

Chapter 799 – Yan Bingqing’ s Scheme (3) – Read novel online for free

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A knife twisted in Yang Shoucheng’s heart anew upon hearing this, and he hugged her into his embrace with trembling hands.

“Bingqing, it’s been hard on you.”

Mo Yan glanced at her expressionlessly.

Topnotch acting!

The truth of the matter was Youyou had acted partial by taking only exactly sixteen slaps before leaving. Yan Bingqing did not know that she was pregnant then, let alone that there ever were those so-called punching and kicking.

She had all along been good at lying.

This was something that her manager admired very much about her.

“Brother Yang, what to do? Now that I’ve been reduced into such a state by that woman, is my life entirely ruined?” she cried in lamentation. “She’s really vicious. Although I was in the wrong, did she have to be so ruthless? Banning me to such a state, what... what exactly did I do that was so wrong? I already sincerely apologized to her, but she forced me to a corner still! Don’t mention the entertainment industry, I probably wouldn’t survive in the mainland! My life is finished, finished...”

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“Mu Yazhe was a little too vicious!” Yang Shoucheng nodded sullenly.

Alas, this was where it was thorny.

In the huge capital, he was unafraid of heaven and earth, but he did not dare to offend the Mu and Gu families.

One was Mu Yazhe and the other was Gu Jinglian; both were ruthless characters. Young but wild, young but vicious, one was more ruthless than the other.

That Mu brat, in particular, was even more overbearing than that Gu chap. At least, on the mainland market, he did not have a place to speak in front of Mu Yazhe.

If there were no Mu Yazhe, him stepping forward could easily resolve this matter.

Within the capital, especially in the entertainment industry, that young man’s words were final.

Yan Bingqing offending him was no doubt courting death.

Seeing the complex look on his face, she started to feel increasingly uneasy and tentatively asked, “Brother Yang, what should I do? Now that I’m in such a state, nobody wants to offend him for me. Just exactly what kind of character is he? I used to think that he’s a formidable character, but... never did I think that a word from him

could turn the entertainment industry upside down; who is he really?”

She seldom heard people in showbiz mention that man and only knew that he was an influential figure in Disheng. Hence, as that financial group was Huanyu’s main shareholder, a word from him could turn the entertainment industry upside down.

Yang Shoucheng was a little troubled. “Bingqing, for this matter, it’s not that I don’t want to help you, but as you’ve heard, Mu Yazhe is a character that nobody dares to offend easily.”

Hearing his words, her heart thumped as her face grew ashen. She plunged into the endless abyss of despair.

Even this old man could do nothing about it and did not dare to offend him. He must really be formidable.

“Brother Yang, if you even say this, then I’m really done for...”

“Don’t worry about it first!” He hastened to comfort her. “Didn’t you just receive a Hollywood offer? Since this matter happened and you’re banned in the mainland, just develop your career in Hollywood; the Hollywood market is very big. You can just focus on it. I’ll make arrangements for you and fight for some resources. Over the years, I’ve made some connections in the Hollywood and can arrange a path for you.”

Chapter 800: Yan Bingqing’s Scheme (4)

“Brother Yang, my overseas movie offers were all canceled,” she sadly said.

He was startled a little. “What’s the matter?”

“This matter has blown up abroad. I heard that several international brands have close ties with Huanyu, and those movies I had previously signed on were resources from Huanyu. Although they are only supporting characters, being able to act in Hollywood films is a big honor as they can strengthen my position further. Unfortunately, now that this has happened, those contracts have fallen through.”

“Really?!” He pondered on this for a while before he slowly said to her. “Those are Huanyu’s resources. Having offended Huanyu, it’s natural for those contracts to fall through. I still have some resources and can give you a try. There’s a movie that is going to be filmed next year; I’ll help you to get in touch and make arrangements for you to get in.”

“Really?” She was ecstatic, as if seeing a glimmer of hope in her desperate plight.

“When have I lied to you?”

He consoled her by patting the back of her hand. “Things have already developed to this stage, so let’s put filming aside for now and prioritize letting your body recover.”

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She solemnly nodded.

He contemplated for a moment and then said, “I’ll first arrange for you to hide in Hongkong and recuperate there. We can talk about other matters when you’re well.”

“Alright, Brother Yang; I’ll listen to you.” With an aggrieved face, she nestled in his embrace, like a little bird relying on its trusted kin.

He stroked her back, which was vibrating from her sobs. All of a sudden, he curiously asked, “This matter arose because of a newbie, huh!”

“Mhm.”

“Who is that newbie? Seems like quite a big shot!” he asked.

Her face immediately assumed a vicious look as she clenched her teeth. “That woman is called Yun Shishi; it seems that she has a power backer!”

Yun Shishi?

He suddenly remembered who that woman was!

His old face twitched as he dipped his gaze to peer at his broken three fingers. He then recalled Gu Xingze’s cold words: ‘Let me warn you; don’t harbor any thoughts about her!’

Yun Shishi... that woman?!

The woman who had caused him to lose his three fingers!

She must be from a big background!

However, fame was merely temporary for the women in the entertainment industry.

Just see how he would crush her when she fell out of favor!

He was livid, and to Yan Bingqing, he said, “Alright! I got it. Be reassured that I won’t let this woman off and will certainly avenge you!”

She was overjoyed upon hearing this and cried in surprise.

“Brother Yang, you really dote on me; I love you!” She kissed him on the lips.

He tightly clasped her nape, deepening the kiss.

Taking the hint, Mo Yan retreated while shaking his head.

...

When Yun Shishi returned to the production team, she realized that Yan Bingqing was gone.

She uncertainly thought of how fast Mu Yazhe had kicked that woman out of the production team.

Mu Xi rushed to the production team. The moment she spotted her charge, she came up to her and scrutinized her face with sparkling eyes.

Confused by her assistant’s behavior, she asked, “Why do you keep staring at me?”

“That’s great! The injury on your face has healed!”

She hugged her tightly. “Shishi, it’s great that you’re fine now! After what happened that day, Qin Zhou berated me and said that you suffered from subconjunctival hemorrhage and perforated eardrum; that almost scared me to death! Woo... woo... woo...”

Chapter 801: Lu Jingtian Parachuting into the Production Team

Puzzled, Yun Shishi asked, “What did Qin Zhou berate you about?”

“He blames me for not taking good care of you and for letting you suffer such grievances in the production team!” Mu Xi answered, feeling remorseful about it.

“It’s all over. Besides, why blame you when this matter has nothing to do with you?”

The assistant was moved to tears. “Shishi, you’re always nice and considerate of me!”

She patted her head. “Well, I’m all healed up now, right?”

“Yes, yes!” The other nodded excitedly, wiping her tears off. “Yan Bingqing deserves the ban. She’s reaping what she sowed for bullying you!”

“Ban?”

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She was confused.

“Yes, that woman’s been banned. The production team already removed her from its roster of cast.” With that, the assistant looked at her strangely. “Eh? Don’t you know about this matter?”

She shook her head blankly. “I didn’t know... She got banned?”

“Yes. Huanyu’s top management gave the direct order, produced many articles, and shamed her on the Internet. Besides being kicked out from the production team, all her commercial endorsements and movie contracts were terminated. Her name is foul even abroad. Anyway, she has no chance at making a comeback! Shishi, don’t you think that this is a blessing in disguise? After she was removed from the production team, Director Lin was especially happy and did not give any attitude for these past few days.”

Yun Shishi frowned slightly.

“I was outside the country these past few days; that’s why I didn’t know about all this.”

Her assistant asked, “Oh, yes. Where have you been for the past few days? You were unreachable; Qin Zhou has been nagging me about you.”

“Oh, I went on a vacation to recuperate.”

“What a shame! You’ve missed the biggest drama of the year! You didn’t see how Yan Bingqing was torn apart these past few nights. She’s such a poor thing; even I feel pity for her! Still, a pitiful person surely has something hateful about them. She deserves it!” Mu Xi resented. “I actually feel that it’s not enough! Should have her apologize in public to you. Only then can you relieve your anger!”

From her words, Yun Shishi realized that she had been fooled by Mu Yazhe.

There was no doubt that it was him who had placed the ban on Yan Bingqing.

Only he could probably singlehandedly turn the entertainment industry upside down.

When had he placed the ban on Yan Bingqing?

Then... that day, he...

The thought of her purposely being kept in the dark and begging him to remove Yan Bingqing... He even shamelessly offered such a condition.

She had actually fallen for his trick!

D*mn. How could Mu Yazhe be so evil?

Her face flushed for a moment. “Then, since she’s removed from the production team, who will be acting her role?”

Mu Xi opened her mouth and was about to answer when a voice came from behind her.

“Yun Shishi!”

She turned her head to the voice and saw a well-dressed woman with exquisite makeup slowly walking up to her.

She was a little surprised. In the moment that she blanked out, the woman had already reached her. She smiled slightly and proffered her hand. “Hello, I’m Lu Jingtian. You can just call me Jingtian.”

Lu Jingtian ?

This face... seems a little familiar.

She could not recall where she had seen her, though.

Yun Shishi held her outstretched hand. “Hello, Jingtian.”

“I just entered the production team, and I’m playing the role of Lin Hena; please give me a lot of guidance in the future!”

Lu Jingtian put on a sweet smile and a friendly gaze.

The assistant, however, stood aside and did not dare to speak anymore.

Yun Shishi answered, “Yes! Everyone is in the same production team, so please give me a lot of guidance in the future, too.”

Chapter 802: So-Called Creating Hype

Translator: Atlas Studios **Editor:** Atlas Studios

“He he! You’re really interesting!” Lu Jingtian smiled sweetly for a moment but suddenly said words that made people confused.

With that, she turned to leave.

Yun Shishi was even more baffled. “What a strange person. Mu Xi, that Lu Jingtian talks strangely.”

She gave people the feeling of being high and mighty.

Like a young mistress from the upper-class society forcefully pretending to look placid, it gave off the feeling of being deliberate.

Mu Xi gave her a face and then hurriedly pulled her to a corner. “Shishi, don’t talk nonsense! That Lu Jingtian comes from a big background.”

“... I feel that the actors in the production team, even a supporting character, all comes from a big background.” She slowly spat out a wise saying.

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Her assistant’s lips twitched, silently agreeing to it. That’s true. Your background is the biggest.

“Anyway, everyone comes from a big background,” the assistant explained. “Lu Jingtian’s father is the biggest shareholder in Huanyu’s top management.”

“How capable.”

Yun Shishi furrowed her brows. “I find her quite familiar, as if I’ve seen her before, but I can’t remember when and where.”

“How can that be? Although she has signed a contract with Huanyu, she hasn’t officially debuted. She did act in several films, but they

were all supporting roles, and the movies have yet to be released,” the other disclosed.

She wondered, “That’s strange. Why were they all supporting roles? Isn’t her father among Huanyu’s top management? Surely, it’s easy for him to invest in a movie to support his daughter?”

Mu Xi rolled her eyes. “Even though it’s his daughter, he can’t act so arbitrarily. Investing in a movie now can easily cost hundreds of millions; her father indeed has the capability to give her an acting troupe, but the box office will certainly be a flop. With that, the hundreds of millions’ worth of investment will just go down the drain. Who is willing to take that kind of risk? Never mind about the box-office flop, what if the reviews are bad, too? What to do, then? Do you still hear a sound after the money is thrown in the water? There will be no return from investing in her.”

She nodded.

“So Huanyu’s strategy for her is to let her act some supporting roles and gain some fame. Later, when the films are released, a PR team will package her by creating hype; her fame will then come.”

“Creating hype?!”

“What do you think, then? Creating hype is the shortcut to fame. Before your debut, Huanyu also created hype. Even now, ‘The Green Apple’ Weibo is also creating hype for you. Your current Weibo fans have almost reached tens of millions! This is the result of creating hype.”

Mu Xi almost spat blood.

This Yun Shishi was literally the best artiste she had ever led.

While others focused on creating hype and gaining fame, she actually really paid attention to her acting skills...

She should know that she was in a ‘gold’ production team. All the conditions were in her favor, so it was literally the best time for her to create hype.

The Internet reviews about her were all good. Many people accepted her role of ‘Yin Xiachun’ and were willing to support her.

Furthermore, everyone in the production team mentioned her in conversations.

Yang Mi, Li Jiuxian, and even Gu Xingze; which one of them was not the hottest idol star today?

Even if she only uploaded a wefie with Gu Xingze, it would spark off a popular hot topic!

However, this Yun Shishi, forget about creating hype, she had only updated her Weibo once for these past few days, and it had nothing to do with the filming at all!

She rather let her and the superstar’s wefie rot in her phone and did not know how to capitalize on the situation to create hype for a bit.

Chapter 803: Gu Xingze’ s female partner was supposed to be her.

Translator: Atlas Studios **Editor:** Atlas Studios

It was no wonder Yan Bingqing hated her. She was blessed with resources but did not know how to make use of them!

“How are they going to hype her name?” Yun Shishi wondered, curious about how Huanyu was going to support her.

“I heard that Huanyu had once tried borrowing Gu Xingze’s fame to hype her name, but he had disagreed then.”

“Why not?”

His fame was soaring; if he lent a hand to Lu Jingtian, she could make a name for herself.

“Do you think everyone is like you? Back then, when Huanyu wanted to use him to create hype for you, he actually willingly cooperated. Xingze is also a weird person. He’s willing to use his fame to support you but not Lu Jingtian; I don’t get him,” said her assistant with a baffled look.

She was surprised.

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When she had just debuted, Huanyu had hyped her name using his fame.

The outside world speculated that she and the superstar had an intimate relationship, and there was a scandal that they were lovers. Hence, during the movie opening ceremony, she was a little caught off guard by the reporters’ series of questions regarding this issue.

“He dislikes being hyped up. Shishi, you’re probably the only exception. In order to support Lu Jingtian, Huanyu threatened and bribed him. They even offered 0.1% of the shares in exchange, but he still disagreed. Rumors have it that our company even originally set up a script for hyping her as ‘Gu Xingze’s scandal girlfriend’, but he refused to cooperate regardless of anything.”

Her assistant continued. “During Huanyu’s annual gala, the female partner they had arranged for him was Lu Jingtian. In the end, he had you as his female partner; only he would dare to do that. Huanyu also didn’t dare to do anything about him. After all, he’s also a shareholder of this entertainment company. His status is there. If he doesn’t agree, they will also not dare to mess around.”

She was startled. “Xingze’s female partner at the gala was supposed to be her?”

“Yes! He originally agreed, too, but he later invited you, so Lu Jingtian almost exploded in anger. Suddenly being kicked away by him, she was forced to attend the gala alone. The topic was gone, and so was the popularity. You, as his female partner, got all the limelight, so don’t think that she’s a friend. She may be polite to you on the surface, but she may be hating you deep down!”

“Thanks for reminding me...”

Her words abruptly ended as she recalled something.

She understood why she had found that woman to be so familiar.

Speaking of the gala, that was the woman who had tripped her that night, no ?

She failed to recognize her at first notice as her makeup was different at the gala.

When she attended the gala that night, she was dressed to the nines, and her makeup was thick and heavy.

Her makeup today was comparatively plainer; hence, she failed to recognize her straight away.

She mocked inwardly, That level of makeup is no different to plastic surgery.

No wonder I couldn't recognize her; it's almost a change of face.

Makeup skills were indeed part of sorcery!

It could let a woman undergo a complete makeover.

Seeing her actual face now, she was not her stunning self at the gala. Her features were neither beautiful or exquisite. It was not even outstanding; who knew what she looked like with all her makeup gone?

She carefully recalled, No wonder that, at the gala, she saw me as an enemy.

It turned out that she had 'snatched' her resources.

In this case, they had a feud.

Chapter 804: There are no true friends in this industry.

Translator: Atlas Studios **Editor:** Atlas Studios

Thinking back of Lu Jingtian's smile to her earlier, it was really hypocritical.

“I've just debuted not long ago, but I've made many enemies; am I that bad at managing people relations?” Yun Shishi mocked herself.

Mu Xi, however, laughed. “Shishi, you need to adjust your mentality. Having plenty of enemies means that you're popular. Others are jealous of you, so they pick on you. If you're unknown with no fame, who will take you seriously? Those who see you as a thorn in their flesh are all jealous of your resources. In this industry, you're considered as one-of-a-kind.”

She was taken aback. “This industry is really complicated.”

“That's what it is!” her assistant affirmed. “How many true friends do you think are in this industry? The industry is so big, but the resources are limited. In the competition for fame and fortune, many are hypocritical people; you'll have to pay more attention in the future. No matter how big your background is, sometimes, if someone gets hold of your sore spot and uses public opinion to attack you, you're finished. Water may keep the boat afloat, but it may also sink it, too, so you must maintain your image in front of your fans.”

Her advice was really pertinent.

She listened to her words and smiled. “Thank you, Xiao Mu.”

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“Eh, Shishi, you really don’t know how blessed you are. For a newbie like you, if not for Huanyu’s support, do you think that you can win against Yan Bingqing?”

She sincerely answered, “To tell you the truth, I don’t have much ambition. Acting is merely a hobby of mine, and I’ve never thought of competing for fame or fortune. I just purely like it and only want to see acting as an ordinary job – a way of life. Am I doing things the improper way for having no ambition?”

“Indeed,” her assistant replied honestly, poking straight on her sore spot.

Her lips twitched. “Need you to be so frank?!”

The other laughed.

Honestly speaking, if these words were to come out of other people’s mouths, it would seem very pretentious and pompous.

Which of those who entered this industry did not come for fame and fortune?

Even though it might not be at first, but after entering this industry, it was hard to maintain that initial resolution once they were influenced.

However, from Yun Shishi’s mouth, the words sounded very pure.

Many artistes, if blessed with her resources, they would have long created hype for themselves using unscrupulous methods.

In contrast, she really only saw acting as a job.

“This is no ordinary industry, though; you’ll have to be extra prudent in everything.”

Over the next few days, after Lu Jingtian entered the production team, the main priority was to re-film Yan Bingqing’s previously taken scenes in order to keep on schedule.

Due to Yan Bingqing getting banned and fired from the production team for making use of her role as Lin Hena to bully a co-actress, all the previous footage had to be re-filmed now.

From the many scenes featuring Yin Xiachun and Lin Hena, Lin Fengtian retained the close-ups of Yun Shishi, while the other parts required re-filming.

In the first few days of Lu Jingtian joining the production team, as she was the missy of one of Huanyu’s higher-ups, everyone was very careful around her.

She was infamous for her bad temper, which was no better than Yan Bingqing.

When she was filming on the other sets before, she would often get into disagreements and vent anger on the staff as well. Her temper was notoriously lousy.

However, this time, after joining the team, as if vaccinated, or perhaps with Yan Bingqing as precedent, her volatile temper was nowhere to be seen.

Chapter 805: Becoming Strangers

It was a different side of her that was presented to the production crew. Throughout the filming, she astounded them with her gentleness and friendliness.

She got along well with everyone, and to their surprise, she did not make things difficult for the rookie, too.

She was fully prepared when it came to the scene in the basement. Unlike her predecessor, she did not make an opportunistic attack at Yun Shishi; instead, the scene was smoothly wrapped up with just three bad takes.

Lin Fengtian was pleasantly surprised with her performance. The scene was well executed, be it her lines, walking position, expression, or dramatization. The slapping act was completed using the montage effect and not real action by the actresses. All in all, everything was done right.

Mu Xi was also surprised by this sudden change in Lu Jingtian.

However, as a saying went, ‘a fox might grow grey but never good.’

It was hard for her to believe that the woman had shed her spoiled and insolent nature to become a totally different person.

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To Yun Shishi, though, she was just happy to mingle well with all the cast.

Since the incident involving Yan Bingqing, those who had offended her came forward to offer their sincere apologies.

Even Yang Mi had a change of attitude toward her and would intentionally act friendly with her at times.

After spending some time with the actress, she gradually came to accept her.

The woman might be a schemer, but she was at least not as thorny as Yan Bingqing, who was a pain to handle.

Yang Mi, who had been in a film when she was very young, officially made her debut in the acting industry at 17. Simply put, she had been in show business for a decade now.

Yun Shishi, who viewed her as a seasoned actress, was naturally respectful of this senior.

The actress truly had a change of opinion regarding her as well. Initially, as she was thinking that the newcomer's ample resources were obtained through underhanded means, she had disliked her.

However, after getting along with her for some time, she grew to admire the latter's authenticity, and they became friends.

There were times when she would put up pictures of their wife on Weibo. As for Yun Shishi, having learned to use the platform, she often interacted with other artistes via it.

The only thing that kept her in a fix was Gu Xingze's aloofness toward her.

Once, on a hot day, she was giving out some bottled water to the production team.

The superstar, who had just finished his part, was on his way to his resting room. She went over to pass him a bottle when she saw him, but he ignored her completely. He simply brushed past her without a second look.

By the time she recovered from her surprise, he had gone into his room, shut the door, and locked her out.

What had happened exactly that he had to keep a distance from her?

Was it because... of what had happened that day?

She could not help feeling down.

To her, he was a senior deserving of her respect.

He gave her so much help, but now, both were no better than strangers. This was a blow to her.

Her assistant witnessed their interaction, and she, too, could not fathom the reason for this overnight change. There seemed to be a huge chasm between the two.

They used to get along so well.

She could still remember how the superstar had given up Qin Zhou, his ace agent, to her.

It was all thanks to the superstar that she could get an ace agent.

Somehow, their relationship had turned frosty.

What had happened?

Though she was concerned, Mu Xi dared not to probe.

Somehow, these two's relationship was unclear and mysterious, and she could not make head or tail of it.

Chapter 806: An Orphan Abandoned by the World

Yun Shishi could sense that Gu Xingze was avoiding her on purpose.

She could not tell what was on his mind exactly, though.

Being in the same production team, where both rubbed shoulders with each other regularly, his aloof attitude certainly made her distraught her.

Perhaps, I am a source of great distress to him.

She thought about it for a while before her lips curled into a half-jest and turned to leave with resignation.

Inside the resting room, the man had his back against the door as pain and desolation flashed across his frigid face when he heard her walk away.

He was unwilling to snub her in such a deliberate way as well.

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However, he knew very well that, if he did not curb his feelings for her, it might get out of control.

He was not being cowardly for refraining to fight for her. He knew that he might be unqualified to compete in the first place.

After all, the man in her heart was not him, was it?

His liking would only become a burden and a source of pain to her.

The only wise thing to do on his part was to maintain a distance from her.

This was his first time having feelings for a woman, yet it regrettably seemed destined to be one-sided.

He slowly sat down and let his body sink into the couch. Picking up a bottle of mineral water, he twisted the cap open and took a few sips. Suddenly, he lifted the bottle in his hand and smashed it at the mirror across the room.

Crack...

Hairline cracks began to appear on the huge mirror panel.

The table was a mess by then.

When his assistant, Ruo Bing, entered the room, the place was in disarray. All the makeup kits and equipment were scattered all over the floor, while a bottle of mineral water lay horizontal on the table with water still trickling down from its unblocked neck.

She alarmingly surveyed the area and quickly discovered the superstar huddling in a corner like a ball.

The man had his face hidden in the shadows, with his fringe covering his face. She could not see his expression, but he looked down and out.

She was taken aback by this scene. Never before had she come across the superstar looking so frail and lost.

He was like an orphan abandoned by the world.

She walked over and carefully placed her hand on his shoulder. There was no response from him, and he continued to sit quietly in the corner without moving; even his breathing felt weak and thin.

“Xingze, what happened to you...” Looking concerned, his assistant asked softly.

He did not speak and merely turned his body sideways.

Ruo Bing’s hand slipped from his shoulder.

She looked up and took in the clutter on the makeup table. Shaking her head slightly, she said softly, “Xingze, I’m going to clean up the place... Er, you can talk to me if there’s anything that is troubling you.”

He remained pensively silent.

She started to clear up the mess; lining the bottles of makeup neatly on the table and wiping the floor dry.

Suddenly, the clicking sound of a Zippo lighter was heard from behind.

She swung around with a start, only to see him lighting a cigarette.

This was a big shock to her!

When did he start smoking?

He never had this habit in the past!

After she regained her composure, she hastily walked up to him, snatched the cigarette stick wedged between his fingers, and snuffed it out on the ground.

He looked up slightly; his eyes gleamed coldly and full of hostility underneath the fringe.

She was taken aback by his hostility, but she stood her ground.

“Xingze, when have you started smoking?”

He looked up at her and finally opened his mouth. “Give it back to me.”

Chapter 807: Acting for Real

“Stop smoking. You still need to record an album tomorrow, and the DEMO for a movie title. You’ll wreck your throat if you continue to smoke.”

He threw her a sidelong glare, quietly fished out another stick from the cigarette box, and took a drag after lighting it.

The weak flame from the tip might be faint, but it lit up his pair of cold eyes.

She did not know what to do with him.

Squatting before him, she said patiently, “Xingze, you can always talk to me if you are unhappy. You don’t have to torture yourself in this way.”

He kept his mum and treated her like air.

She was embarrassed but could do nothing about it.

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She had been working for him for years, yet she knew very little about him.

From what she knew, he was extremely sentimental.

Unlike other stars who changed their assistants one after another, he only had two of them since his debut.

He was the type to keep the things he liked no matter how broken or worn out they became.

He was the superstar among all the stars, and the number-one idol in the nation, yet he was insulated from gossips.

Many actresses had flocked to him; nevertheless, he was always alone.

Other than that, she knew nothing about him.

Maybe, in the first place, no one could make him open up his heart.

He was discovered by a talent scout at 15; after which, he entered showbiz through Huanyu. After signing up with the entertainment company, he acted in his first movie and released an album later on.

Since then, his fame had skyrocketed, and his career was smooth-sailing.

Looking past the fame and glamor, the superstar gave off only one feeling.

Loneliness.

That's right. Loneliness.

Beside Qin Zhou, no one could truly get close to him.

This might have to do with his childhood.

It seemed that he was an illegitimate son of the famous Gu family in the capital. His mother had passed away when he was very young, and he was exiled to live by himself overseas.

That only changed when he met Qin Zhou when he was 15.

To his assistant, he was always aloof and detached, just like a prince on a pedestal, whom no one could get close.

This was her first time seeing him distraught, though, and that put her at a loss.

“Xingze, you still have a scene to complete this afternoon. Will you have any problem acting later with your current state?”

“No problem.” He opened his mouth at long last.

That put her heart at ease finally.

“That’s good! Have a good rest and get into form.”

He looked downcast holding the cigarette between his lips.

Right now, acting was his only way of releasing his pent-up emotions.

There were moments when he wished that time would stand still there and then.

He wanted to live in the world of acting, never to depart.

At least, he got to hold her hands, hugged her, and kissed her when they were acting.

Into that act, he had really poured all of himself; it was for real.

Alas, to her, it was merely acting.

...

There were two scenes in the afternoon.

One was between Lu Jingtian and Jun Mo.

The other was Gu Xingze and Yun Shishi.

These two acts consisted of the important highlights in the novel.

Jun Mo did not have many acts in this movie, but when she did make her appearance, they were always significant scenes. As this was her first acting role a novice actress, she spent a considerable amount of time polishing her skills. Often, she would look for Yun Shishi to practice her script.

She worked hard, going over a line for a scene a couple of times each.

In her first act, her character ‘Su Qi’ shared a scene with Lu Jingtian’s ‘Lin Hena’.

Chapter 808: What acting is this?!

After Yin Xiachun returned from overseas, she had emotional entanglements with Yin Dongyu again.

Because of her hospitalization from pneumonia, the man was absent from the engagement with Lin Hena. Enraged, the woman stormed to the hospital she was in with the intention to pin the blame on her but was blocked at the entrance to the ward by Su Qi.

The two people had a dispute.

It was also a tear-jerking scene in the movie.

When Lin Hena furiously interrogated Su Qi, “Are you just going to watch the woman you love go into the arms of another man? Do you really love her? I see that your so-called ‘love’ is merely lip-service! Don’t you feel indignant sending your beloved woman away?” Su Qi calmly answered, “I love her, so I’m giving her the greatest freedom of all.”

For this scene, Jun Mo specially pulled Yun Shishi to rehearse for many times.

It was so much the latter could almost recite the script of this scene at heart.

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Because of all her efforts, during the filming, Jun Mo was in a very good condition. She was full of emotions, her lines revealed deep emotions, and each of her facial expressions was very on point.

Especially for the close-ups, the tension in her eyes was enough to give people goosebumps.

Meanwhile, while Lu Jingtian was in the condition, the tension in her expression paled in comparison to her co-actress.

This one line in particular: “Suqi, you’re such a coward for pushing your beloved woman to someone else!” made her burst into peals of laughter several times.

Lin Fengtian was so furious that he lashed out at her.

She almost cried from his scolding. Her eyes were red as she ran back to her waiting room. She finally adjusted her condition, but in

the end, during the filming, the director got furious because her emotions were not on point and lashed out at her. Again, there was a series of bad takes.

She really wanted to cry, but no tears came forth.

Rage overtook the director as he pointed at her and scolded her before everyone on set. “Lu Jingtian, I’m tired of scolding you! D*mn it! What acting is that?! Do you think that your acting is really good? You don’t even see what you’re acting! Go back and look in the mirror to see what makeup you have on. It’s so thick; are you acting a delinquent?! Don’t read the script first when you return. Go read more on an actor’s self-cultivation. You still want to be popular, bah! Indulging in fantasy! It’s quicker for you to go buy a pillow and dream! Do you think you’ll be popular after being slightly prettier from your cosmetic surgery from South Korea? Your acting is so lousy. Believe it or not, I’ll cut your scenes until you’re a mere passerby!”

He was the infamous demon scissorhands.

Everyone present, hearing how he reprimanded her, wanted to laugh but did not dare to do so and could only suppress it.

Especially her co-actress to the scene, Jun Mo was practically choking from holding in her laughter.

“Pfft!”

Yun Shishi, however, was unable to hold it in and snickered.

The assistant quickly endured her laughter and tugged on her clothes’ hem. “Shishi, don’t laugh!”

Sure enough, Lu Jingtian, who had already suffered a stomach of grievances from the director's scolding, took a glance at Yun Shishi. Her eyes were frighteningly insidious.

Seeing her get distracted, he got so angry he launched into another scolding. "Where are you looking at?! You're not serious during acting, and now you got distracted while being scolded?"

She trembled under his scolding. She wanted to cry, but since she still wanted her face, she endured it and did not release even a whimper.

This Lin Fengtian was simply too harsh with his scolding!

Her father was a Huanyu higher-up. Was he unafraid that she would go back to complain?

As if he could read her thoughts, he sneered. "Don't think that, just because you have a little background, I won't dare to do anything to you! Be clear of your identity; once you're in the production team, you're no longer the high and mighty missy, so don't show that disgusting missy manner here!"

Chapter 809: Provocation

"Be clear; you're an actress and not a missy, understand?! It's on your father's account that I let you join the production team, but it doesn't mean that I won't kick you out just because your father's face is big! If you can't act well, I'll kick you out! Based on your

performance, I can easily pick someone out from the extras and that person can act better than you. What acting is this?!”

Hearing how Lin Fengtian reprimanded Lu Jingtian, Yun Shishi was finally convinced.

This director having a hot temper was not just a rumor, and he truly dared to say whatever he wanted.

Such directors were rare nowadays.

Even Jun Mo, from the sidelines, was scared witless hearing it.

His scolding power was simply something. Witnessing it with one's own eyes was admirable.

Among the group of directors now, only he would probably have the guts to scold an actor with background.

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He abruptly announced a break while filming was underway, and the next scene was set to start at 7 PM.

It was a scene in the rain.

Right after the director left, the young missy ran to the washroom with her mouth covered.

As soon as she left, the group of actors burst into laughter.

Even Yang Mi could not help but cover her mouth and reservedly laugh up her sleeve.

Mu Xi eventually could not bear it in and chuckled as well. “Oh, dear. This director really surprises me; his scolding really makes people tremble in fear!”

“I’ve never seen such a demonic side of the director before.”

“That’s you; I’ve seen it plenty of times. He has exercised much restraint now. In the past, to be part of his production crew, everyone needed to take out 200% of professionalism, or else they were bound to get scolded.”

Her assistant laughed.

Jun Mo cautioned her. “Shishi, the next scene is likely yours and Xingze; do you want to rehearse for a bit? Don’t laugh at others now, but when it’s your turn later, and you don’t perform well, he’ll scold you all the same.”

“True. Don’t be so smug now; if you don’t act well, he will also scold you. In front of him, there’s no so-called ‘special care’. If you don’t act well, you’ll be like Lu Jingtian earlier and be reprimanded harshly.”

Her face revealed a trace of fear. “I’m panicking now after hearing your words. You’d better rehearse the lines with me!”

Jun Mo rubbed her fringe and said, “Alright, little fool.”

Mu Xi looked on with awe from the side and sighed. “Jun Mo, your boyfriend charm is really strong; I’m almost gay for you.”

She raised a brow. “What do you mean?”

“You’re so handsome yet still so gentle; I’m almost falling in love with you.”

She blushed, feeling a little shy.

Yun Shishi scolded her assistant. “You’re so bad. You clearly know that our Jun Mo is easily shy, yet you still tease her. Ha ha!”

In the afternoon, an uninvited guest came to the production team.

After rehearsing with her friend, as per her routine, Yun Shishi went out to buy a few boxes of drinks to distribute to the staff. When she returned to the set, she saw a familiar face.

Song Enya...

She was taken aback.

Why was she here?

The lady sat beside Lu Jingtian and comfortingly soothed the latter’s back, who seemed to have cried for a long while. The two looked as if they had a close relation.

Were they friends?

Was she visiting the set?

Sure enough, birds of a feather flocked together.

This saying made a bit of sense, indeed.

Seeing her looking in a direction, Jun Mo looked over, too, and recognized Song Enya at a glance.

She was a little surprised to see that the woman's gaze was on Yun Shishi.

“Shishi, do you know Song Enya?”

“I know her but not familiar,” Yun Shishi answered simply. Clearly, she did not want to mention more.

Chapter 810: An Unwed Mother

Song Enya looked at her too before she bowed to exchange a few words with Lu Jingtian. Yun Shishi did not know what they had said but saw Lu Jingtian lift eyes full of scorn at her.

She clung onto Jun Mo and moved to leave, but Song Enya walked over fast and blocked the way by standing in front of her.

“Yo, I was just wondering who it is; turns out that it's the shameless mistress!” She whistled and eyed her mockingly.

Lu Jingtian, meanwhile, did not come forward, probably because they were still on set.

With Yan Bingqing as precedent, she did not dare seek trouble with her on set.

The other was different, though, and needed not to fear anything.

Yun Shishi eyed her emotionlessly but did not bother to respond and stepped to the side to walk away, instead.

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Song Enya refused to let her go, however, and stepped to the side to block her way again.

“Hiding upon seeing me, are you feeling guilty? Face is as important to a man as the bark is to a tree; if you dare to be a third party, then don’t feel guilty about it! After doing such shameless act, you dare to still want your face?” Her words were extremely explicit and provocative. Clearly, she wanted to settle an old score with her.

Her voice was so loud and high-pitched almost everyone on set heard her.

However, on this huge set, other than Yang Mi, no one knew her.

As the missy of a major and aristocratic family in the upper-class society, it was only natural that the actress would know her.

Only stars, like the newly debuted Li Jiuxian, would not know this mayor’s missy.

However, upon hearing the words ‘mistress’ and ‘shameless act’ from her mouth, each one aimed at Yun Shishi, everyone could not help but look at one another.

Mistress?

Was Yun Shishi a third party?

Yang Mi raised a brow slightly. She, too, did not know what was happening, but she did know that the woman was out to trouble Yun Shishi.

“Surely, not? Who is this woman?”

“I also don’t know, but she’s really beautiful – even more than Lu Jingtian.”

“Doesn’t look like a star, though. From her noble air and haughty attitude, she seems to be a missy of well-off family.”

“Yes! She’s, in fact, classier and prettier than Lu Jingtian, but what does she mean by Yun Shishi being a ‘mistress’? Is she truly a third party?”

“How can it be? I don’t believe. How can Shishi be a mistress?”

...

The crowd could not help but whisper and talk behind their backs.

Jun Mo frowned as she listened to them. She was about to step forward, but Yun Shishi raised her hand to stop her before quickly meeting Song Enya’s provocative gaze. Her face, though, was a mask of tranquility.

“Miss Song, you’re sick, and it’s very serious. If you haven’t taken your medicine, then don’t come out and harm people.”

Hearing this, Jun Mo chuckled.

Song Enya’s eyes glinted. “You dare to say that I’m sick?! How are you qualified to speak to me in this manner?!”

“Oh, dear! Look; your princess disease is acting up severely. It must be at the terminal stage already.” She taunted confidently.

“Yun Shishi, I really didn’t expect you to be this shameless. Seducing a married man and getting between someone’s family, still, you’re unrepentant about it!” With that, Song Enya sneered. “I see how you’re famous online now. Fans praise you for being chaste and beautiful, but if they see your true colors, a third party and an unwed mother, and learn of your glorious deeds, I wonder how they will feel? I’m really looking forward to it.”

Chapter 811: Mu Yazhe is my man.

An unwed mother!

As soon as Song Enya spoke, there was an uproar on set.

The crowd’s gazes shifted from her to Yun Shishi and found it to be unbelievable!

Yun Shishi had illegitimate children and was a third party?!

Such shocking news, surely it was untrue?!

She did not seem to be such a vile woman.

Still, the woman did not seem to be speaking nonsense, too. Her words held credibility and sense, not at all sounding nonsensical.

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Could Yun Shishi really have such dirty secrets?

It was not impossible.

For a newbie, she was blessed with resources from day one and received much support even before the movie was released that her limelight had long overshadowed the superstar's heavenly halo. It was a little incredible, indeed.

Was it really what this woman had said? Did she get between a marriage and hook up with a mysterious investor?

After working in this industry for so long, it was clear that everything was not baseless.

For a moment, the crowd buzzed fervently as countless skeptical gazes fell on her.

With a nonchalant face, she merely looked at the woman calmly.

Jun Mo, however, could not take it and fumed, "Song Enya, don't slander people! You say that Shishi is a third party and an unwed mother, but do you have any proof?"

The other answered with disdain, "What's your name? Am I talking to you? An actress still dares to be so pretentious with me; don't know where your courage comes from, then step aside!"

Jun Mo's handsome face turned sullen. She stepped forward and moved to speak, but Yun Shishi stopped her again.

She did not wish to see her stepping into muddy waters for her.

Hence, she raised her head and said, "Jun Mo, thank you for defending me, but this is a private matter between me and her. It's better if you stay out of it."

She looked at her with heartache, displeasure evident on her face. “I just can’t ignore it, Shishi. What gives her the right to slander you like this? This is baseless; she’s starting a rumor, and it’s too much!”

“Am I starting a rumor? Is it truly baseless?!”

Song Enya laughed coldly and mockingly. “Yun Shishi, your acting is really superb! Oh, how your pure and innocent face fooled so many people. They are willing to defend you, but do you dare to admit the truth to them? Am I all talks and have no proof? Am I just starting a rumor and smearing your name without evidence? Not only is your acting superb in the show, even your acting outside it is matchless. In front of Brother Mu, do you fool him, too, with your white lotus act?”

Yun Shishi, however, maintained a calm face. Her eyes were full of pity as she looked at Song Enya; it was as if the latter was a pathetic being.

Hurt by her gaze, the other exclaimed, “What’s with your look?!”

She raised a brow. “I only feel that you’re truly pitiful.”

Song Enya was tongue-tied for a moment, unable to get the gist of her words. “What do you mean?!”

She took a step forward and slowly said to her ear, “No matter how you rage, you can’t change the fact that Mu Yazhe is my man. You’re the one unqualified, understand?”

Song Enya’s eyes blazed in anger, and she raised her palm at once. “B*tch, you’re shameless!”

Jun Mo swiftly reached out and pushed Yun Shishi to her back protectively.

The slap to her face, however, was slow to fall.

Song Enya furiously looked over her shoulder, only to find Gu Xingze, who somehow appeared behind her, tightly holding her wrist.

A pair of frosty yet handsome eyes landed on her in an incredibly indifferent manner.

“You...” Upon seeing him, her face paled for a moment.

Chapter 812: Gu Xingze’ s Rage

Gu Xingze ?

What was the meaning of this ?

Why did he stop her ?

“Gu Xingze, what are you doing ?!”

“Are you done making a scene ?”

His lips curled impatiently as his handsome face turned frosty. “This is a set – not your playground !”

He held her wrist so hard it seemed he wanted to snap it apart. His grip was so vice-like her wrist abruptly turned white from blood deficiency. No matter how much she struggled, it was to no avail.

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Struggling for a while and not managing to break free, she angrily demanded, “Unhand me!”

He obediently let go of her wrist at once. Caught off guard, she fell to the ground inelegantly.

She wore seven-centimeter high heels today, so after this fall, pain shot through her ankle; it seemed to have gotten twisted.

Feeling aggrieved and resentful for a moment, she looked up at him with dissatisfaction.

The man merely bowed his head to meet her eyes; his face was frosty and his eyes were piercingly indifferent.

She was cowed by his gaze and was tongue-tied for a moment.

Amid her shock, Lu Jingtian rushed forward to help her up.

“Gu Xingze, why are you even helping her?!”

Song Enya was so incensed she forgot her image and hollered at him.

He emotionlessly replied, “I have no patience for you, so don’t be stubborn in front of me; it’s very vexing.”

Daunted by his cold gaze, she kept her mum.

Lu Jingtian opened her mouth to speak, but he swept a glance on her and coldly ordered, “Shut up!”

“...” Even she dared not say a word anymore.

“Gu Xingze, you... you're too much...” Song Enya's eyes were flushed. It was obvious that she was about to cry from anger.

“Have you had enough? Didn't you hear me asking you to shut up?”

All of a sudden, he raised his voice. “Who let this outsider in?!”

Outsider?!

She was startled and wanted to rebuke him, but with a tug at her arm, Lu Jingtian sensibly dissuaded her from doing so.

The security personnel rushed over and, upon seeing Song Enya, eyed the superstar with apprehension, mumbling “It-It's me...”

“From tomorrow on, you don't have to come anymore,” said the superstar with a cold face.

The security was stunned but nodded helplessly.

Gu Xingze continued. “Throw her out! In the future, outsiders are not allowed to enter.”

She stared at him in disbelief. Before she could say anything, she was thrown out of the set by the security personnel who had heard the commotion.

Jun Mo protected Yun Shishi from the front up until Song Enya was chased out of the set. Only at this point did she turn to face her with concern. “Shishi, are you all right?”

“I’m fine; what can be wrong?” She raised a brow but was unbothered.

“Aren’t you mad? She said such things to you!”

“Crazy people with crazy words; why stoop to their level?”

Lu Jingtian shot her a glance and snorted. She then returned to her seat.

Gu Xingze suddenly walked over and tightly held her arm.

Surprised, she raised her eyes and saw that his face was strangely sullen.

“Xingze, you...”

He dragged her with him.

She was baffled by what he was after. Only until he pulled her to a secluded corner did he release her hand.

“Xingze, what... what’s wrong with you?” she carefully asked. Stepping closer to him, she suddenly found herself confined at a corner by the man’s outstretched arms.

Chapter 813: Will you choose me, instead?

Startled by his abrupt action, she lifted her head to peer at him in bewilderment. He was brooding sullenly with his penetrating stare on her.

“Xingze, you...”

“Moments ago, that woman accused you of being a third party and an unwed mother.”

His thin lips parted slightly, and words tumbled from them chillingly.

“How did you feel when you were being humiliated like that?”

She was taken aback by his question and could not respond for a time.

“Why so quiet? Is this your final answer?”

He glared at her, antagonized. “Yun Shishi, is this your final decision? Why do you want to cheapen yourself in this way?”

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“What do you mean?”

“What can he give you? Wealth, splendor, status, or fame?! And then, what else? Endless slander, humiliation, abuse, and contempt, do you really want all that?!”

His words shocked her immensely.

Despite his frigid look and icy tone, she could nimbly catch a fleeting pain in his eyes.

Was his heart... aching for her?

She did not know what to say next.

The superstar continued. “Whatever he can give you – wealth, splendor, status, and fame – I can give you, too, but if I’m your man, I’ll never let anyone slander, humiliate, abuse, or look down on you!”

She was tongue-tied by his retort.

He softened his tone and inched his handsome face closer to hers. The anger in his eyes was replaced by a tinge of tenderness and vulnerability. He looked at her with so much pain and indulgence, wishing with all his heart that he could walk up and tightly wrap this woman standing in front of him in his arms.

Alas, he could not do that.

He closed his eyes pensively and asked hoarsely, “Shishi, if you had known me before him, would you have been with me, instead?”

If she had met him before Mu Yazhe, would she have chosen him?

She was dumbfounded by this question.

“Xingze, I’ve always treated you as my great senior—”

He cut her off. “Can I not be your senior?”

She was stunned.

“Shishi, am I just your senior in your eyes?”

He slowly opened his eyes. By now, calmness had returned in his voice and eyes. “I’ve always seen myself as someone with no

worldly desires, but that has changed the moment I met you; for the first time in my life, there is something I want to fight for.”

He also did not expect his heart to be moved by a woman again; he was even prepared to stay single for the rest of his life.

It was as if he were possessed after he got to know her; his heart practically beat for her. Her every glance, every move, and every smile warmed his hardened heart.

“You haven’t given me a reply yet. Without him, would you choose me?”

He persisted with her, not wanting to give up just like that.

If she would say the word ‘yes’, he would fight for her with all his might!

She maintained her silence for a long time before she slowly reached out her hand and pushed him aside.

“Sorry, Xingze...”

Her rejection was absolute.

He looked at her emotionlessly. All of a sudden, his lips retracted at the corner as something in his eyes flickered to life and then got extinguished mercilessly.

By the time she regained her composure and looked up, he was long gone.

She took a deep breath and tried to lift her spirit as she emerged from the shadows. Meanwhile, her assistant, who had been looking all over for her, finally spotted her.

“Shishi, where did you go? I couldn’t find you anywhere.”

She looked out of sorts and did not seem to hear her assistant.

Mu Xi looked at her perplexedly. “What happened to you...”

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Mu Xi looked at her perplexedly. “What happened to you...”

Chapter 814: Yun Shishi, what are you thinking about?

“Shishi, where did you go? I couldn’t find you anywhere.”

She looked out of sorts and did not seem to hear her assistant.

“Shishi?”

“Huh?”

“What happened to you? Why are you looking so lifeless like Xingze?” Mu Xi retorted helplessly.

“Nothing much. I was just thinking of something.”

Her assistant pursed her lips, took out a thermos flask from her bag, and passed it to her. “Here; take it.”

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She was surprised as she took the flask from her hand. “What is this?”

“Ginger tea. I’ve prepared this for you.” Her assistant then added. “Later at seven, you’ll have a rain-soaked scene. Hopefully, you can complete it in one take. Anyway, after that, remember to take a warm shower quickly and then drink ginger tea. This will help prevent you from catching a cold.”

Knowing that her artiste would have a scene in the rain today, she hastened to prepare this ginger tea for her.

Yun Shishi was full of gratitude. “Thank you.”

“Aiya! There’s nothing to thank me for. I’m your assistant, remember? My job is to ensure that everything, big and small, is nicely prepared for you!” she replied smilingly.

At seven in the evening, exactly on the dot, the truck with the water hose reached the production site, which was at the hotel's carpark.

Lin Fengtian got everyone on standby. Finally, the log-keeper hurried to the center of the scene and got all the artistes at their respective positions.

In this scene, Yin Dongyu missed his engagement ceremony with Lin Hena to look after his sister whom he learned had gotten pneumonia. Inside the hospital ward, he thought that she was sleeping and finally revealed the feelings he had hidden from her all these years.

Yin Xiachun was not sleeping, actually, and opened her eyes out of the blue to question her brother for avoiding her when she heard his confession.

He panicked and hastily left the room, wanting to flee in his car when his sister gave chase.

This scene in the rain was the emotional climax of the show.

Ding Ning opted for a nude look to express her sickliness. After much effort, the makeup was finally completed. The stylist could not help being mesmerized by the beauty before her.

Her wan face and pale lips, under this frail and sickly look, accentuated her pair of sparkling and ethereal-looking eyes. Her presence exuded a sense of poignancy and vicissitude.

How beautiful.

The production assistant rushed to remind her, and she quickly got up to leave.

The lights and recorders were all in place at the production scene.

When she reached the spot, she saw Gu Xingze already at his seat, while the makeup artist busied herself applying last-minute touch up on his face.

His heart contracted in pain when he saw her sickly appearance; however, he soon realized that this was due to the makeup, and that assured him considerably.

“‘The Green Apple’, Scene 28, First Act, and... Action!”

She took one glance at the superstar and lost her thoughts momentarily before she hastily dashed forward in an umbrella. Lin Fengtian cut off the scene after her first few steps.

“Yun Shishi, what are you thinking about?”

She was stunned.

“Have you read the script yet? This is an important scene, so can you put in your hundred and one percent? Please, Yin Xiachun is supposed to chase after him anxiously. Where is the anxiety on your face?”

“I’m so sorry. I’ll pace myself again,” she apologized at once.

It was true that she had lost her thoughts earlier, which resulted in the fumble at the first instance.

The director told her seriously. “Shishi, you have potential and a fast learner. I hope that you won’t disappoint me again!”

Although he held her in high regard, he would not spare her if she made mistakes in her work.

To him, acting was work, and he drew the line very well between it and pleasure. It must be executed flawlessly, and no one, even this promising newcomer, was allowed to betray his

Chapter 815: You like Yun Shishi, do you not?

Mu Xi watched fearfully at the side, only hoping that this rain scene could end quickly.

“‘The Green Apple’, Scene 28, Take 2; Action!”

...

The filming went on with hiccups.

The main problem was that Gu Xingze could not get in the proper condition.

As for Yun Shishi, her eye expression somewhat lacked the emotion.

Sitting in front of the monitor, Lin Fengtian found this to be strange. He kept feeling that the two were not in the right conditions and seemed to be distracted.

(vit(function()){})

The eyes of the superstar, in particular, were either wondering or too deep. The intense emotional struggle in Yin Dongyu's eyes was not properly expressed at all.

On the other hand, while she got the right eye expression and her lines were properly read, her demeanor had an awkward feel to it.

It was the ineffable sort of awkwardness.

He 'cut' the filming and announced, "Mid-break for 15 minutes."

Mu Xi took a blanket and quickly covered her charge's body as she helped her back to her seat.

The superstar sat by her side, too, but did not spare her a glance; it was as if she were air.

There was no interaction at all.

Being observant, the director was vaguely aware that there was something fishy between the two. Hence, he walked over to Yun Shishi, pushed the actor away, and occupied his seat.

"Shishi, you're not fully in condition today. What are you thinking about?"

"I... I got distracted. Sorry."

He waved his hand. "I don't want to hear this. Say; have you ever been in love?"

"I guess... I'm kind of?"

“Think of him as the man you love, and then bring it into the role. Envision this; the man you love clearly loves you back, but he’s afraid to love...”

He tried to bring out her emotions. “In the next take, you must portray the anguish and hysteria in Yin Xiachun.”

Having high comprehension level, she soon got what he wanted from her. “Director Lin, thank you; I understand now!”

“Okay! Try to pass it in one take!”

With that, he went to the superstar’s side.

His face turned somber instantly.

“Xingze, for this scene, you just need to follow your inner struggles.”

The actor was dumbfounded.

He drummed his fingers on the table and snorted. “Do you really think that I can’t tell? You like Yun Shishi, don’t you?”

The superstar raised his eyes, his face pale and his eyes abnormally empty.

“Your present emotional state fits this plot very well. Carefully give some thoughts about Yin Dongyu’s emotional state and then just express your inner struggle out; that’s it!”

He narrowed his eyes; how could he not tell how this actor felt for her?

Gu Xingze liked Yun Shishi.

Unfortunately, this feeling could only be buried deep in his heart.

The actor frowned slightly in contemplation.

Standing up, he patted his shoulder. “Give it some thought, and then try to pass it in one take!”

With that, he left.

Gu Xingze raised his head, but he accidentally met Yun Shishi’s eyes. She was sitting somewhere not far from him. Seeing that he was also looking at her, she immediately averted her gaze.

The break of fifteen minutes was soon over.

The two went back to the scene.

The staff raised the water hose and sprayed it in the air, creating an artificial rain scene in no time.

“‘The Green Apple’, Scene 28, Take 7; Action!”

“Yin Dongyu!”

Yun Shishi cried out in hysteria. From the start, she was exactly in condition, and the power of this shout almost made her voice hoarse.

Lin Fengtian smiled satisfactorily.

Chapter 816: The Elevator Scare (1)

Gu Xingze stood in the rain with his back facing her.

Yun Shishi rushed into the rain and slowly walked up to him upon seeing his footsteps stopped. She attempted to pull his hand, but the moment her trembling fingers was about to touch his, his hand retracted, as if he had gotten electrocuted.

Her eyes exuded a hurt gaze.

“Brother...”

Her helpless yet weak cry hit the most tender part of his heart.

With a hoarse voice, she asked, “Why are you always avoiding me? You clearly love me, too, so why are you always escaping? What exactly are you escaping from?”

He trembled for a bit, but very quickly, he constrained the roaring sea in his heart and feigned calmness.

(vit(function()){()})

“I’m not... escaping.”

“You are! You clearly are!” she yelled in exasperation. “You’re always avoiding me! Always!”

With that, she reached out to hook his hand.

He did not shun her touch this time.

Gazing at his back, she carefully asked, “Didn’t we make a promise in the past that we’d be together for life – together forever? You promised me; have you forgotten this?”

Her lips constantly trembled as her broken yet pleading voice left their confines. “Brother, love me, alright?”

There was a pregnant silence.

Lin Fengtian immediately zoomed in on the image, giving Yun Shishi a close-up shot.

The fragility in her eyes was full of tension.

He applauded in his heart!

The dead silence continued for some more, and it seemed as if a century had passed before Gu Xingze sighed. “How can I love you?”

He turned around, and the camera zoomed in on his face.

He frowned slightly. Hesitation and fragility were evident in his eyes.

Even her heart trembled upon seeing that gaze.

“Xiachun, what can I take to love you?”

...

This scene was finally done.

The director stood up and clapped thunderously.

Out of the role, Yun Shishi's face revealed a smile of relief.

Gu Xingze, however, seemed to have gone too deep into his role; his face was despondent.

From her periphery, she saw his face, and her smile stiffened in place.

“Clear the set! Make preparations; we'll end here today!”

Almost at once, the actor turned around and headed to the building.

She stood rooted to the spot. Her assistant rushed over with the blanket, urging, “Shishi, quickly go take a bath!”

Coming back to herself, she nodded. “Alright.”

“Do you need me to accompany you?”

“No, I'll go on my own.”

“Alright! Remember to drink that ginger soup after you bathe!”

The production team had especially booked the entire floor of a hotel, which was beside a hospital, for the staff's use.

At this time, the sky had already darkened.

It was already 10 PM.

The front desk staff was feeling sleepy.

Clenching the room card in her hand, Yun Shishi carried the thermos flask and entered the hotel. However, by coincidence, she met Gu Xingze at the elevator entrance.

The startled her could not help feeling a little awkward.

In the rain scene earlier, she got fully drenched, whereas the man, who was holding an umbrella the entire time, only got drenched at some corners.

“Do remember to take a bath, too, or else you’ll catch a cold.”

“Mhm,” he blandly answered. His gaze, however, was at the elevator doors.

The floor of the elevator kept on jumping.

Ding dong!

A message alert sounded.

She took out her phone; it was a message from Youyou. [Dearest mommy, what time are you coming home tonight? (heart)(heart)]

Chapter 817: The Elevator Scare (2)

The elevator doors opened, and Gu Xingze stepped inside.

After replying to the message, Yun Shishi followed him into the elevator.

However, as soon as one of her feet stepped inside, she felt a sudden turbulence under her. The lights inside flickered a few times, and then the lift actually uncontrollably lurched downward!

At this point, she was halfway into the elevator. Seeing the elevator lurch down uncontrollably and her about to get caught... he hurriedly grabbed her arm and jerked her inside.

Losing her center of gravity, she fell into his arms.

The phone dropped to the ground with a smack!

Because of the elevator's intermittent shaking, both fell to the ground together.

(vit(function()){})

Immediately afterward, they felt a strange centrifugal force. The elevator, which was still falling, seemed to crash to the ground with a bang!

He subconsciously covered her in his embrace. The moment his spine collided with the stiff floor, he had the illusion that his bones had shattered from the impact.

The lift rocked for a bit thereafter, and the lights overhead flickered; everything returned to serenity.

Only then did the elevator slowly close.

Yun Shishi could not react. She was even unaware of what exactly had happened. Once it turned quiet, she scanned her surroundings and saw the elevator's floor panel was black.

From the elevator, she could hear the rope saws swaying, and in this quiet and narrow space, these noises only gave way for uneasiness and anxiety.

“Elevator malfunction?!”

This was her first reaction.

Turning to look at the man, she saw his pale face. It was as if he had lingering fear. Clearly, he was still a little shocked by the earlier accident.

Imagine; were it not for his fast actions, he probably could only watch her get caught in the opening.

He did not dare think of the consequences.

She, too, carefully recollected that, just as she stepped into the lift, she felt it abruptly lurch downward.

Gu Xingze had tugged her into the elevator. Thinking about it carefully now, she felt a chill spread from her feet all the way to her spine.

If he had not reacted fast enough, or if he had chosen to push her out, instead, she would have been fraught with grim possibilities.

That was because, in that situation, it would be too late to push her out, too.

She was nearly caught by the elevator opening.

...

The fear in her heart seemed to devour her from within.

She actually had a brush with death earlier.

“Xingze...”

Her heart raced and her palms turned clammy, yet she calmed herself at once and expressed her gratitude. “Thank you.”

He closed his eyes and quickly quelled his fears. Slowly, he stood up and pressed the floor button.

The floor indicator was no longer glowing.

The lights overhead flickered unstably, while the exhaust fan continued spinning.

He turned to look at her and his thin lips parted. “Shishi, don’t be afraid. I’m here with you.”

Humming her assent, she felt an explicable calmness and lose her apprehension.

Gu Xingze speculated that the elevator had likely malfunctioned and fell. Fortunately, it only fell a short distance from the first floor to basement three. If it had been from a higher floor, the consequences were unthinkable.

Chapter 818: The Elevator Scare (3)

Gu Xingze had a slight headache.

How did this happen to them ?

Being over a decade in the entertainment industry, he often flew across the world and encountered his fair share of elevator malfunctions, but this was truly the first time it had happened to himself.

Experiencing it for himself now, he felt uneasy and panicky from being trapped inside an elevator.

He reached out to press the alarm bell for emergency, but even after pressing it for so long, there was no response at all.

“What’s wrong?” He was puzzled. “Is it out of order?”

She stood up and tried pressing the floor buttons, too, but the lights did not light up at all.

(vit(function()){()})

She then pressed the alarm bell; it rang for a bit, but no one responded.

“What’s going on? Why is there no response after pressing it?”

“Do you think it’s out of order?”

“It doesn’t seem like it! That’s weird. There should be people manning the elevator maintenance for twenty-four hours.” She brooded. “Why is this hotel like this? The safety measures are simply terrible.”

“This is a small hotel. Many are like this, too,” explained the man.

She asked, “Have you ever met this kind of mishap?”

“Yes, I have, and I’ve even seen it on the news.”

“Oh, I’ve seen it on the news, too. There’s an elevator malfunction in a university then, and a student passed away from being stuck in the cabin for long.”

He answered, “I’ve seen that one, too.”

“I didn’t think that it would ever happen to me. It’s too precarious earlier.”

She caught sight of her fallen phone and hurriedly picked it up. The phone died from the impact. She hurriedly turned it on, wanting to call for help using the phone.

Seeing her actions, he said, “It’s futile. Phone signals are blocked in elevators, and there’s no mobile network coverage inside. Besides, we’re in the basement now.”

Sure enough, after she turned on the phone, there was no signal on its display, and she was unable to make a call.

“What to do? The phone really has no signal at all.”

With no Internet and signal, it was impossible to communicate their plight to the outside world.

She started panicking, feeling very helpless.

No one responded to the alarm bell, and the phone had no signal; it was as if they were lost in the wild, isolated from help and caught in a predicament like this.

He frowned as he patiently pressed the alarm bell repeatedly. It was unknown if the elevator lacked maintenance over the years or other reasons, but no one responded at all.

Were the people in the security room dozing off, or did they secretly leave their post to go play?

Half an hour later, no one still responded. Frustrated, he punched the metallic doors of the elevator and finally gave up.

She sighed.

“Are we now on basement three?”

“Mhm.”

She pressed on. “Then, will the elevator resume its braking?”

“It won’t.”

Turning around, he explained, “The elevator has an emergency device. In case of a malfunction, it will stop the lift’s braking.”

“So, now, we can only wait for the maintenance personnel to come, right?”

He pondered on this for a moment before he slowly answered, “Yes, that’s the only way.”

Suddenly, as if having lost her strength, she despaired, “When will they find out that there are people trapped in the elevator?”

He peered at her, suddenly walked up to her, and picked up a fallen blanket to cover her. “Don’t be scared. Someone will find out tomorrow morning at the latest, and that is just the worst-case scenario.”

The consolation on his face gave her a great deal of faith.

She calmed down as a corollary. “Mhm.”

Chapter 819: Cannot Find Yun Shishi

The moment she lowered her head, water droplets dripped from her hair to the elevator floor.

Gu Xingze frowned slightly as he urged, “Dry your hair first. You were drenched in the rain. Don’t catch a cold.”

Seeing that she was drenched all over, he recalled that she had been in the rain for three hours just because he was not in the right frame of mind.

He pursed his lips, feeling a little guilty and worried. “Are you cold?”

“A little.” She smiled in embarrassment. Catching the undisguised worry in his eyes, Yun Shishi suddenly broke into laughter.

He was amused by this. “Why are you laughing?”

“You’re no longer so indifferent now,” she answered frankly.

(vit(function(){})

If not for the elevator malfunctioning, who knew how much longer would he treat her indifferently?

He was startled for a moment, then helplessly laughed, and clutched a corner of the blanket to dry her hair.

Out of nowhere, he blurted out, “I’m sorry.”

She kept silent, though. Instead, she simply bowed her head and unlocked her phone. Opening the music application, she played a single from Gu Xingze’s latest album.

The music dispelled the uneasy air caused by the silence in the elevator.

He sat down and leaned against her.

It seemed that, in this way, he could share his warmth to her.

...

A lot of the staff left once the production team finished packing the props.

Two hours passed, yet Mu Xi was still waiting for her artiste. She raised her hand to look at the time; it was already 12 AM.

Why was she not here yet?

She phoned her, but a robotic female voice indicated that, temporarily, the call could not get through.

She rushed to the hotel and saw the front desk clerk dozing off. Hence, she walked to the elevator and pressed a button, only to see a black display on one of the elevators, which had no reaction.

“Did the elevator break down?” she mumbled depressingly. “What a lousy hotel.”

This hotel did not have any star rating, nor was it of a certain class, but because of its proximity to the shooting venue and its moderate scale – the others being either four stars or lousier – taking the budget into consideration, Lin Fengtian booked the whole second and tenth floor.

Of the two, all the rooms on the second floor were arranged for the staff’s lodging, and the two rooms on the tenth floor were arranged for several main cast’s use.

Of course, the main cast would certainly not stay in the hotel, but it was convenient when they were filming night scenes. Artistes like Yang Mi and Gu Xingze were usually transported by nanny vans, and most of the time, those rooms only served as resting areas for them.

Frankly speaking, this hotel was truly lousy. The reception clerks did not have the slightest professionalism, dozing off even during working hours. Now, despite one of the elevators not working properly, no one came to repair it right away.

Perhaps, it was a little late, and the maintenance staff had gone off duty?

Mu Xi did not give it much thought as she went up to the tenth floor and rushed to the room. However, upon opening the door, it was pitch-black inside.

It was as if no one had ever been there at all.

Surprised, she mustered up her courage to knock on the superstar's door, but no one responded.

No one was there, too.

When she returned to the first floor and passed the reception area, she moved to ask if any of the clerks had seen Yun Shishi. Alas, when she went over, the one working the night shift was dozing off.

Forget it. It's useless to ask, anyway.

They were all dozing off; what could they see?

She intended to inform them kindly that the elevator had broken down, so that someone could go there to repair it, but after seeing their working attitude, she felt angry and disinclined.

Chapter 820: Lost Contact

What kind of attitude is this! Wait till I expose your poor hotel service on the Internet!

She was unconcerned over the lift breakdown and certainly did not think that the person she was most worried about was currently trapped in it.

This was not something that most people would consider under normal circumstances; thus, she could not be blamed for not being meticulous.

After all, she only came across a breakdown like this in newspapers. To her, there was no immediate connection between the breakdown and Yun Shishi.

She walked out of the hotel and called her artiste one more time. It, again, went unanswered.

She called a few more times, and each time, it was only the automated voice repeating the notice to her.

She wanted to call Gu Xingze when she discovered, there and then, that she did not have his number.

(vit(function()){})

Oh, dear... What's wrong with me?

She tousled her hair in frustration. Where have those two gone off to? Why is everyone disappearing on me?

By the time she returned to the production set, the props were already pretty much packed.

The director was still busy, though.

Mu Xi approached him cautiously. "Director Lin, have you seen Shishi?"

"Shishi?"

He turned around. “Why would I see her? Aren’t you her assistant?”

“I...”

She was dumbstruck with his remark.

He laughed. “You are her assistant, and you don’t know where she is; how would I know, then?”

“She was drenched after the shoot, so I told her to have a hot shower in her room, but I am unable to contact her since!” she mourned.

“Have you tried looking for her at the hotel?”

“There’s no one in the room.”

This was when he looked at her in the eyes. “There’s nobody in the room?”

“Eh.”

“Then, where can she be?”

He found this weird, too. “Have you called her handphone?”

“I couldn’t get through the line.”

“Couldn’t get through!” He frowned.

Her face had already turned red from anxiety. “I called a few times, but it always went to the automated machine. I really don’t know what’s wrong.”

From her periphery, she caught sight of Ruo Bing picking her backpack, immediately disregarded the director as she rushed to get the woman's attention. "Ruo Bing, Ruo Bing!"

The woman halted her steps with a dazed look on her face. "Er? You are..."

"I'm Yun Shishi's assistant."

"Oh, oh! That's right!" She laughed. "I'm sorry I failed to recognize you right away."

"No problem; no problem..." Mu Xi worriedly asked, "Oh, yes. Have you seen my Shishi?"

"No..." The other assistant was lost and bewildered by her question.

This assistant is funny; why is she asking me about the artiste she's in charge?

I'm not Yun Shishi's assistant in the first place.

"Then, have you seen Xingze?"

"He's probably gone back."

She continued resignedly. "I may be his assistant, but his personality is... Eh, he dislikes others interfering with his personal life, so he disallows anyone from following him after he wraps up his shoots."

"Er, if it's convenient, can you give me Xingze's number?" The other carefully raised the question.

She was stunned and then shook her head. “I’m sorry I can’t. His number can’t be divulged to anyone.”

“I’m asking because I have no other way to find her, except to see if he’s seen her.” The younger assistant pleaded with her. “Perhaps, you can give him a call. This way, you need not give me his number. This is an emergency, and I really need your help, please!”

Lin Fengtian had gone over by then and, seeing Ruo Bing’s reluctance, told her straight in the face. “You call Xingze now and find out where he is!”

The assistant could not reject this famous director’s instruction and nodded in acquiescence. “All right.”

She took out her phone and called Gu Xingze’s number.

The call went through, but despite ringing for some time, it was unanswered.

Right now, the incessantly vibrating and ringing phone was on the seat inside his Porsche, which was parked at the carpark.

“No one answered the call,” his assistant explained, “and this is Xingze’s work phone. He puts it aside once his work ends.”

“Can you please try again?” Mu Xi clasped her palms together in a pleading gesture.

“All right,” Ruo Bing agreed.

She made several calls, which all went unanswered.

Seeing how disappointed she was, she consoled smilingly, “Don’t worry; Yun Shishi is an adult and not a child. You can’t be blamed for losing her, can you? You needn’t be so anxious.”

(vit(function(){})

The younger assistant furrowed her brows disturbingly.

“When I first became an assistant, I was just like you. I tried tugging closely behind Xingze like he’s my kid, but in reality, our role as an assistant doesn’t mean that we take over everything. The artistes need their personal space, too.”

Lin Fengtian thought for a while and told Mu Xi with a frown, “You go back first. I’ll send someone to look for them.”

“All right. Thank you, Director Lin.” The assistant could only listen to his suggestion.

...

Inside the elevator at this moment.

Yun Shishi retreated into a corner with a blanket wrapped around her wet body. Unfortunately, this could not stop the onslaught of damp and heavy gust of cold wind.

The ventilator inside the elevator was blowing cold wind continuously.

She started feeling cold with her wet clothes sticking on her body. After being drenched for a long while under the man-made rain

earlier, coupled with the cold air steadily blowing, she was wet and cold now.

She could not tell how long it had been since they got trapped in this lift. All she knew was that time seemed to have stood still. Gradually, she started feeling light-hearted.

She slumped in the corner with much lethargy.

Gu Xingze continued pressing the alarm bell for help until its battery ran flat. No alarm went off after that.

“D*mn!”

Muttering a curse under his breath, he turned around and saw her shivering and burrowing into the blanket.

His heart tightened into a knot, and he hastily approached her. Squatting, he placed his hand carefully on her shoulder and felt the coldness and wetness of her skin with his fingertips.

His heart ached as he tapped her shoulder lightly.

“Shishi, what happened to you?”

“Eh...”

She was getting drowsy by the second. Her eyes, without focus, peeked out from the blanket.

“Cold...”

“Cold?”

“So cold...”

He looked up to see the mist of cold air from the ventilator bellowing directly at her.

No wonder she’s cold!

She would really catch a cold if the cold air continued blowing on her while her body was soaking wet.

He told her gently, “Shishi, don’t sit here; you’ll catch a cold.”

She shifted her body, frowning slightly, and tried to get up while gripping his arm for support; her legs wobbled. “Eh.”

When he touched her hands, he felt her palms covered in cold sweat while her fingertips were hot. With a start, he reached out his palm toward her forehead to test her temperature.

He could feel a burning sensation under his palm.

She’s running a temperature now!

He was full of anxiety as he bit his lower lip in frustration.

As he fretted over her, he cursed this hotel for not having an emergency kit on standby.

Worried that she might be freezing still, he brought her over to another corner. He then took off his outer coat to cover her back in hopes of providing her with more warmth.

She barely had any strength left to thank him.

Her head was spinning and hurting like crazy as her temples throbbed hard. It was as if her head would split open anytime!

Chapter 822: Unease

She failed to notice the air conditioning device in the elevator; she only grew colder as she waited, unconsciously curling herself into one corner. Despite her attempts, she was unable to resist the cold.

He sat by her side. His heart was wrenched with pain at the sight of her lethargic palm-sized face, which was burning red due to the fever. Her breathing had turned quick and shallow.

Not wanting to give up, he went to press the alarm bell again. Alas, the battery had truly gone flat, and no sound came forth no matter how many times he pressed it.

He kicked the elevator door in despair and produced a loud slam.

He tried shouting for help.

He knew very well, though, that, with this elevator down in the basement, no one would hear his cry for help unless someone happened to be passing by.

Mindless shouting would be a waste of effort.

(vit(function()){})

In reality, a few people who had parked their cars in the basement moved to go up the hotel, but seeing that this elevator was faulty, they used the other one, instead.

In this world, most people were apathetic toward others and always in a hurry. After all, in most circumstances, they would be unbothered with situations that did not affect them.

Hence, no one went to the reception to report about the breakdown.

Some even thought that the elevator was under maintenance and did not raise an enquiry.

Time ticked by.

He took a gander at her phone. It was already three in the morning. The battery was about to go flat from the continuous play of music.

He stopped the music to retain some battery power.

This was his way of preserving their last strand of hope. If a miracle did happen, and the phone received signal somehow, they could use it to call for help.

The woman, still shaking from the cold, had shrunk further into the blanket.

He put his hand lightly on her forehead; it felt alarmingly hot.

He grew more anxious and uneasy.

This tight and narrow space would feel suffocating to anyone after a while. As for her, because she was running a fever, she might pass

out. She could even end up in respiratory distress if her fever did not abate any sooner. In worst-case scenario, there was the likelihood of her fever leading to asphyxia.

Hence, he told her softly, “Shishi, don’t fall asleep, yeah? Stay awake.”

She answered mechanically in a hoarse and weak voice, “I’m feeling so cold, and my head is hurting...”

Frowning, he reached out one of his arms to embrace her, but just as he moved his one limb, he caught sight of her brows furrowing while dipping his head, and his arm froze momentarily.

His heart struggled for some time as he watched her shoulders tremble from the cold, and finally, he put his hand on her shoulder and slowly pulled her into his arms.

She was stunned and instantly heard his loud and powerful heart beating away next to her ear. Thud, thud, thud, thud—

He tugged and wrapped the blanket tighter around her.

“Don’t fall asleep. Someone will come and save us soon.”

He comforted her gently. As he felt her body stiffen, he quickly clarified, “I’m doing this... only because you are feeling cold.”

“Thank you,” she whispered, her voice sounding like mosquito buzz.

“Let’s practice our script,” he suddenly suggested.

He was really worried that she would fall asleep this way, and the fever would overtake her.

Actually, he did not know how efficient this hotel was and when help would arrive.

At this moment, he could only comfort her in this manner.

However, she was too weak to talk to him, much less to practice their lines.

Chapter 823: Shishi has a child?

When her voice eventually weakened, Gu Xingze could not help holding her a little tighter.

He caught sight of a thermal flask beside her hand when he lowered his head. Opening it, there was ginger soup, which was still warm, in it.

He carefully poured some out and brought it to her mouth. “Shishi, drink some ginger soup.”

She sat up slightly to sip a few mouthfuls.

After drinking some of the soup, her body seemed to feel a little warmer.

He poured her another cup, and she obediently drank it all up.

Seeing that she had drunk all the soup, he then worried that she would fall asleep.

(vit(function()){()})

“I’ll sing for you.”

She blinked. “Well, okay.”

Smiling, he started singing in a hoarse voice.

“A long, long time ago...

“You had me, I had you...

“A long, long time ago...

“You left me and soared far away...”

...

Mu Xi returned home and lay in her bed after washing up. However, sleep eluded her.

Even when she got home, she patiently phoned her artiste, but she was, ultimately, unable to get through.

Regardless of how Lin Fengtian and Ruo Bing repeatedly reassured her, she still felt uneasy.

Perhaps it was her instincts, but despite her time with Yun Shishi still being relatively short, she understood the latter’s temperament well.

Regardless if she was at home or otherwise, she would give her a notice at least.

Her charge was very polite and treated everyone around her with their due respect.

She would never let her worry unnecessarily, unless of course she encountered something unexpected.

Her thoughts ran wild as she tossed and turned on the bed. Just as she sat up in frustration, all of a sudden, the phone she had placed on her pillow rang.

In the dark and quiet night, the loud ringing of her phone frightened her.

She quickly picked it up, thinking that her artiste had called. The unfamiliar number on her phone display, however, made her heart feel faint.

She sighed and answered the call in a dispirited voice. “Hello?”

“Hello, are you Yun Shishi’s assistant?”

On the other end came a child’s voice. It was quiet but with a hint of urgency.

The voice sounded mature.

If not for its tenderness, she might even be unable to tell that this was a child speaking.

Stunned, she subconsciously answered, “Yes!”

On the other end, Yun Tianyou sat on the sofa with a name card clenched in his hand. His face was somber. “Yun Shishi is my mom. She’s not back yet, and I can’t reach her. I’d like to ask if you know where she is.”

She was shocked. Her first reaction was to think which child had called to prank.

Child?!

Shishi has a child?!

Is this a joke?

Shishi’s just 24, and she has a child already?

She obviously did not believe it.

Still...

“Is my mommy still filming on set? It’s already this late; she should be back home. She sent me a message earlier, but there’s no news from her afterward. I can’t reach her phone. I’m sorry to disturb you, but I’m just really worried about mommy.”

Youyou’s tone was polite and courteous, but there was more of calmness and coherence in it.

She immediately tensed up, too. “I’m her assistant, but she’s not with me now. Today’s filming is over. Because she got drenched in water earlier, I had her take a hot shower in the hotel room, but there’s nothing from her afterward. I can’t reach her phone and I’m very worried, too!”

Chapter 824: The Calm Analysis

Yun Tianyou got hold of a clue. "... You said that she had disappeared after filming?"

"Yes!" Mu Xi nodded vigorously.

He took a gander at his watch; it was already past 5 AM.

"What time was that?"

"I... I don't clearly remember."

The boy was unexpectedly calm. "Think about it properly!"

She carefully thought back and said, "It's probably around 10 PM; I can't remember the exact time. I didn't pay attention to the time then."

(vit(function()){})

He hurriedly opened the last message sent by his mother. 10:12 PM.

The time matched.

On the other side, she carefully asked, "Boy, you... Is Yun Shishi your mommy?"

"Yes," he affirmed. "Where are you now? Is it convenient for you to pick me up?"

"Erm..."

She looked out of the window. It was in the wee hours of the morning now.

She was a little worried, but she also did not really believe this child; hence, she said, “Why don’t we call and report to the police first?”

“Auntie, the police will only file a ‘missing person’ report if we lose contact of a person for forty-eight hours. Although we can report to the police, it’s in the wee hours now; how efficient do you think they can be?” He reminded her in a serious manner.

She was shocked by his calm analysis.

This child... His rationality was simply an eye-opener!

How old was he?

From his voice, he was probably only six or seven years old – he sounded very young. Were children so smart nowadays to be aware of the conditions for filing a case with the police?

“Auntie, I’m worried about my mommy, but I’m alone at home now, and it’s inconvenient for me to go out, so I can only trouble you.”

“Alright! So your home is at...”

“Xiangti Walk; I’ll wait for you at the entrance!”

“Alright.”

She hung up the call, proceeded to change her clothes, and left the house with her car keys.

Her apartment was no more than a ten-minute drive to Xiangti Walk, and she soon reached the entrance to it.

She sat in the car, looking curiously at the gate, when a light rap came from the door.

The abrupt noise frightened her.

She quickly turned to look and saw a little boy standing outside the car door. He was dressed in a white shirt with matching suspender pants and carrying a small bag.

Surprised, she hurriedly unlocked the car door.

She then nervously watched the boy, with handsome and delicate features, climb into the car. His posture was as light as a cat.

He quickly closed the door, fastened the seatbelt in a practiced move, and looked at her. "Go to the set."

Mu Xi: "..."

Could she say that she was shocked?

She had never seen such a calm child whose mother was missing before!

She carefully observed him. This child was so young, only about the age of six or seven. His handsome little face, with beautiful brows and straight nose, did bore a resemblance to Yun Shishi.

Shishi really has a child?!

She was greatly shocked by this.

Seeing that she was in a daze, Yun Tianyou waved his hand at her.

She came back to her senses, and he gravely reminded her. “Auntie, don’t be in a daze when you’re driving; it’s very dangerous.”

She mumbled, “Thanks for the reminder...”

“Start driving, then.”

He directed.

In fact, he intended to call Li Hanlin to fetch him.

However, Mu Xi was his mommy’s assistant, and she was with her before she disappeared, so he should be able to gather important clues from her. In this aspect, his agent was useless even if he came.

Mu Xi drove all the way to the set.

At this moment, it was dead silent on the site.

The props had been packed and shipped away.

The spacious carpark regained its past deserted look and did not lend any clue.

After searching around the set for a while, Yun Tianyou still did not manage to find anything.

Mu Xi looked blankly at his calm and rational look and could not tell at all that he was merely six or seven.

Were kids so precocious now ?

(vit(function()){})

The boy backtracked to her. Raising his face, he asked, “Mommy sent me a message before I lost contact with her; it was around 10 PM. At that time, where did she go?”

“Hotel... Because she got drenched, I told her to take a shower in the assigned hotel room.”

“Hotel?” He could not help but doubt this.

“Yes.”

She continued to explain. “Our production team booked rooms in the hotel next door. They are generally used as resting areas for artistes, and Shishi’s room is on the tenth floor.”

Youyou asked, “Then, won’t we know where mommy went if we go to the hotel to check the security footage?”

His words were a wake-up call.

She smacked her head. “Gee! That’s right! Why didn’t I think of that earlier?”

He secretly gave her a disdainful glare. It’s because you are stupid.

Of course, this comment could only be kept inside. His face did not show his contempt for her IQ as he asked, “Then, can you bring me to the hotel?”

“Yes.” She squatted, wanting to carry him, but the boy said, “I’ll walk on my own.”

Mu Xi: “...”

She was starting to doubt if this child had non-human genes.

Children were generally afraid of walking in the dark and needed to be carried, no?

In contrast, he did not want to be held.

His face showed disdain.

She was practically tickled by this.

The two rushed to the hotel. Upon stepping in, the boy surveyed his surroundings. This hotel was dilapidated; how stingy the production team must be.

Mu Xi explained that the production team had to budget their funds, so they did not stay at a high-end hotel.

He remained calm and collected, though he was skeptical in his heart. He invested a sum of money, no?

Several tens of millions, in fact. Were they eaten up by dogs?

After deducting the stars’ remuneration, the production cost for a youth movie was already very low when compared to other commercial films, which required special effects.

Besides, Lezhi Holdings was not the only investor.

There was also Huanyu and some bigwigs, as well as the product placements, yet they still stayed in such a shabby hotel?

Was it that... the money he had invested went to dubious places?

Mu Xi walked up to the front desk and saw that the receptionist had already fallen asleep. There was no reaction even after calling several times.

Youyou went over to kick the stool.

The front-desk clerk woke up with a start. Surveying her surroundings, she saw a handsome little guy in front of her and asked with displeasure, “Eh? Where did this child come from?”

“Auntie, are you awake now?” he coldly asked unexpectedly.

Still young at the age of 29, the front-desk clerk was so stunned by his direct way of calling her ‘auntie’ that she froze.

Mu Xi was dumbfounded by his simple and rough method of speaking.

This child...

Who did he inherit this trait?!

Oh, yeah. It suddenly dawned on her that she had a question that needed an answer.

If this was indeed Yun Shishi’s child.

Then, who was his father?

The boy's face vaguely reminded her of someone. A blurred face of a man surfaced on her mind, yet she could not remember who he was.

Now was not the time to be looking into this!

She heard the front-desk clerk grumble, "Where did this child come from? Why does he talk like this?"

Chapter 826: Mu Yazhe is the child's father?!

Mu Xi asked, "Miss, where is the hotel's control room? We'd like to see the security footage if possible."

The front-desk clerk yawned before giving her a wary glance. "And you are?"

"I'm from 'The Green Apple' production team; we booked ten rooms at your hotel."

Blankly, the staff said, "It's not long since I've been transferred here. Although I heard that a production team booked our hotel, why do you want to see the security footage?"

"Of course, it's because of an emergency. An artiste from our production team has gone missing after entering your hotel, and we can't reach her on the phone no matter what. Since this is the place she's disappeared, we wish to check the security footage..."

The front-desk clerk rubbed her sleepy eyes but apologetically refused, “I’m sorry! Shouldn’t the production team report directly to the police someone goes missing?”

“... Report to the police?”

(vit(function()){})

“That’s right. Don’t mind me asking this, but how long has this person gone missing?”

“From 10 PM till now.”

“Then, report to the police.”

Youyou piped in from the side. “The police will only make a record of our statement and only after 48 hours will they file a ‘missing person’ report.”

Mu Xi nervously explained, “Actually, the current situation may not require the police; we just need to know where she went after entering the hotel.”

“It’s like this...” The front-desk clerk frowned and then carefully explained, “We’re not qualified to retrieve the security footage unless the police step forward.”

“Why?”

“No authority,” she admitted. “Previously, we had a customer whose laptop and other belongings got stolen and requested for us to check the security footage, too. In the end, it was only retrieved through the police’s interference.”

The boy furrowed his brows.

The lax service of this hotel really made people worry.

Mu Xi rushed to one side to call the police.

In the end, the reply she got was that few police officers were on the night shift at the station. Some were out on patrol, and two were making a record, so they were unable to accept more reports for the time being.

She was advised to file a ‘missing person’ report after twelve hours had passed or wait until 8 AM; by then, the police station should be able to dispatch someone to take stock of the situation.

Upon hanging up the call, the little lad asked about the situation. She answered him truthfully.

“How?”

She fretted, unconsciously asking him for his opinion.

She did not realize that she, an adult, had actually asked a child for his opinion on what to do.

Youyou pursed his rosy lips slightly.

Following which, he thought of something and took out his phone to make a call.

After ringing for a long while, the call was finally answered.

He opened his mouth. “Daddy, I’m now at Haotai Hotel. There’s an emergency; come over for a second.”

Mu Xi was dumbstruck and gloomily stared at his calm face as he hung up the call.

She could see the anxiety and nerves in the child’s eyes, but even though he was deeply worried, he was still able to make sound decisions. It was enough to make people gasp in admiration.

Over ten minutes later, a sports car parked at the hotel entrance. The slender and handsome man that had appeared at the door gave her a shock.

Only then did she realize why she found the child’s features familiar.

She looked blankly between the father and son, and the corner of her lips twitched.

The father of this child was actually... the crown prince of the Mu Group, Mu Yazhe!

She suddenly got the reason for his murderous aura and furious glare when he witnessed Yun Shishi being bullied and slapped by Yan Bingqing.

She also understood why Yan Bingqing was banned and driven into a corner overnight!

Chapter 827: The chief police officer leads a unit in person!

Mu Xi was still confused.

Mu Yazhe entered the hotel and saw the little guy standing in front of the reception at once. He walked over and picked him up before asking what had happened.

The receptionist stared in disbelief at the handsome man in front of her. Even though Mu Yazhe had hurriedly left home and only wore a casual shirt, he still exuded an innate grace and nobility!

She thought, This man must be a respectable person of an extraordinary background.

He had a tall figure and an extraordinary presence. Despite only standing there for a while, his presence filled every corner and made the huge space seem incredibly narrow!

While Mu Xi was still in a daze, Youyou quickly recounted the entire matter to his father.

The man's gaze turned cold.

(vit(function()){})

“When did she go missing?”

The boy answered, “The last time mommy replied to me was 10:12 PM. When I called her at 10:30 PM, I couldn't get through.”

When he could not reach Yun Shishi, he rummaged through the house and found the name cards of her assistant and manager. He first called Qin Zhou's phone, but it was off.

He next made a call to her assistant, who then led him to this hotel.

The little lad continued speaking. “Our top priority now is to check the hotel’s security footage, but the front-desk clerk said that only with police intervention can we be given permission to view it.”

His father’s cold, piercing gaze fell on the receptionist.

Cowed by his gaze, the front-desk clerk rushed to explain. “Mister, this is a hotel rule. I really can’t make any decision! Without the police, we can’t retrieve the security footage.”

“Have you called the police?”

“We did, but the police said that they can only dispatch personnel after sunrise.”

The man’s eyes narrowed and walked to a corner with his son in his arm. He made a call and succinctly gave out orders.

Unknown what exactly he had said, but soon, three police cars rushed to the hotel.

What happened next practically made Mu Xi gape.

Four or five men dressed in police uniforms alighted, and they were led in a hurry by the chief police officer, Chen Wei.

Just as he stepped through the door, he saw the tall man at the hall and immediately nodded and bowed as he walked up to him. The smile on his face was of flattery and respect, way different from Mu Xi’s impression of the unsmiling police.

This police head went up to Mu Yazhe. With a slight bow, he respectfully greeted, “Hello, Chairman Mu! We didn’t know that it was you before – hence, the delay. I hope you don’t mind!”

The man neither batted an eyelid nor opened his mouth.

The chief officer then looked at the little guy in his arms, smiling again as he flattered, “Is this your son? Gee, how handsome he is!”

Immune to this, the man spoke in a cold voice, which made people feel numbed. “Forget about greetings; we’ve an emergency here, haven’t we?”

These words were cold yet majestic and held a strong deterrence.

He stood there emotionlessly, yet he still gave off a dignified aura.

Practically everyone in this huge capital knew his name.

It was just that very few had gotten the honor to see his face.

This was also Chen Wei’s first time seeing him; he had only heard his name in the past. Now that he was seeing the real person, he felt immensely shocked.

Tall, handsome, magnificent, and as the rumor said, an exceptional man!

“Alright. I’ll start making arrangements!”

Chapter 828: Not Have Strong Enough Influence

“I’d like to see the security cameras in this hotel, but the hotel staff said that I don’t have the authority to do so without police intervention,” Mu Yazhe said.

Chen Wei nodded. “So Chairman Mu wanted to look at the security footage; leave it to me! I’ll make the necessary arrangements pronto.”

With that said, he adjusted his expression and walked up to the front desk. He had on a stern look that a chief police officer should have.

Mu Xi stood by the side, undoubtedly a little stumped.

It was no wonder people would tussle for power and fame.

In retrospect, when she was imploring in every possible way at the front desk, the receptionist evaded her requests with minimal words.

When she called the police, not one policeman was dispatched!

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Now ?

In all honesty, it was just because she did not have strong enough influence!

At this moment, the front-desk clerk was already promptly making calls, requesting for the lobby manager to head over.

With the chief police officer stepping forward, the rest of the problem would be easier to settle.

The control room was on the second floor. Thus, like stars crowding around the moon, a row of people escorted Mu Yazhe to the elevator.

As they passed by the elevator entrance, the front-desk staff noticed that one of the elevators was not operational. She wondered, “Did this elevator break down?”

“Break down? Why would it break down?”

Embarrassed, the lobby manager immediately stepped forward to give it a try. It had indeed malfunctioned. “Get someone to fix this at sunrise.”

Youyou furrowed his brows and suddenly questioned, “Could... mommy be trapped in the elevator?”

Mu Xi was stunned for a moment. This was indeed a possibility!

“Think about it; we can’t connect to mommy’s phone no matter what, and there’s usually no signal in elevators.”

The boy made the analysis calmly.

At the side, the humiliated lobby manager replied, “How can that be? If there’s someone stuck in the elevator, somebody will surely notice it! There’s always a staff member working in the control room around the clock.”

“Perhaps, the staff member in the control room is dozing off like the receptionist at the front desk?” Youyou retorted.

The face of the front-desk clerk reddened.

The lobby manager glared at her menacingly, but he still tried to salvage the situation. “No, our staff won’t dare! Why don’t we just go in the control room, then we will know?”

Alas, when they got near the control room entrance, all they saw were four security guards, with faces full of rigor, playing cards at a corner.

Instead of saying that they were playing cards, it would be more accurate to say that they were gambling.

The lobby manager exploded with anger and bellowed, “It’s still the working hours; what are you all doing?!”

The four men were startled. They turned their heads around, only to find a group of people with magnificent auras surrounding them. They stood up in haste and awkwardly tried to mediate the situation.

The lobby manager wanted to berate them further, but Mu Yazhe swept his gaze over to the chief police officer, who immediately understood his intentions and said hurriedly, “Let’s stop wasting time; we need to find her urgently!”

“To the computer room!”

The computer room, which was very small, was cluttered with machines. Following the chief inspector and Mu Xi, the man carried his son inside.

Just as they entered, Youyou’s gaze swept across all the screens. He abruptly paled in shock and pointed at one of the screens. “It’s mommy!”

Everyone turned to look in the direction that he was pointing. On the monitor, in the small cramped elevator was Yun Shishi, wrapped in Gu Xingze's arms; both were huddled in a corner.

She was obviously in a poor mental state. Despite the blurry security footage, they could still see her dispirited and listless expression.

With a start, Mu Yazhe walked to the monitor. His thin lips were pressed into a cold line as his icy eyes swept across those behind him.

His gaze was cold and terrifying!

The lobby manager, who was standing behind him, went weak in the knees and knelt on the floor.

Chapter 829: Rescue You Two Right Away

“Ah... Xingze is there, too!”

Mu Xi exclaimed as she joined them to look. Seeing Yun Shishi's trembling body under the blanket, her heart ached. “Gosh. She's drenched from the rain, and now that she's been trapped in the elevator for so long, she may have caught a cold!”

She turned to the lobby manager angrily, her tears on the verge of spilling. “What's with your hotel?! The receptionist was dozing off, no one was watching the control room, and the security guards were off playing cards! You people don't even know that guests are

trapped in the elevator for this long! If something happens to them, can you afford to take responsibility?”

“I’m sorry; I’m sorry!” The hall manager apologized profusely, feeling deeply remorseful.

Mu Yazhe ordered, “Why are you still not hurrying to contact the rescue team?”

“Yes, yes!” He hurriedly contacted the rescue team.

Youyou’s little hand touched the screen as tears of concern started pooling in his eyes. “Mommy...”

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His father was still not appeased. His eyes narrowed as he stood before the screen, watching how Gu Xingze tightly held his woman.

Being naturally observant, the assistant noted the man’s frosty look and explained at once, “Xingze must be afraid that Shishi would be cold; that’s why he’s hugging her.”

“It’s useless saying all this now. Saving them is more important,” the boy calmly stated.

She was secretly surprised as she was again in awe of this child’s maturity and rationality.

By the time the rescue team and fire brigade arrived, it was already near daybreak.

The ambulance came in a flash, too.

Unknown who had divulged the news to the media, but once they heard that Gu Xingze and Yun Shishi were trapped in the elevator, reporters and paparazzi crowded the hotel entrance to get a scoop.

Chen Wei quickly called for backups to prevent these members of the media from interfering with the rescue.

The elevator maintenance personnel started surveying the lift's position. It was concluded that the elevator did not stop on a certain floor level but rather in the basement.

Mu Yazhe and the others stayed in the control room to monitor the situation of the two stuck in the elevator, while the rescue team went down to basement three and opened the lift doors. Mu Xi rushed to the front and shouted, "Xingze, Shishi, are both of you in there?!"

The superstar heard her shouts from inside the elevator and immediately responded, "Yes!"

Yun Shishi, however, had already passed out from the high fever. There was no reaction from her.

"We're trying to rescue you two out now! Are you both alright?"

He promptly responded, "I'm fine, but Shishi's having a high fever. Please hurry!"

Startled, Mu Xi begged, "Please quickly rescue them out!"

"Yes, yes. Miss, calm down first! We'll get the equipment right away."

Because the elevator had stopped at the very bottom, the first thing they needed to do was to align it to a certain floor level using a hand-winding device before they could rescue the two inside.

She immediately said, “Xingze, Shishi, watch for your safety! We’ll be able to get you two out shortly.”

“Alright!”

Gu Xingze lightly patted Yun Shishi’s cheeks. In a gentle voice, he said, “Shishi, wake up. Stay awake for a moment. We’ll be able to get out in a while.”

“... Mm.”

He could not help hugging her a little tighter. He lightly pecked her on the forehead as a form of encouragement, then raised his head, and closed his eyes as he took a deep breath.

Standing in the control room, Mu Yazhe saw everything that had happened in the elevator. The scene of the superstar kissing his woman on the forehead, in particular, left him clenching his fists.

Chapter 830: Crowding of The Media

In the elevator machine room, two maintenance workers installed the hand-winding device to prevent the lift from moving too fast or an accident from occurring when its brake was mechanically released.

Another person used a technical method of releasing and tightening the brake. When the brake was released, another pair vigorously

wound the hand-winding device, allowing the cabin to move up slowly.

A disturbing turbulence took place in the cabin, causing the lights to flicker.

Yun Shishi curled up even tighter.

The excessive turbulence aggravated her headache and left her feeling dizzy.

Each lurch was punctuated by silence and then another tremor set in.

In the control room, Youyou watched everything on the monitor with great trepidation. Suddenly raising his head, he said to his father, “Daddy, let’s head down to basement three!”

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“Huh?”

“Mommy doesn’t seem to be feeling well; I’m worried.”

“Alright.”

Mu Yazhe carried him down to basement three.

Upon arrival, the boy noticed the absence of the medical team and inquired after it. Mu Xi immediately said, “I’ll check.”

Not long after, she rushed back, saying, “The ambulance can’t get in as the entrance is blocked by a crowd of reporters and paparazzi. The police chief has already deployed more people over...”

“Reporters?” Mu Yazhe’s brows frowned in displeasure.

She chimed in indignantly, “Yes! We don’t know who leaked it, but the reporters caught wind of Gu Xingze and Yun Shishi being stuck in the elevator, so they all rushed over to get a scoop.”

Youyou furrowed his brows, too, asking, “The police?”

She anxiously answered, “There are too many reporters. Various media orgs sent plenty of their people to get a scoop, so there aren’t enough police!”

Just then, a reminder came from the elevator maintenance worker’s walkie-talkie. “It’s reaching; pay attention!”

A group of people clamored around the elevator entrance as it emitted a dull thud.

A voice once more came from the walkie-talkie. “It’s already in position!”

The rescue team pried open the elevator doors and saw Gu Xingze hugging Yun Shishi in a corner. Upon hearing movements, the superstar raised his head, only to meet Mu Yazhe in the eyes.

He was slightly startled. Amid him blanking out, the man strode into the elevator and took Yun Shishi from his embrace and then left without a backward glance.

Youyou followed closely beside him, tiptoeing to monitor his mother’s condition.

His little hand gently held hers. All of a sudden, his delicate brows creased. “Mommy is having a high fever!”

The man bowed his head and pressed his forehead against hers. When he felt the boiling heat coming from her forehead, his face revealed a hint of uneasiness, too.

Mu Xi glanced at her charge and then looked back at the superstar. She hurried into the elevator, wanting to help him up, but he avoided her slightly.

Her arm froze in mid-air. She suddenly recalled that he had a fixation over cleanliness and disliked excessive contact with others.

She felt slightly embarrassed at this and smiled in concern. “Xingze, are you alright?”

He slowly got up, but because he had squatted for too long, when he stood up, his body swayed slightly and he felt a little dizzy.

He wanted to catch up with them to check on Yun Shishi’s condition, but Mu Yazhe rushed out with her in his arms.

When the man appeared at the entrance while carrying her, it caused a great commotion.

The reporters originally wanted to get a scoop of the superstar and this newly debuted actress getting stuck in the elevator together, which was revealed by the hotel staff, but when Mu Yazhe appeared with her, instead, the focus shifted for a moment!