state. She was just like a kitten the way she latched herself onto another. She needily burrowed herself deeper into his wide chest, acting perverse and willfully coy to her heart’s content. It seemed that his embrace was her entire world.

That small face of hers could truly tug at one’s heart and soul. Her dewy eyes, currently painted with some tipsiness, gave a mellow glance. She looked at him in intoxication, seemingly wanting to say something she eventually withheld. Looking at her breathtaking charm, water droplets appeared to be about to fall from her eyes.

In the depths of her orbs, there seemed to bloom a fresh and sweet flower.

It was just disappointing that this woman was unable to assess the situation at hand and even appeared not to recognize who he was.

Danger and impatience were evident in his cold eyes. “Who am I?”

“I don’t know...” she answered piteously as she tried to break free from his grasp with all her might, “ergh... It’s painful. I don’t want it... Let go of me...”

His eyes narrowed into slits as his face darkened. Unknowingly, a thin air of discontent surrounded him.

“Who am I?”

“Erm...”

He lost his temper. He tipped his head and fiercely bit on her lower lip.

She let out a stuffy moan from the pain. Unable to avoid him, her entire body trembled with a start.

The lips were the softest part of the face; hers, in particular, were as fragile as cherry blossom petals. They were sparkling, moist, and delicate. He bit her once more with considerable strength, and a shallow but sensual teeth mark appeared.

“Go away... b*stard... b*stard...”

She hit his shoulders and mumbled gibberish. She was clearly unhappy at his bullying.

What a foolish woman. Was she drunk? That drunk? Too drunk to be unaware of who was in front of her and whose arms were embracing her?

She was only safe because it was him today, but if he were not alert enough, would she know her fate? Could she predict what would happen next?

That ‘Gu Xingze’ she had just called out for so dearly, where was he now? Could he protect her entirely?

He smirked from the bottom of his heart. He was disappointed with how careless this woman was.

If he had not predicted earlier that someone would definitely be unable to resist her and that they would attempt to trip her up again, and if he had not appeared in time, she would have most likely been devoured into nothing!

He was frustrated, not because she got drunk but because she knew clearly of her alcohol capacity yet still dared let herself go. Was she feeling that at ease?

She met him while she was drunk, but if it were another man, would she also recklessly show her charms like this?

Just like a feeble lamb, would she submit herself to the mercy of others?!

Flames were lit in his eyes. His orbs, usually frigid, were ablaze. He could not wait to burn her out.

This foolish woman. How could he let her go like this?

He wanted her to be very clear on whose grounds she was at and what situation she was in! If he did not let her experience some hardships, he was afraid she would not even know what she had done wrong.

His large palms audaciously explored the hemline of her gown and forcibly pulled it down. The priceless fabric was then ripped into two.

Tossing aside the obstructive gown, he supported her waist with his large hands and lifted her high up.

“Who am I?”

The monotonous voice resonated in the wind and made it seem colder. It hastened to recollect and pull back her wandering thoughts.

“I – I don’t know...”

“Look closely. Who am I?!”

He fiercely planted a hickey on her shoulder blade; he would not stop until he reached his goal!

She forcefully pried her eyes open to get a clearer view, but her vision continued to swim hazily.

Her body had a really unique condition. She always kept herself from alcohol; finishing an entire glass of red wine was already her limit. That tipsy feeling came fast and strong but went away slowly. Her vision was still an entire blur, so how could she even see him clearly.

She could only rely on the little awareness left in her to touch the man’s face. Being exposed to the night’s cold wind, it was chilly to the touch. She felt his lips, which also had no trace of warmth. They were thin and biting cold.

Noticing that her mind was still hazy, he furiously pinched her again. He held her face up and brought it right in front of him. He stared at her with beady eyes and pressed on once more, “WHO AM I?!”

This time, she somehow made out his appearance. Her small face crumpled, as if the entire world had collapsed.

Chapter 207: Stubborn

This time, she somehow made out his appearance. Her small face crumpled, as if the entire world had collapsed.

“I don’t know you!”

This seemed to be said in a fit of pique.

Did she really not recognize him, or was she using her tipsiness to spout nonsense, pretending to not know him?

Could it be that she was purposely opposing him?

“You don’t know me?”

Yun Shishi turned away. She did not want to see him. Using her tipsiness as an excuse, she daringly became petulant with him.

Her mind might be foggy, but she still recognized the man before her.

She was angry and did not want to respond to him. He was unbothered by her attempt to ignore him as he had ways to make her respond!

Her body suddenly froze. Feeling his movements, her entire face instantly paled.

“DON’T TOUCH ME!”

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“Huh?”

“B*stard, I don’t want you! Go away! You have a fiancée and plenty of women, so why are you still messing with me?! Why do I have to get bullied by you and bear with your temper?! WHY?!”

He did have a fiancée, did he not?

She even spotted him hugging Tang Yu, whispering to her ear after he exited the dance floor!

How was he any different from other men? He, just like them, was an animal who thought with his lower half.

He still turned his face over, his eyes lazily opening halfway and his lips pressing together coldly.

The longer she thought of it, the sulkier she got. She fumed, “I want to get out...”

As soon as she said this, her arm was yanked by the man. Using his long arms, he easily pulled her into his embrace with one scoop.

She was startled into letting out a soft yelp. In the blink of an eye, she was in his arms.

There was a playful smile in his eyes. He curved his thin lips upward and, with a low and charming voice, asked, “Woman, are you really going to be stubborn with me?”

“...”

“Say my name.”

“No!”

He was displeased with her being stubborn. He did not allow her to continue and ordered, “SAY IT!”

Her body shuddered lightly. She stiffened as a bad feeling gripped her heart.

She mocked, “You like forcing people to do something they’re unwilling to, right?”

“That depends on who the person is.”

He smirked, “If it is others, I may be unwilling!”

Hearing his words, she laughed in rage.

“HUH! Should I be moved to tears because I made you willing?”

“You’d better be like that.”

She struggled with uneasiness, but the man clutched her waist tightly, his large hands pressing on her back.

The two came even closer to each other.

Their faces were intimately close, the tip of their noses were touching, and their breaths were intermingling.

She was truly made uncomfortable by his proximity!

Seeing his attractively handsome face this close from hers, she pushed him away, albeit in vain. How could he be so strong she actually had no room to struggle?!

She hopelessly turned her face away, yet he firmly held her chin between his long fingers. She was forced to turn her face toward him again.

Her face, which was forced to face him again, had eyes squinting and moistening in pain.

The man kissed her lips greedily. It was more delightful than he had ever imagined.

One kiss, and then it was unstoppable.

He got excited when he kissed her, and they continued with their unfinished business.

She could not help but tremble from his light touch. She appeared more attractive with the blush coloring her face!

He had really made the wrong assessment when he previously compared her to a kitty.

Come to think of it; she was, in fact, akin to a beautiful and salacious poppy with the way she made people irresistibly delve deeper and get addicted to her!

Chapter 208: I like to hear your voice

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Come to think of it; she was, in fact, akin to a beautiful and salacious poppy with the way she made people irresistibly delve deeper and get addicted to her!

She was shocked and angered by his brazen actions. She was more shocked than angered, though. She attempted to push his chest again with all her might, yet her feeble efforts had no effect on his strong physique.

He easily grasped her wrists with one hand.

“Let – Let me go, Mu Yazhe!”

She panted slightly and angrily stared at him. He was not disturbed, however.

He closed in on her lips and mockingly cocked an eyebrow. “Why? Didn’t you just say you don’t know me?”

“I...”

His sexy laughter rang in her ears as he audaciously pulled her closer to him. Opening his mouth, he tugged on her strap with his snow-white teeth.

A bite, a jerk, and a heave; with his fringe sweeping across her cheek, the button on her gown came undone at once. The fair and tender shoulder flesh underneath was revealed.

He reached and hugged the back of her neck, his tongue ravishing her nape. He amorously sniffed her jade-like skin; she smelled like she had just stepped out of a shower with her natural fragrance.

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She was thoroughly stunned. With her hands held captive by his hand and voice shaking, she begged, “Don’t – Don’t do it here!”

“Yes, I am.”

His short reply stifled her voice.

She felt ashamed and vexed. This kind of matter was embarrassing to start with, and to do it publicly inside the car sent her shivering with goosebumps.

This man was always full of vitality. With their car right next to the road, other vehicles might pass by and catch them in action. The thought was embarrassing enough to make her want to dig a hole in the ground to hide her blushing self!

What she did not know was that he had already ordered his men to seal off this long winding road on the hill; no cars could pass through.

Unlike her thoughts, he was more bothered by others coveting her!

She did not know this, however, and was in a nervous state.

Why am I always so defenseless before him? Why is he always able to do whatever he wants with me?

She felt despondent. Her eyes stung, and then tears rolled down her face!

She looked even more lovable in her tearful state. Her watery eyes twinkled in silent protest, making him want to devour her right there and then!

Her exposed delicate, snow-white skin was beautifully complemented by the moon's glow and the gentle breeze that was carrying the begonia's sweet fragrance.

His heart pounded fast. He looked at her through narrowed eyes as he covered her body with his huge jacket.

He wanted to consume her under the cover of the moonlight.

Her suffocating hold and piteous cry strung across his back like an electric current, leaving his body taut.

He lowered his head and lustfully bit her charming nape as he pressed her hands against his shoulders.

She tensed her lips and refused to open her mouth, choosing to swallow her shame and fear, instead. Her restrained manner upset him somewhat. He drawled, "Call my name."

She audibly sighed as she held onto his shoulders. Looking at the man in his usual composure through her tears, she felt even more ashamed of herself.

His seductive voice could be heard once more. "Call my name! I like to hear your voice."

Chapter 209: Scenic Villa Garden

His seductive voice could be heard once more. “Call my name! I like to hear your voice.”

“No...”

She panted and sobbed, refusing to cooperate, yet, in this situation, the man still had a way to make her open her mouth. In the end, she could not hold off and let out a mournful cry...

Mu Yazhe!

“Do you know me?”

“Yes... I know you!”

“What’s my name?”

“Mu Yazhe... Mu Yazhe...” she sobbed uncontrollably.

The man bowed and covered her lips passionately.

It was so sweet!

The red wine’s faint fragrance escaped from between her teeth and captivated him; his kiss grew deeper and more passionate as he immersed himself in her seductive lips.

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It might be because of the alcohol in her system, or she might also be feeling aroused; in any case, she did not reject his advances and, in fact, timidly followed the tempo set by the tip of his tongue.

Her soft flaps drew across his lips and suckled on his tongue.

Her shivering, small lips licked and moved lightly over his. For a while, he was under the illusion that he was holding an adorable kitten, which was expressing its delight by licking his lips!

Compared to a wild passionate kiss, this little action of hers was more riveting! His eyes deepened. If it were not for his scruples, he would perhaps devour her thoroughly in the car.

His actions gradually became light and gentle with her surrender.

...

After their lovemaking session, she quietly folded, like a kitten, in his arms and dozed off in exhaustion.

They had just consummated in the car, but that did not seem to satisfy his appetite.

He was like a young chap who wanted more after his first taste of the forbidden fruit.

The car went all the way to a remote spot; it was to a residence called Scenic Villa Garden, where the environment was steeped in high elegance.

The woman in his arms was still sleeping despite reaching their destination. She might just be feeling embarrassed, so she simply gave up by closing her eyes and not moving at all.

A servant opened the car door and calmly watched him carry her out of it and through the villa's lavish entryway.

This villa was just recently completed. Its construction was started fifteen years ago.

His mother was sickly at the time, so his grandfather spent a fortune to find a suitable plot of land on the outskirts for her. He intended to build a villa garden in this scenic spot for her recuperation.

His mother, Jiang Yishan, was well-liked by Old Master Mu. This parcel of land, though far from the city, was still expensive because of its scenic environment.

Mu Sheng had even invited a geomancer to check out this place back then. It was a rare location with all the right elements – ideal for recuperation.

Unfortunately, his mother was short-lived and passed on while the construction was still underway.

Her passing was a big blow to Mu Sheng. The project was chucked to the side until Mu Yazhe took over it when he grew up.

The villa was constructed a year ago, but it was not named yet.

The rich were attracted to its picturesque view and uncontested landscape, and it became a prime location in the capital. Looking to

own a property here was daunting, as the price of one villa was at an astronomical rate of a few billions.

Mu Sheng was especially fond of the Chinese-style units atop the hill.

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Chapter 210: Father and Son Standoff 1

This particular villa was completed using a Chinese-retro garden blueprint. Several pavilions and rocks with flowing water served as its backdrop. It was elegant in a classic way. The old man easily transferred the deed for this parcel of land to Mu Yazhe, which earned him the jealousy of the other members of their clan.

Mu Sheng's love for his grandson was evident in this instance. Still, it was undeniable that the villa was originally meant for Mu Yazhe's mother, Jiang Yishan. Since she was gone, it was only natural for him to pour his love on his grandson, instead.

Mu Yazhe carried Yun Shishi straight to the bathroom to clean up once they entered the bedroom.

He, who was born with a silver spoon, had never taken care of anyone before. Hence, his movements were inevitably clumsy, and he unintentionally hurt her from time to time.

The eventful day had thoroughly worn her down, so her eyelids did not even flinch when she felt pain and, instead, simply opened wide, too tired to voice out a complaint.

While he was cleaning her, he realized that she was thinner than he had previously reckoned.

Perhaps, because she had been through the lactation phase, she was plump in the right places, but he could still easily hold her wrists with one hand. Her distinct clavicle was white like jade bone and her pair of arms was pitifully thin like lotus root, as if he could break them with a little application of force.

This was not mentioning her tapered waist. It was just too thin. Women should be slightly voluptuous.

It seemed that he needed to invest in some nourishing tonics for her.

Why is this woman always so slim no matter what she eats?

How did she pass the last six years? When I first met her, she wasn't this thin and had a little more flesh on her.

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He, of course, did not know of the hardships she had endured in the past six years.

When she was studying, she was breastfeeding Youyou. To supplement the family income, she had to work several jobs at the same time. On top of doing all these, since she was still living with Yun Yecheng back then, Li Qin made her do the household chores, too.

She managed to finish her studies when Youyou was a little older, but because of her son, she was ostracized.

No man was there in the household to stand up for the mother-son pair, so they suffered much discrimination.

He turned on the showerhead to wash off the shower foam on her body. Thereafter, he covered her with a bathrobe and brought her to the bed.

He was startled by a ringing sound from the couch.

He walked over to have a look; it was her hand phone. When he picked up the phone, he saw a cute profile picture of Youyou flashing on the screen.

A tender voice came through the line when the call was connected.

“Mommy... My lovely mommy, when are you coming home?! The house is dark and cold now; Youyou is scared. Mommy, come home quickly... Youyou baked your favorite sponge fingers!”

The child’s saccharine voice was a stark contrast to his egotistic display toward his father. Before his mother, he was forever a pampered little child.

He raised his eyebrow in surprise, recalling how he had been splashed with a pail of cold water by the boy the other time. From what he could remember, the child was not this tender and loving.

‘Yun Shishi is my mother; Yun Tianyou’s mommy. I’ll protect her for the rest of my life. I won’t allow her to be harmed or wronged in any way, and I’ll definitely not let you hurt her.’

‘Who do you think you are? What makes you think you can bully my mother and bring her sadness? If I see you do this again and make her suffer, I won’t let you off easily.’

He was so hostile back then, but, today, before his mother, he was innocent and childlike – no different from any six-year-olds.

Can a six-year-old be such a rascal and so good at acting?

Chapter 211: Father and Son Standoff 2

Can a six-year-old be such a rascal and so good at acting?

In his heart, he was more bewildered than amazed at the boy.

The child was like a puzzle to him. He was only six years old; how capable could he be? A normal kid at Yun Tianyou’s age would not know much. Those who were average might not speak well yet and probably needed their fingers to count.

He had even seen children his son’s age fearful and wary of strangers. There were even those timid ones who would hide behind their parents.

Little Yichen was deemed as smart for his age. He had superior intelligence and, although aloof, was just a kid at heart.

Little Yichen was definitely different from this boy, who was scheming like an adult.

He could still remember how the boy had called him by his full name on the phone that day. There was no hint of fear in the child's voice, only calmness with an unexplained coldness and detachment. The child seemed to know his identity as his biological father despite not meeting each other before. In fact, he was coolly warned never to get near the mother again.

He is super protective of his mother at such a tender age. Any slightest threat to her is magnified and deemed as unforgivable in his eyes.

Six years old... What can a child do at such an age? Still, he confidently told me off, 'Who do you think you are?'

He even warned, 'I won't let you off easily.'

He was alarmed, indeed. He had been a child before, too. When he was six, he was just a naughty kid, who grew up in a secured environment. Although he was mature for his age, it did not make a big difference, unlike this kid.

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He was a little wary of what kind of mature soul could be residing inside the boy's young body.

On the other end, Yun Tianyou was fidgeting with the toy in his hands as he sat in his study room. Hearing a shallow gasp on the phone, he attributed it to poor signal. "Mommy? Mommy, can you hear Youyou?"

"Yes."

It was a throaty mature tone; Mu Yazhe finally spoke.

The man's voice hit Yun Tianyou like lightning; his body froze on the spot.

“Are you... Mu Yazhe?” he forced this question out of his mouth, his tone no longer innocent and childlike. It sounded as if two grown men were coldly confronting each other on the phone.

The boy frowningly stood up from the chair; his fingers shook in his shock.

“Yes, it's me. Why are you calling me by my name?”

“What should I call you, then?” Yun Tianyou mockingly asked before he suddenly questioned, “Why is my mommy's phone with you?”

“Shh,” he shushed with a smile, saying, “Your mother is sound asleep; keep your voice down.”

“Why is she at your place?” The boy could not accept this fact, and he furrowed his brows in grave alarm.

This must be a big shock to him.

“Didn't I tell you to stay away from her?”

“You asked me to choose when we last spoke, yes?” he kindly reminded him and, seemingly in a good mood, said, “Well, I've made my choice.”

Yun Tianyou stroked his chin and thought for a moment.

‘Family or foe, you choose.’

“Mr. Mu, I think you have made a mistake,” the boy coolly said, “I take back my words.”

“Er? You are regretful?” The man chuckled uncontrollably. This child was such a smooth-talker; who did he learn it from?

Chapter 212: Father and Son Standoff 3

“Er? You are regretful?” The man chuckled uncontrollably. This child was such a smooth-talker; who did he learn it from?

“Whether you choose to be family or foe, it’s got nothing to do with me. Whatever it is, you will never be part of my family!” the little lad declared before lowering his voice, “Return mommy to me. I’m warning you; you’d better not touch her.”

He sounded cold and malicious. While his voice sounded tender and youthful, his tone was deterrent.

Mu Yazhe realized that despite the twins being born on the same day, they were very different.

Compared to the rascal on the phone, Little Yichen was an angel.

This son had his father’s charisma; both talked in the same fashion. He was bold and daring just like his father despite his young age.

“You are not adorable at all,” he commented while sitting on the bed and tenderly stroking Yun Shishi’s cheeks.

“Hmph. It’s none of your business.”

Yun Tianyou regained his composure soon after. He paced back and forth the room and, in the end, took a firm seat at his desk. From the drawer, he reached out for his checkbook.

Raising a brow, he told the man, “Name the price.”

“?!” His father wore a stunned expression.

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“How much? How much money can make you stay away from my mommy?”

How much money?

The man’s mouth twitched.

Is the boy negotiating a price with me using his piggy bank?!

“Are you negotiating with me?”

“Why not? We, businessmen, talk with money; don’t waste my time on small talk.” With one hand on the phone, Yun Tianyou held the pen between his lips and removed its cap using his other hand.

“How much are we looking at, then?”

“One billion; is that enough?”

The man burst into laughter.

One billion; how is the child going to come up with that sum ?

When he was six, although he came from old money, he did not even have thousands of millions in his name, let alone one billion. Where could the child get that one billion ?

He was not looking down on the boy and was just being realistic.

Besides, did he need that one billion ?

“One billion in dollars; is that not enough ?”

The two ‘men’, separated by the phone, were in direct confrontation. It was a tense moment.

“Not enough.”

“Ten billion, then; is that enough ?” Yun Tianyou wore a confident smile on his face as he twirled the pen with his fingers. He acted like a businessman – one who knew he would get what he wanted.

The son’s confident manner and astronomical offer were an eye-opener for the father.

“How about this; let’s have a fair competition.” Spontaneously getting up and walking toward the floor-to-ceiling window, the man stood there and said this.

The clear windowpane reflected his slender frame.

The smile on Yun Tianyou’s face stiffened. “Fair competition ?”

“No money can match the value of this woman to me. She’s priceless in your heart and in mine as well.”

“He he! You’ve overestimated yourself.” The boy sniggered. “Mr. Mu, between you and me, who do you think mommy will choose? You will lose this bet.”

“Oh? That may not be true. Let’s wait and see.”

The boy’s expression shifted uncontrollably. He made a fist and tightly clenched the pen in his palm. Where did that man’s courage to provoke him come from?

No one can replace my place in mommy’s heart. Is that man going to challenge me?

Frustrated, he cut the call and exhaustedly slumped on the leather seat. Despite his audacity on the phone earlier, he was not all that confident in his heart.

Chapter 213: Beyond His Control

The man seemed dead set on snatching his mommy from his side.

If he lost his mommy, then he would have nothing left. No! He would not allow that to happen!

D*mn!

With furrowed brows and clenched fists, he rigidly looked into the distance. His shadow contained an indescribable sense of loneliness.

He could not lose his mother...

The call was cut off.

Mu Yazhe raised a brow and erased the call log before dumping the phone on the sofa.

This animosity was a secret between father and son.

He would not let Yun Shishi know of their conversation.

Similarly, that smart kid would hide this from his mother and would pretend to be an innocent and obedient child before her.

When he returned, the woman in the bed was still sound asleep. Deep in her dream, she did not discover the hostile confrontation between the father and son moments ago.

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Rolled up in the quilt, she whimpered like a kitten as she unintelligibly talked in her sleep. He reached out to sort the quilt. She sounded a protest, adjusted her sleeping position, and fell into a deep sleep again.

He did it with her in the car when he was drunk. He was intending to continue when they reached the villa, but the fatigue apparent on her exquisite face made him spare her for tonight.

Yun Tianyou's warning reverberated in his ears.

'You'd better not touch her!'

He was like a threatened little beast, full of protective spikes, at such a tender age. He ensured his words and tone were spiteful enough to hurt before he stopped.

Still, he could empathize with the boy. Yun Tianyou might be aloof, but he was, in fact, naïve at heart. For years, she was the only true kin he had in his pure and innocent world.

Only Yun Shishi had provided him meticulous and loving care from her heart.

A six-year-old child, even when well-accomplished, would still be reliant on his mother.

Now that there was a man and a child barging into their world without warning, how could Yun Tianyou take it lying down?

The child sounded guarded and detached on the phone, but he could detect traces of anxiety, helplessness, and even fear in his tone.

In any case, am I really that offensive? he thought to himself, his brows furrowing in resignation.

If he really wanted her, he would not have let her go six years ago.

He knew himself better than anyone else. He was the type who did not warm up to anything easily.

However, once he set his eyes on something, he would not let go.

He was sentimental and not one to forget the past. Still, he also knew that many things were beyond his control despite his rich origin. This was especially true with his elite background as a member of the Mu

family. There was just plenty of plotting, scheming, and conspiring going on. One had to be doubly careful in this household.

With his kind of background, no woman would stay long beside him.

He had always told himself not to attach feelings into any relationship and that having a fling was sufficient. Allowing himself to feel could very well break his heart in the long run, could it not?

Chapter 214: The Mystery Six Years Ago

Over a decade ago, his mother had passed away. That separation felt as if one of his ribs had been ripped off his body.

He never wanted to experience that kind of feeling again. Thus, for Yichen, he had built a tall wall around him, using any means possible, to keep him secured within.

As for Yun Shishi, she was like a small fish. Out of goodwill, he had once set her free to an unfettered life.

However, six years to the present, meeting her again, he could not let her go anymore.

He was not happy with her family. He originally thought that she would take off with that money. She might have headed abroad for her studies, met the right man there, and then promised each other their lifetimes.

Unfortunately, life did not seem to go smoothly for her in the past six years.

She was stumbling in life and had two burdens at home: an adoptive mother and an unrelated younger sister. They were akin to two blood-sucking leeches that refused to let go without sucking her dry first.

Six years ago, his secretary had once let him in about a particular detail.

Yun Shishi was initially unwilling to become a surrogate for him. The first time she had her body checked, a middle-aged woman had accompanied her. Upon investigation, this woman was revealed to be her adoptive mother.

She was a filial daughter. She always wore a heart of gratitude for Yun Yecheng adopting her. After all, regardless of food or clothing, her adoptive father had never once treated her shabbily.

When his career was in a crisis, she was extremely worried. Nonetheless, it was her adoptive mother who had first brought up the matter about surrogacy; if she were to sign the contract to be a surrogate, she would then be rewarded with an astronomical sum. This could help resolve her father's company debts to a certain degree.

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She initially disagreed. She thought that it was too irresponsible, but Li Qin, who was tempted by the prospect of money, pressed her on.

She threatened her with death and blackmailed her of being ruined for life if she did not agree!

Li Qin made her feel guilty, saying that if she disagreed, they would face hardships in this lifetime, and the entire family would be implicated because of her.

Yun Shishi felt remorseful and humiliated. Despite her unwillingness, she had no choice but to sign the contract in the end.

However, when Li Qin returned home, she feigned ignorance about everything and, like always, humiliated her to no end. She was absolutely wicked.

When Mu Yazhe first heard of this, he did not take it to heart, until he got his hand on that test report.

He took a look at her blood type and compared it with the Mu blood sample. The Department of Genetics reported the result of the DNA paternity test; the probability of paternity was higher than 99.999%.

She was the true daughter of the Mu Group who was left out in the cold. Mu Wanrou's identity then became very dubious.

Mu Yazhe had long been suspicious of her identity.

This suspicion was groundless, though.

Upon her entry to the Mu residence, Grandpa Mu had some of her DNA samples collected and tested, but there were no issues with the result. Thus, everyone in the Mu family no longer questioned her identity despite the child having a different look from her mother.

When Yun Shishi's DNA paternity test result came out, the test that Mu Wanrou had taken before, which contained no 'issues', became the biggest issue!

Who exactly was playing tricks?

Mu Wanrou?

Impossible.

How old was she back then? How was she capable of modifying the result of the test report?

There was definitely someone else who had tampered with the result.

Who could it be?

Chapter 215: Mu Qingcheng 1

Who could it be?

In fact, he had long been suspicious of Mu Wanrou's identity.

Mu Yazhe was still young when Mu Sheng brought the nine-year-old Mu Wanrou to him as his future fiancée; he was very adamant despite appearing nonchalant.

When she just joined the family, Grandpa Mu was over the moon he did not conduct a paternity test right away. He had indeed collected her blood samples, but he dragged on with doing the DNA test.

It was not until Mu Sheng realized that the girl's appearance differed from her biological mother, with not even one part or an expression being similar, that he began to have suspicions and finally decided to conduct the DNA test with the samples.

Mu Wanrou, who was still very young at the time, obviously had no knowledge of this matter. Moreover, at her age, what trouble could she stir up?

When the result came out, they were a perfect match.

While Mu Sheng instinctively felt that something was off, he did not take it to heart and simply concluded that her facial features have yet to mature.

However, when she was finally of age and her facial features had fully matured, her looks were still a far cry from that woman. Again, Grandpa Mu was suspicious.

Mu Qingcheng – this was that woman's name.

She was adopted by Mu Sheng in his forties and had no blood relations with him.

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Mu Yazhe knew little of that woman, as there was limited information about her. It was as if someone had purposely placed a lid over her past.

That person was most likely Mu Sheng.

The things Mu Qingcheng left behind had mostly been kept hidden. Grandpa Mu was afraid he would constantly be reminded of her if he saw her items, so he stored them away in the basement. He only kept that piece of jade on his person, taking it out every now and then to stare at it while lost in his thoughts.

Still, regarding her background, Mu Yazhe discovered some bits and pieces of it.

Mu Qingcheng was apparently just a lowly singer at a cabaret known as 'Paramount' in the past. Before she was adopted to the Mu family, her stage name was 'Qingcheng'. Rumors had it that she was an orphan and did not have a name.

Unlike the current one, the capital of the past was far from prosperity, but many wealthy families were secretly born from economic reforms.

Despite this, the Mu, a rich and powerful family of a hundred years, dominated the capital.

At that time, there was a bustling district in the capital. Putting it in today's words, it was a district filled with nightclubs. Few bars and nightclubs were in business back then, so Paramount was the place the rich often passed the time after a meal.

The bustling district Paramount was in was one of the many properties under the Mu family.

Paramount was originally about to close down due to poor management.

A little later, Paramount's then manager brought in Mu Qingcheng from somewhere — she was such a treasure.

Not only did she have a naturally lovely voice, she was also skilled in ballroom dancing, and just like her name, she had a devastatingly beautiful appearance, which was hard to come by. She was unmatched in her generation and famous in her time.

Because of this, as time passed, her status at Paramount gradually increased. Along with this improvement, the cabaret, which was previously on the brink of closing, flourished again. It was even competing with the most popular cabarets at that time.

Many bosses went to Paramount for Mu Qingcheng, and all those who had gone there became regulars and frequented the cabaret later on.

Chapter 216: Mu Qingcheng 2

The owners of the other nightclubs fought over this rare talent with high bids.

This was a steady cash cow!

At that time, many had tried poaching her.

Mu Qingcheng was a sentimental girl, however, so she was not swayed by the other bar owners' generous offers.

From then on, her fame soared and none could surpass her; she was deemed as the number one songstress in town.

Paramount's business gradually got better, while the rest got worse.

Toward the end, all the nightclubs in the capital had closed down except for Paramount, which continued to be an evergreen business.

The nightclub owner was very good to Mu Qingcheng and had never mistreated her.

After all, she was worshipped as the face of the nightclub.

Men were known for being drawn to beautiful women since ancient times. Hence, after some time, his heart wavered; after all, she was a charming beauty whom men could not resist.

At that time, she, who was barely touching eighteen, was blossoming in her naivety and tenderness. She was like a clean hibiscus after she removed her makeup – truly a source of deadly temptation.

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Once he sent her home, he unexpectedly pounced on her by the house entrance.

She did not see it coming and was shocked.

She was proud and principled despite being a songstress and threatened to kill herself if he made further advances on her. Unable to have his way, he angrily stormed off.

What she did not know was that this scene was captured by a tabloid reporter. It was on the news the following day.

Soon after, rumors about her no longer being chaste spread like wildfire.

Her life was turned upside down overnight.

She was pure, holy, and inviolable to her patrons. Her image was greatly tarnished by the slanderous rumors.

Those patrons started to become unruly around her, and the situation got from bad to worse. When she sought the help of the manager, he refused to intervene as his way of revenge for her earlier rejection.

Full of pain and grievances, she started to grow tired of this tough, miserable nightlife and even life itself.

Her customers became more unreasonable as the rumors became even more exaggerated. They would even openly fight over her. During this difficult period, she was forced to seek protection from a man.

At that time, only this man was capable of protecting her from the threats and bullies in the capital.

This person was Mu Liancheng.

Mu Liancheng was Mu Yazhe's biological father and Mu Sheng's favorite son. He was young, capable, and talented. Despite only being in his twenties, his assets already reached more than a few hundred million.

At that time, he was engaged to the mistress of the wealthy Jiang family in the capital.

Mu Qingcheng ended up being adopted by Mu Sheng as his daughter. Accordingly, Mu Liancheng became her sibling in name

without any blood connection. This killed off any notion he had for her.

Chapter 217: Compassion

Mu Qingcheng's beauty was ethereal and timeless, but the same could not be said about Mu Wanrou. The latter could not even hold a candle to the former's little finger.

Hence, when Mu Wanrou was a teenager, Mu Sheng did another DNA test on her.

She somehow caught wind of this matter and hurriedly bought off the Department of Genetics to tamper with the DNA test result. Mu Sheng was kept in the dark regarding this and could only lament the permanent loss of Mu Qingcheng's beauty.

Mu Yazhe, who knew the truth, got a hold of the real DNA test result before Mu Wanrou could have it falsified. He got proof that she was a fraud.

The pathetic Mu Wanrou had been penny-wise and pound-foolish.

She thought that a simple doctoring of the result could put wool over everyone's eyes and hide her identity so she could continue with her masquerade as Mu Qingcheng's daughter.

She had underestimated Mu Yazhe, however. The man had seen all kinds of conspiracies and gone through numerous bloodsheds brought about by wealth since young.

Power, money, fights, dirty schemes, and plots – he had seen them all; Mu Wanrou could not be his match.

Mu Sheng was old, and though it was true that experience begot wisdom, he was at the stage where he could only be considered as senile.

This was not true for his grandson, though. Mu Yazhe was not at all senile, so while she managed to fool the grandfather, the grandson was not tricked by her in the least.

However, she alone was insufficient to flash his trump card.

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Suspecting a bigger plot behind her ploy, he continued to bide his time by maintaining a low profile.

Grandmaster Mu was getting on in years and was only Disheng Financial Group's president in name. While he was its largest shareholder, he was no longer involved in its operations. All matters were left for his most-trusted grandson to handle, as he wanted to enjoy his remaining days in peace.

He was getting old with every passing day, after all, so it was inevitable for someone to eye the inheritance rights to the consortium in his hands.

Although Mu Yazhe was the rightful heir and the one whom Grandmaster Mu had chosen to lead the household in the future, that did not mean the rest would accept this arrangement willingly.

Mu Sheng had three wives. Mu Liancheng was born by his first wife, and Mu Yazhe was the only son of Mu Liancheng and Jiang Yishan. This did not mean that there were no other potential heirs in the Mu family!

With his grandfather's health deteriorating, those eyeing Mu Yazhe's inheritance were starting to grow restless!

Women were usually sacrificed in a royal bloodbath.

Mu Yazhe contemplated for quite a while upon receiving Yun Shishi's identity report.

It was true that the missing mistress was her. Mu Wanrou was just a fake. In this case, the identity as Mu Qingcheng's daughter should be returned to its rightful owner.

This also meant that Yun Shishi was his real fiancée. He had seen a picture of the young Mu Qingcheng, and Yun Shishi was a carbon copy of her.

In fact, Grandmaster Mu could easily determine who was real and fake by presenting Mu Wanrou and Yun Shishi to him at the same time. One look was enough. No explanation, argument, or even an identity report was needed.

Yun Shishi had inherited Mu Qingcheng's otherworldly beauty and profound classiness. This was the best evidence.

He did not do that, however, as he felt a rare sense of compassion for her.

Chapter 218: Evidence

Such an innocent and pure lady deserved a better partner to lean on. As for him, he could do without women, and a wife was nothing but a title to him.

Women were all the same. He reminded himself not to know true love again.

Triggering his emotions would only add to his weakness, and that could really be fatal.

The dangerous world of the rich was not suitable for a woman as pure as white paper like her.

Only, now, he learned that he still had a son, and under this foolish woman's meticulous care, the young boy had actually turned into someone outstanding.

He had to rack his brains because of this.

Sitting on the bed's edge, he looked at Yun Shishi's soothing side profile and delved into deep thought.

...

It was late into the night, yet sleep continued to elude Yun Tianyou.

Tossing and turning in bed as he thought of Yun Shishi, he eventually climbed out of it in his pajamas and went to his study desk to furiously complete an entire book of high school math questions.

He powered on his laptop, and a beep notified him of a new email in his inbox. He clicked on it; the email contained information he had ordered Li Hanlin to check into earlier.

(vit(function()){)

Lu Jingtian. She had a nice-sounding name that belied her wickedness.

Youyou read the email in silence, his fair fingers rhythmically drumming on the table. He looked as if he was focused on planning out something.

His earlier conversation with Mu Yazhe had given him a stomach full of indignation. With no news from his mother, he was absolutely feeling frustrated.

He was not in the mood to bother about this woman.

He was about to log out of his email account when Li Hanlin sent him another batch of messages. They contained recordings the latter had copied from the hotel.

For a place like a hotel, security camera recordings were securely stored. If there were no police officers at the scene, normal citizens could not get their hands on them at all.

He did not know how Li Hanlin had managed to get these in his hands.

He opened the first recording. It showed Lu Jingtian bashing a woman in one of the hotel's corridors.

He was able to identify her with a look, as he had taken note of what she was wearing in the gala. Her gown was noticeably unique, so she was easily identified in it.

Security cameras within Hotel Imperial were well-hidden, and the extent of capture was adjusted to the widest. The cameras from the recordings were positioned to capture the stairwell and the elevator doors.

Those familiar with the hotel's layout were aware that these two areas were focal capture points of security cameras, thus recordings were shot from two different angles.

Unfortunately, Lu Jingtian was considered to be 'committing a crime under supervision'— in the heat of the moment, she forgot to find a more secluded area and directed her fists and kicks at Yun Na straight away. With the backing of her powerful father, she needed not hesitate.

The first recording was hazy. From this angle, one could only identify Lu Jingtian's silhouette.

As for the person she was beating up, her facial features were blurred out and he could not recognize her at all.

When he opened the second recording, it showed the two from the front. It was positioned at a precise angle and the facial features could clearly be seen. He identified Lu Jingtian at once, and the appearance of the woman she was hitting gradually became clearer.

... Yun Na ?

He furrowed his brows.

She attended the gala tonight as well? Why did he not see her?

Was it because he arrived there too late?

Five minutes into the recording, Lu Jingtian dragged Yun Na into the stairwell. Ten minutes later, she exited the stairwell with a flustered look.

Chapter 219: Wait for the Right Time

Ten minutes later, she exited the stairwell with a flustered look.

Another ten minutes passed, and then a few security guards quickly rushed to the scene. They took the already unconscious Yun Na out of the venue.

Youyou pondered. On his handsome but youthful face were moist eyes with a calculating glint.

Lu Jingtian...

Tonight's gala was truly amazing; there was actually this interesting scene.

Although Yun Na suffered such a fate, he felt no pity for her; he only thought that she was the victim of her evil deeds.

He was young, but he knew the concept of karma.

One planted the seeds, and later they would bear fruit.

Planting a good seed would bear a good result, and a bad seed would result in a bad one.

Nonetheless, he was shocked by Lu Jingtian's ruthlessness.

This Lu Jingtian was too vicious. From the recordings, one would not even know what she did to Yun Na for the latter's face to end up looking bloody and hideous.

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He was not concerned with how she was as a person and would, in fact, not have bothered to look into her further had she not done and said all those horrible things to his mother back at the gala, which, of course, incurred his wrath.

He was afraid of nothing except this woman doing the ruthless things she had done to Yun Na to deal with his mother...

At the thought of this, anger gushed out uncontrollably from his heart.

Yun Tianyou navigated the mouse on the screen to save the recordings and then replied to Li Hanlin: Wait for the right time.

On his end, Li Hanlin thought it to be strange. Wait for the right time?

What were they waiting for? Was this not the opportune moment?

He took great pains to get his hands on those recordings. He originally thought that Yun Tianyou would sell them for a high price to the media reporters in his haste to besmirch Lu Jingtian's name.

The boy did not do that, however, and instead, magnanimously told him to wait for the right time. Right time? When exactly was the right time?

He suddenly thought of a decision Yun Tianyou had made in one of the board of directors' meetings.

Back then, Lezhi Holdings had a smart toy that all the shareholders in the board of directors gave their go-signal to be introduced to the public. They wanted to release this product to the market as soon as possible since they were sure that it would be an international craze.

The first batch of toys was almost ready. At that time, the demand for toys was coincidentally high on the market, and the board of directors became more eager for the product to be released. When the contract to launch the product onto the market was passed over to Yun Tianyou, they keenly waited for him to sign and stamp it, but for the longest time, he made no move to do so.

The board of directors panicked. They urged him repeatedly to give his approval, but he only sent them an email stating: Wait for the right time.

Right time? What was the right time?

Li Hanlin could not help but be curious. Everyone did not know what Yun Tianyou was thinking.

Just as the board of directors was almost at their wits' end, less than two months later, news of MITEL Toys Corporation having problems with their production line surfaced. Upon investigation of the International Regulations Committee, the toy company's wooden toys

were found to be containing excessive lead. When risk assessment was conducted on this product, issues, such as excessive toxic solvent level and even discoloration of the surface coating, were identified.

MITEL was among the toy production tycoons and the biggest competitor of Lezhi. The jenga blocks it produced were once a worldwide craze; the company was at the top of its game.

Therefore, when this scandal circulated, everyone was shocked, and MITEL's reputation hit rock-bottom.

At that time, parents were extremely concerned with the quality of their children's toys.

Toys were meant for children to play with. If there were issues with their quality, would they not harm the children, instead?

Chapter 220: Breathless

Lezhi Holdings took this opportunity to counterstrike by releasing an announcement, producing an international toy quality assurance report, and mercilessly lambasting MITEL for its unscrupulous practices.

Lezhi used MITEL Toys as a springboard to host its grand product launch; because of this incident, the former emerged victorious in this commercial battle.

Lezhi Holdings took sixty percent toy market share in the first quarter.

Following this matter, the director board began to view this mysterious shareholder with much awe and reverence.

Yun Tianyou had once said that he was not the type to lock horns with another, but once he did, he would not leave an opponent any chance to retaliate.

Recalling the boy's casual tone when he spoke these words and reflecting on them now, the agent was unnerved.

It was astonishing for a six-year-old boy to have such business acumen and foresight. Moreover, anyone would find his charisma daunting!

Yun Tianyou would naturally not tell him what chance he was waiting for; he had his plans.

...

Warmth flooded the room.

Yun Shishi had a rare good sleep.

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She usually did not sleep well. She would often be visited by nightmares at night, but last night, her sleep was peaceful and dreams were beautiful.

The sky barely lighted up when her punctual biological clock woke her up from sleep.

No sun rays could possibly pass through the tightly drawn curtains across the windows.

She could feel the suffocating darkness closing in on her.

Hangover made her head pound; gastric juices upset her stomach.

She drowsily reached out her hand to ease her aching temple, but a broad hand beat her to it and massaged the parts of her head experiencing dull pain with just the right amount of pressure.

The ministrations managed to soothe her tensed nerves.

Her next reaction once her headache lessened, Where did the hand come from?

With a pop, her brain seemed to split open with a blinding flash of bright light.

She surreptitiously opened her eyes into slits and cautiously swept them around her.

A man was lying face-to-face beside her. His long arms were possessively holding her to his chest; both were naked and covered by a quilt only.

She looked down further and caught a steamy image that got her cheeks and ears flushing red.

The man's body was strong and broad. She had seen him looking tall and lean in a suit, but she did not realize that he had such a perfectly sculpted body underneath it.

This image undoubtedly messed with her mind.

Her mind was messed up... and so was her breathing!

She vaguely recalled each scene that proceeded last night. Her throat constricted embarrassingly when the steamy scenes played in her mind.

She might not take well to alcohol, but she could still retain memories of the happenings when she was tipsy.

In her memory, there was a sports car by the roadside on a forested hill, a man who took her in his arms as she was made to sit on his lap, and an entanglement of bodies.

The more scenes she recalled, the more alarmed she became.

Her eyes uncontrollably rimmed red.

Oh, god. What stupid things did I do?

She secretly blamed herself. Why did I finish that glass of wine when I know very well I can't hold my liquor? Now, it got me into deep trouble!

Why was she so easily devoured?

She angrily reproached herself. She was so frustrated her body started trembling and her breathing grew ragged.

Chapter 221: Pretending to Be Asleep

Yun Shishi's subtle movements woke the man up.

He had always been a light sleeper. When he was younger, his grandfather had sent him to a military camp for special training. There, he developed an amazing alertness and easily woke up from sleep at the slightest movement.

“Are you awake?”

He bent his head to get close to her. His snug breathing warmed her cheeks and made her blush.

His sleepy, baritone voice, which was magnetic to her, sounded slightly lazy and hoarse.

Her heart pounded alarmingly at his question.

She did not respond but, instead, quickly shut her eyes and lay motionless like a stone.

This was her first time sleeping with a man. She was so nervous she could not breathe properly. Her highly strung nerves made her pant erratically and hold her breath.

One needed to understand that she had never been in a relationship before, let alone hold a man’s hand. This was truly her first time to share a bed with a man, so she was very nervous and did not know where to put her hands.

Mu Yazhe chuckled quietly.

This woman is pretending to be asleep in front of me ?

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What poor acting skills; anyone can tell she's just pretending.
Unfortunately for her, she doesn't have her son's pure acting talent.

“I know you are awake.”

Her heart skipped a beat at his words, but she still did not open her eyes.

She suddenly flipped to her side and pretended to sleep talk. She muttered unintelligibly as she edged toward the side of the bed, wanting to stay far away from this despicable man.

He rose slightly from the bed, lazily propped his head in one hand, and laughingly watched her antics.

Her resistance was useless to him.

He saw her in danger of falling off the bed from edging too far to the side and could no longer resist asking with bemusement, “Are you trying to run away now?”

He tittered. She's so stupid; only running away after I had my ways with her. Isn't it a bit too late?

The man reached out his hand and pulled her back into his embrace. Her head spun as her breath hitched. She almost let out a scream.

When she opened her eyes into slits again, she saw his handsome face close to hers.

He flipped on top of her. Propping himself up with his arms, he admired her shy look as she lay under him.

She was deeply flustered. Oh, god. Why did I have to wake up?
Why can't I just die in my sleep?

Waking up to this awkward situation, she did not know how to face it.

“Are you awake or still pretending to be asleep?”

She refused to open her mouth out of sheer embarrassment. With her eyes tightly shut, she was hoping to bluff him.

The man did not want to give it a pass, though.

His lips curled into a mischievous smile. With one hand clasping her face, he asked, “Open your eyes and look at me, eh?”

He did not use force on her. She kept her mouth and eyes firmly shut.

She knew she would feel more ashamed if she opened her eyes.

The soft, king-size bed dipped; it would be his playground now.

She might refuse to open her eyes, but he had his ways to ‘wake’ her up.

Pressing on top of her, he proceeded to do it with her in this posture.

Chapter 222: Embraced to Sleep

Pressing on top of her, he proceeded to do it with her in this posture.

Although she protested and resisted, they were not as fierce as before. Her feeble struggle was not worth mentioning to him.

Toward the climax, she only buried the secret pleasure on her small face at the base of his nape.

She looked like an adorably coy kitten the way she protested in weak dinging.

Her snug breaths fanning his ear were a sadistic arousal. She did not know that her manners in the bed had almost transformed him into a beast, gluttonous only for her.

He was undoubtedly full of vitality in this aspect. Her stamina was poor compared to his, and drowsiness assailed her toward the end.

There were a few times he wanted her to get on top of him, but her body was just too lame and soft to stay put. As such, he could only make do with topping her a few times. This satisfied him somewhat, and he finally stopped his advances late into the night.

She was worn out by then and lay feebly in the bed.

Her eyelids were lidded and refused to open; pretty soon, she fell asleep with a flip to her side.

The spacious room was filled with a beautiful aroma that could only come after lovemaking.

As his heavy heaving settled down, he wondered to himself, When did I start to lust after a woman?

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She lay on her side, her body subconsciously curling into a ball. Her messy, black hair spread across the pillow and covered half of her jade-like cheek. She looked indescribably alluring.

She liked to sleep in a fetal position. He recalled a psychological research claiming that women who slept in this posture were subconsciously insecure. She looked defenseless like this, which made his heart ache.

He lowered his head to gaze at her and, with that look, his heart was moved again.

This woman was like an ancient woe – inherently capable of bewitching men. Even in her sleep and stagnant posture, she could still capture a man's heart.

He climbed down from the bed with her in his arms and went to the bathroom to wash her.

He concurrently summoned the servants to change the dirty bed linen.

In her hazy state, she felt a warm hand gently wiping her body with a towel.

Afterward, muscular arms seemed to carry her back to bed and embrace her as she slept.

His sonorous heartbeat reverberated in her ears the whole night.

Thump, thump, thump. The sound was soothing for some reason and made her feel loved and protected.

She slept soundly that night; she had not had such a peaceful sleep in so long.

Alternating between sleeping and dreaming was how she muddled through the night until daybreak.

She was woken by her empty stomach's growling; it was already bright outside.

She turned to look at the digital clock on the bedside table. It displayed the time as one in the afternoon.

She had lost the concept of time in her long, deep sleep.

The window had an open seam, and fresh air, which fanned the curtain from outside and expelled the alluring scent from inside, ventilated the room.

Chapter 223: Waking Up

The window had an open seam, and fresh air, which fanned the curtain from outside and expelled the alluring scent from inside, ventilated the room.

As she gradually came around, she found herself lying flat in the bed. Her lower belly felt incredibly swollen, and especially between her thighs, she felt a lingering, burning sensation.

The space beside her in the bed was empty. It seemed that the man had left.

With this thought, she knew she could unreservedly occupy the whole bed.

She reached out and pulled the quilt over her head, burrowing within. She was upset with herself; her heart winced as she tossed and turned in the bed.

She could still detect the man's faint aroma and, though somewhat resentful of it, did not have the strength to push the quilt off of her.

She rolled off the bed and eyeballed the room; it was unimaginably big.

She exited the bedroom and entered a hall. The marble flooring felt cool under her bare feet.

There was a set of new clothes neatly folded on the couch for her. They were newly bought based on the price tag still attached to them.

The clothes were simple yet elegant. She could guess their price and brand by merely touching the high-quality fabric. This was confirmed when she looked closely at the price tag; this was luxury good from a high-end brand.

She did not want to accept anything from the man, but looking at the bathrobe on her, she decided that she could not possibly walk around in just it, so she took the clothes and proceeded to change in the bedroom.

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The hand phone rang after she barely finished.

The ringing interrupted her thoughts, and she walked over to pick up the phone.

She was slightly stunned at the displayed caller ID: Gu Xingze. She was stricken with guilt in her current circumstance and in answering the call.

Why was she bursting with guilty, though ?

She pondered. The ringing eventually stopped when she did not answer, but after a few seconds, the phone rang again from his call.

She sipped her lips and connected the line.

“Hello ?”

“Shishi ?”

His voice came through; it sounded a little husky though gentle, as if he were trying hard not to startle her.

The concern in his tone made her eyes burn with tears.

She walked to the window and lifted the curtain to the side, causing bright sunlight to flood in and sting her eyes.

“Er, Xingze.”

“Qin Zhou told me that you got drunk after a drink last night. Are you home right now ?”

“I...” She did not know how to respond.

She was clueless on where she was, actually.

Outside the window, she could see a panoramic, scenic view. This villa was at the peak, overlooking the entire garden with beautiful landscape.

“I...”

“It’s good that you are safe and sound at home. Did you just wake up?”

He mistakenly assumed on his end that she had just woken up and invited, “I’m downstairs at your place. Are you willing to have tea with me?”

She replied with a start, “I’m... I’m not at home.”

There was a long pause from him.

“Where are you?”

His car was parked just outside her apartment. He got off it and looked up at the shuttered windows to her place; his brows furrowed quizzically.

“Where are you? I’ll pick you up.”

She held her throbbing head resignedly. “You don’t have to pick me up; I’ll go back... shortly.”

Chapter 224: Not as Simple as You Think

“... Mhm.”

Gu Xingze hesitated to speak and only replied with a hum. He wanted to say more, but he was vexed to realize that he was not in the position to do so.

Yun Shishi also felt extremely awkward. When the two, who were on the phone, heard each other's breathing, they instantly fell silent.

The extended period of silence made them feel as if time had stopped.

It went on like this until he let out a sigh from the other side.

“Shishi, don't be afraid.”

Her eyes bulged in astonishment.

“Are you and him a thing?”

He sounded her out. His mention of ‘him’ made her recall what had happened last night.

She froze and nodded in a daze, forgetting that they were on the phone, and he could not see her.

“That man isn't as simple as you think. It's best if you don't get involved with him.”

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There was obviously an unfounded worry in his voice.

That man was not that simple?

It was only yesterday that she truly found out about the man's identity.

He belonged to the Mu, the wealthiest family in the capital, and was at the helm of Disheng Financial Group, which had drawn the attention of the world. The man, Mu Yazhe, had an absolutely noble status since birth. She never wanted to get involved with him whatsoever.

There seemed to be a vast chasm separating him and her. They belonged to two worlds, and it was difficult to cross over to the other.

They absolutely did not have a future together.

She replied, "I know that."

"You don't know, Shishi. That man is far from simple."

He paused briefly and lowered his voice. "Do you love him?"

Love?

That man?

No... How could she possibly love such a domineering man?!

She blanked out and then shook her head, but her voice got stuck in her throat, and like a damaged machine, she could not let out a sound.

He noted her silence and continued slowly, “That man is very dangerous. If you stay with him, you can get hurt. Shishi, I don’t want to see you getting hurt.”

A complete and coherent line went past his lips. After another bout of silence, he suddenly said, “I’ll feel hurt, too.”

Her heart clenched as her brows knitted. For a moment, her mind was completely blank.

No women could resist a man’s gentility.

This included her. She was initially armed to the teeth, but when she was faced with his gentle words, her armor was discarded at once, and her lips unconsciously formed a smile.

This smile did not last long, however.

Mu Yazhe’s furious face flashed across her eyes, and she suddenly recalled the position she was in.

The man seemed to dislike her being in contact with other men.

Whatever position she was in, she always felt thankful to Gu Xingze, but gratitude did not equate to love.

If she did not love him, on what grounds should she let him get hurt?

She weakly said, “Xingze, thank you, but I don’t wish to implicate you.”

“Huh...”

Implicate ?

“Shishi, listen; I may be much stronger than you think.”

He impulsively boasted, but it sounded more like a warm welcome. The man seemed to be warmly inviting her to hide under his unfurled, protective wings.

“Shishi, let me protect you... okay?”

The fingers that held her phone suddenly stiffened.

A wall in her heart crumbled down a bit as she was caught off guard.

At this moment, she, who was absorbed in her self-contradictions, absolutely did not realize the ominous presence closing in on her from behind.

Chapter 225: Going Too Far

At this moment, she, who was absorbed in her self-contradictions, absolutely did not realize the ominous presence closing in on her from behind.

It was not until her phone was snatched away by a large hand that she finally had a reaction. She was startled into turning around and immediately saw the man who was silently standing behind her. He was looking at her through extremely cold, narrowed eyes.

The coldness at the corner of his lips and the sharpness in his eyes reflected the displeasure this man had for her!

“Shishi, are you...”

Gu Xingze’s somewhat worried voice could be heard from the phone.

The rest of his words, along with her phone, instantly flew out of the window in a neat, parabolic curve!

“You!”

She looked at him in shock and watched in despair as her phone broke into pieces. Rage gradually filled her heart.

The sound of the phone shattering reached her ears and caused her to shudder slightly. She bit her lower lip as her shoulders shook with emotion.

The man pushed her shoulders at once. With his deep-set eyes containing too much rage, he said monotonously, “I thought you are an intelligent woman.”

Her chest rose and fell incessantly. It was clear that she was also enraged by his actions.

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When did this man come in? Was he a ghost? How was there no sound when he walked and suddenly appeared behind her?!

He bought her this new phone as compensation for the one he broke back then. It was the best phone from all the current brands.

She was not sad about the phone itself. However, she had used it for quite a while, and there were many precious photos of Youyou in it.

Before she could transfer them to her computer, the phone was already broken beyond repair by this man.

The workmanship of that phone was superb, yet it was broken into pieces by him – he had clearly used a lot of strength. In a way, it indicated how angry this man currently was.

Yun Shishi lost her temper as well, and she angrily pushed him away.

“You’re too much! Absurd; this is simply absurd! Why are you being so crazy for no reason?!”

She was absolutely maddened. Along with the rage she had bottled up since last night, she instantly exploded.

Her character was usually gentle. She had a sense of propriety and knew to leave some leeway for others.

She seldom lost her temper; it could even be said that she was inherently mild-tempered and hardly fought with others! For the simple reason that her son claimed to love her smiling face, she always strove to keep her temper in check.

However...

This man just had to go too far again and again!

After her explosion of rage, she steered clear of him and went toward the exit.

Mu Yazhe grabbed hold of her wrist at once. “Where are you going?!”

“Home! Going back to my home!”

“Going home? I doubt so!” the man scoffed, “You’re going to look for Gu Xingze, that man who can supposedly give you protection, right?”

“So what if I go looking for him?! What does it have to do with you?! Anyway, I just don’t want to stay with a crazy b*stard like you!” She clenched her teeth and stared at him with reddened eyes, forcefully shaking his grip off.

The unprepared her was then pulled back by the man. Her lower back immediately bumped on the window. The sudden ache left her defenseless, and she cried out involuntarily in pain.

“Mu Yazhe, are you crazy?! You crept behind me and then lashed out at me for no reason. If you’re not crazy, I don’t know what you are!”

“Crazy?” The corner of his lips curled into a snicker. His expression completely changed when he heard her stinging words, his eyes instantly getting covered in frost. “Woman, are you still unclear of your standing?”

Chapter 226: I will return everything to you.

“Woman, are you still unclear of your standing? Do I have to remind you of your status for you to know what you can do and cannot do?”

“My status? What is my status? You tell me what my status is!”

Her extreme indignation propelled her to shoot back at him aggressively. She seemed to realize the meaning behind his words as she tugged his sleeves with both her hands. In a trembling voice, she continued, “Do you mean that I’m... your lover, your woman, and your belonging? Are you referring to these three when you talked about status?”

He stared at her coolly and expressionlessly, as though admitting to her interrogation.

She coolly burst into laughter all of a sudden.

“Mu Yazhe, you are too much! Who do you think I am, and what do you treat me as? Your toy and your belonging? Someone who’s at your beck and call?!”

“Isn’t it so?” the man frostily retorted. He had obviously been antagonized by her based on his angry look.

“You have a sharp, little mouth; do you really need to win all the time? You are my woman now, and since you are that to me, please be respectful and stop flirting around. I don’t like others touching my thing! I don’t like it.”

“Your thing?”

“Isn’t it so? What you have on you, including yourself, all belongs to me!”

His tyrannical declaration was like an inviolable law.

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She snorted, his words sounding funny to her ears. With red-rimmed eyes and an incredulous expression, she sneered at him.

“I’m your thing? You keep saying that I’m your woman, but what do you treat me as? Am I your toy or your belonging?! Alright, if that’s the case, then I’ll return everything to you!”

Saying this, her fingers deftly unbuttoned the clothes she was wearing. She removed the coat and threw it at him as she screamed, “Here; I’ll return that to you! What I owe you, I’ll return to you! Take everything back!”

Looking perplexed, he held her shoulders and stopped her. Why is this woman so stubborn? Did I mean that? Did my words come out as that?!

“Why must you put yourself down?”

“I put myself down? You are the one putting me down!”

She paused for a bit and then sarcastically continued, “How am I flirting around? Did I ever seduce you? You are the one messing with me in the first place! Am I so cheap to be your kept woman? Did I beg you for it? Did I shamelessly stick around you? No, I didn’t! The only wrong thing I did is to sign that unfair contract with you six years ago! I admit that I wasn’t forced; I signed it willingly! You paid me handsomely under that contract... but that’s a fee in exchange for my rights as a mother! If it weren’t for my father’s company being in a crisis, do you think I’d be willing to do that? Do you think ten million or a billion can be used to buy my child or exchange my rights as a mother?! I’ll give you one billion and you

return my child to me; can you do that?! Are you willing to do that?!”

Her confession was a shot to her heart, and it pried open the long-hidden wound that was hurting inside her.

Chapter 227: Unfair Treatment

Her confession was a shot to her heart, and it pried open the long-hidden wound that was hurting inside her.

From a young age, she had moved from place to place. She did not even know how her biological father looked like. For as long as she could remember, she only knew of a mother, and this closest kin left her when she was still young.

She finally managed to have a home. Despite being unrelated by blood, Yun Yecheng still gave her a home!

Although not everyone in this family was kind to her, she was not short of daily necessities.

Repaying gratitude with kindness was a principle she had always lived by. After all, her adoptive father provided financial support for her postgraduate studies even though he himself was strapped on cash. Her heart was not made of iron, and she could not bear to look on unfeelingly as her father was driven into desperation.

With no room to retreat, she signed that humiliating contract.

Was it something she wanted, though? What she wanted... was to protect her family!

Questions were constantly being fired at him, and Mu Yazhe was caught off guard by these.

He had never seen her lose control of her emotions.

Right now, she seemed to be filled with despair and helplessness. The toughness she had tried so hard to create instantly crumbled. She was completely defeated.

“What mistake did I make in my past life? Did I owe you? Have I killed someone, committed arson, or been a heinous criminal? YES! I was in the wrong. I shouldn’t have taken away your child, but Youyou... He’s also my child! I’m willing to be accountable and pay the money I owe you for the breach of contract. I’ll return it to you even if I have to use every penny I earn in my entire life! You wanted me to stay by your side, and I agreed to that as well, so how could you humiliate me like that? I’m a human being and not an item! I have my thoughts and emotions; I have my tempers, and I know pain as well. The words you spout, why are they always like knives, cutting into people and making them hurt? I’m your woman, so am I not supposed to have dignity? Do I not have the rights to have dignity as a human being? How lowly am I exactly that you have to trample on me like this? Do I have to open myself up and let you take whatever you want with me just because I’m your woman?! Is this what you really want? Not for me!”

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Suddenly, he held her cheeks firmly and shouted, “SHUT UP!”

He almost suffocated from her monologue! Each word he heard filled him with apprehension. He hated her asking him these questions. Was he like that? Was he this terrible in her eyes?

After his bellow, she bit her lower lip tightly and never spoke further.

She then stared at him with tears gushing out like a river.

Still, the indignation and hardships she had bottled up for over a decade, how could they completely be explained by yelling from the bottom of one's heart and shedding a few drops of tears?!

She was not a puppet; she had human feelings as well. When she was happy, she wanted to smile. When she was sad, she wanted to cry. However, she could not cry – Youyou was afraid of her tears. He was afraid that she was heartbroken or hurt.

Thus, she tried her best to conceal her weaknesses.

Yun Na might be envious of her good fortune of being recognized by Lin Fengtian, taking a leap into the entertainment industry, and perhaps having a bright future ahead of her!

However, she was also envious of Yun Na for having doting parents who unconditionally loved her and easily forgave her mistakes!

She only wanted to be an average woman of flesh and blood rather than a walking corpse. She wanted to be loved, to be accepted, and to be cared for. At the very least, she did not want to be treated unfairly like this!

She stretched her hand out to push the man away as she broke down, but he just had to remain standing in the same position, erect like a mountain. No matter how much she pushed and shoved, he did not move an inch.

Chapter 228: Stop Crying

She stretched her hand out to push the man away as she broke down, but he just had to remain standing in the same position, erect like a mountain. No matter how much she pushed and shoved, he did not move an inch.

Her heart sank. She absolutely hated this man, who had turned her life upside down, yet she could do nothing about it!

“Take it away. Take all of it away! Don’t torture me anymore!”

Yun Shishi held on to her head and, with her back against the windowpane, she slid down bit by bit. Burying her face deep into her arms, she sobbed uncontrollably. She looked just like a child the way she let out all her pent-up humiliation, anger, indignation, and despair freely.

“Mu Yazhe, I hate you. I hate you the most...”

He was momentarily dumbfounded.

His heart hurt and felt frenetic – absolutely frenetic – for he made her cry. Her unexpected breakdown took him by surprise, and he was clueless about it.

For the longest time, he just stood there upright, watching her with helpless eyes and lowered head, at a loss on what to do.

Why did this woman love to cry in such a piteous and depressing manner, as if all her defenses were dissolved? She was wholly displaying her true self before him!

What should he do with her, though?

Was he in the wrong, after all?

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Was he in the wrong?

He just wanted to build a fortress and keep her inside it while providing her with abundant sustenance – be it glamor, wealth, or even limitless love. He simply hated other men thinking of her!

He just wanted to keep her safe from the others coveting her.

Was this also wrong?

What should be done, then?

He slightly furrowed his brows. His heart was in so much pain he was suffocating. He had never ever shed a tear; even when he was sustaining injuries all over his body in the most gruesome special training camp, he did not cry even once.

The cold-hearted him had never felt so heartbroken because of anyone, but as this woman completely broke down before him, she made his heart unexpectedly clench in pain.

“STOP CRYING!” he bellowed. She, however, did not care for him, and her hoarse cries seemed to assert his distance.

He held his forehead in frustration. A woman’s tears were always an unexpected trump card against men; they penetrated through them and gave no way for them to defend themselves.

Was he not the same? Looking at her cry, his heart felt pain but he could do nothing about it.

He had never comforted a woman before; must he comfort her the way he did with Yichen?

When Yichen was younger, he feared pain the most. He was especially afraid to receive injections whenever he was sick. Each time he had to take an injection, he would wail endlessly.

In those instances, he would pull him into his arms and kiss his cheeks. The boy would then stop crying.

He lowered his stance and stretched out his long arms, easily scooping her into his embrace.

In the past, this woman would have struggled, shoved, and ran from him.

Right now, however, she did not! Her body was extremely docile and she let him hug her without much struggle, yet her cries did not stop.

She simply buried her face deep within and sobbed nonstop as she rubbed her eyes. She did not appear to be a 24-year-old lady but a

weak and helpless little girl instead. She looked so delicate and pitiful, one would be hard-pressed not to shower her with affection!

He carried her to sit on the bed, just like how he had carried Yichen, and hugged her in his arms.

The man's chest was very wide. His chest and his hug then became a place where she could willfully cry and seek solace.

He dipped his head to wipe her tears away. He kissed the side of her mouth and softly said, "Don't cry, hmm?"

She still cried. She cried so movingly and despairingly it felt as if the sky had fallen and earth had cracked open.