

## Sweet Love 1971

### Chapter 1971: Give her a basin of makeup remover, and you will find an old, rural woman.

Once she took her seat, the senior starlet glanced sideways at the rookie actress and flashed her a contemptuous smile before turning to look straight ahead with seemingly no respect for the latter.

“How gorgeous she looks. She’s just as splendid as a proud peacock.”

It was a heartfelt compliment from Yun Shishi.

Her manager scoffed. “Gorgeous? Don’t be fooled by her appearance. Give her a basin of makeup remover, and you’ll find an old, rural woman. Could she even be your match if you were to apply that sort of makeup now, too?”

His reply rendered the artist speechless. “...”

Having a highly sensitive hearing, Han Yuyan’s ears pricked and heard what the star agent had said about her.

He did not hide from her, either. In fact, his comments were perhaps deliberately directed at her.

What the veteran heard made her seethe in rage. *Is Qin Zhou out to embarrass me with his savageness?*

Alas, there was nothing she could do about it, given the status he held. No amount of glory could give her the guts to make an enemy out of him.

She barely managed to keep herself and her anger in check as she clenched her fists tightly enough for her sharp nails to puncture her flesh. Following which, the actress plastered an elegant smile on her face and feigned ignorance as she stared straight ahead like a proud queen.

After the long, torturous rehearsal, the awards ceremony was finally underway at eight o’clock in the evening.

Yang Mi and Li Jiuxian were the emcees of this event.

According to the top manager, the superstar and Han Yuyan were set to be the emcees of this film festival. However, along with the banning of the superstar, the name list of the emcees changed, too. It just so happened that Huanyu was actively pushing and supporting the pair on stage. The two had co-starred in a popular TV series, which was enjoying high ratings at present.

The hosting duo of this ceremony usually comprised a male and a female, though of course, there was also the occasional combination of two male celebs.

Alas, these two visually attractive emcees seemed to be of insufficient standing in the industry, considering the impressive cast lineup—Han Yuyan had graced the event with her attendance, after all.

While Yang Mi was considered good enough with the popularity she got, that could not be said for Li Jiuxian, who was not faring quite well in the fame department.

Nevertheless, they were greeted with thunderous applause and cheers by the audience upon their appearance on stage.

With an honored smile, the female host began her opening spiel. "It's a privilege to appear on this stage today before you as one of the film fest's emcees. To be honest, I still feel quite nervous to be up here, facing so many seniors in the industry. I'm dedicating my first hosting experience to the Golden Eagle Film Festival. As a rookie host, I may be lacking in terms of experience, but please give me this chance to express my deepest respect and earnestness for this event."

Thereafter, she bowed deeply to the audience with a hand placed on her chest, earning herself another round of applause from those below.

It was then her partner's turn to give his opening speech, and Li Jiuxian managed to liven up the venue's atmosphere with just a few words.

Like always, the film festival's opening was very dry and dull, with each VIP guest giving a speech. The awards ceremony would only begin after several performances.

The first round of awards to be presented was the Director of the Year and the Film of the Year, with the former being first up.

The screen then began playing a video clip of the shortlisted names and their representative works, which, unsurprisingly included Lin Fengtian.

The nominees were the fair winners of the online voting, which had been held over two weeks before the film festival. Out of the ten contenders, only one would eventually emerge as the victor to receive the said prestigious award.

Lin Fengtian had one of the highest numbers of votes right from the start of the poll. The skyrocketing of 'The Green Apple', along with its raving reviews, made him one of the most viable candidates to bag the Best Director.

Only then did Yun Shishi finally feel a little tense.

She had paid special attention to the list of shortlisted names, and from what she could tell, the competition was very stiff.

### **Chapter 1972: Highly Anticipated**

She had paid special attention to the list of shortlisted names, and from what she could tell, the competition was very stiff.

Lin Fengtian needed the skillset to stand out and win.

Of course, his background was as important as his talent.

The artist really hoped that the director would be able to clinch the award—not because of any personal benefits but because he was such a talent in her eyes. Although the guy did not need an award to prove

himself, she felt that, among the nominated directors, no one was on par with his influence and work attitude.

The esteemed guest awarding the Director of the Year was the most famous veteran actor in the world of movies, Chen Haimin. This veteran actor was past his prime at the age of fifty. Moreover, he was diagnosed with cancer last year and spent half a year fighting before finally defeating the serious illness.

He had since returned to the world of movies and filmed a few shows, becoming highly acclaimed.

Despite being old, he still wore a smart, Chinese tunic suit. As he stood on stage and gave his signature smile, he still seemed full of vigor. He had just greeted everyone, yet the audience had already broken into a thunderous applause.

“After being separated from the stage for three years, it feels like I’m finally back home as I stand here before you during this awards ceremony. To everyone in the audience, please let me have the honor to present this sacred and stately award.”

The applause was heard again.

“The role of the director in movies is also to lead the movies and television to new heights. Like the highest-ranking commander in the army, the troop’s success or failure depends on his or her leadership ability. After several hundred years, our domestic film circle saw the presence of many outstanding directors. However, I believe that the talent of a director isn’t solely dependent on the box-office sales. The qualities, cultivation, and the respectful attitude they have toward movies, are important elements to consider. The person to receive this prestigious award today is also one of the best directors in my heart. I was lucky enough to have worked with him in a couple of movies. What I will never forget is his highly professional and respectful work attitude. I’m sure everyone should be able to guess who I’m talking about!”

Chen Haimin smiled and looked at the cue card before sweeping his gaze across the audience off stage.

The crowd went wild.

With this hint, most could guess who it was.

Lin Fengtian, who was sitting in the front row, suddenly squinted his eyes and smiled.

Yun Shishi held her manager’s hand nervously. “I have a feeling that Director Lin will have a chance!”

Qin Zhou could not help but tease her. “You’re not even the one getting the award; why are you so excited?”

“His award is worth more than mine; how can I not be excited?”

In the moment that she was feeling nervous, Chen Haimin’s deep voice was heard from the stage.

“This year’s Director of the Year goes to... LIN FENGtian! For his work, ‘The Green Apple’!”

Amid the thunderous applause, Lin Fengtian got up from his seat and walked slowly up the stage under everyone’s eyes.

Chen Haimin hugged him and handed the award over before letting him have the microphone. It was now time for his speech.

The director of the year stood in front of the microphone and raised the award gently with a smile on his face.

“I’m very honored—truly honored—to be the recipient of this prestigious award! This trophy cup is heavy, which is a coagulation of the acknowledgment and love I’m feeling from you guys. Again, I’m extremely honored.”

He looked at the audience. His gaze was a lot gentler under the spotlight compared to his strict expression during shoots.

### **Chapter 1973: A Sense of Superiority from Acting in a Youth Movie**

“I’ve been in this profession for over a decade, from a cameraman and a producer to the director of the new box-office record for the most-watched Chinese film, ‘The Green Apple’. It’s been a road filled with fear and trepidation. I feared mediocrity as much as I dreaded going unacknowledged. I’m thankful for every person who fought with me. Today, I did it. ‘The Green Apple’, to me, isn’t just any youth film; it’s the culmination of my career as a director! As such, I want to thank my production family for the happiness they gave me as we grew together. This award doesn’t belong only to me; it belongs to you all as well. Thank you!”

Yun Shishi smiled and applauded the man.

Lin Fengtian as the recipient of the Director of the Year was truly well-deserved.

Li Jiuxian smiled and said, “Director Lin’s award may be heavy, but he deserves it.”

“All of my glory belongs to every person working quietly backstage with the production team. They are all heroes. Thank you very much!”

The man on stage was humble and polite. It was hard to imagine that this was the same devil director, who harshly cursed and berated all the main cast on set.

After he walked off the stage, the presentation of awards resumed.

‘The Green Apple’, together with its crew, received many nominations. Apart from the Director of the Year, the cast and the film itself were nominated for Best Actor, Best Actress, Best Supporting Actor, Film of the Year, Most Popular...

Of course, being nominated did not mean that they would win the categories in the end.

The initially, highly anticipated Gu Xingze did not manage to clinch the Best Actor, losing it ultimately to someone else.

The superstar had always received tons of cheers.

Be it his popularity, acting skills, or professionalism, nothing could be faulted.

Why then...

Could it be because of his ban?

Yun Shishi pursed her lips in disappointment.

Qin Zhou glanced at her and immediately understood what she was upset about. He hurriedly said, "Don't be sad. Xingze didn't win this award because he's not there yet. Don't look at the low-movie market rate of the latter half of the year. While there are different levels of commercial films with quite a few cases of superficial numbers, there are still plenty of quality works in the earlier half of this year—to name a few are 'Mekong River Tragedy', 'Flying Swords of the Snow Mountain', and 'City of Pain'. There are many outstanding works and plenty of male celebrities with extraordinary acting skills.

"But... his skills don't lose to them." She was clearly unconvinced.

"A youth movie has always been weak when contending in such a category. It can't win against those films with profound meaning, so... missing the award is to be expected. Your attitude should be a bit more placid about this!" explained her agent.

The actress slowly nodded in response.

At the side, Han Yuyan suddenly sneered. "Did you think you'd win an award just by being nominated? You've only acted in a youth movie, yet you're already showing a sense of superiority; a teen film like 'The Green Apple' could probably still fool students but not the Hall of Elegance! Yun Shishi, you shouldn't have too much hope. You won't be able to win any categories, either; at most, you can win the Best Rookie just for the fun of it."

The newbie artist turned around expressionlessly. She glanced at her and suddenly gave an elegant smile.

"It seems that my memory isn't that great. For the famous actress Han to be born as an outstanding actress, you must be feeling that acting in inferior works, such as youth movies, is beneath you, but if I remember correctly, your first work was with Director Lin. If not for 'Bamboo Dragonfly', you might not be where you are today."

#### **Chapter 1974: A Sarcastic Repartee**

Han Yuyan was momentarily rendered speechless by Yun Shishi's elegant words. There was no way for her to rebut, so the former could only give the latter a spiteful look!

What a shameless woman with a sharp tongue!

How dared she go against her?

Who did she think she was?!

The newbie artist took in the malevolent yet hypocritical smile on the senior starlet's face before laughing relentlessly. "It's interesting that you consider my participation in a youth film to be inferior, so what about you? You've only gone overseas to plate some gold, yet you've ended up plating various grades of them! He he! You sure are impressive."

"You!"

The veteran actress flushed with anger. No matter how thick her foundation was, it was hard to conceal the redness on her face caused by her fury.

Her debut work was indeed 'Bamboo Dragonfly', and because of it, she received quite the resources.

She had always looked down on youth films, though. Thus, after becoming famous, she took on literature and art films, which were of a higher artistic level. Although such films would usually receive critical acclaim but would have poor box-office sales, she still accumulated an adequate amount of public praise.

Of course, she had no lack of controversial works; one of which was 'Butterfly'. In it, she acted as a geisha, who had undergone special training as a female spy and got planted in an intelligence agency; the character was adrift her entire life.

As the plot was too sensitive, it was not aired locally.

There were many people online who insulted her, calling her a traitor for the film.

Nonetheless, that film let her enjoy resources from abroad, and her remarkable performance in it opened an opportunity for her to break into Hollywood.

As she was under constant criticism back in her country, the veteran starlet conducted a large-scale charity event to erase her less-than-glorious image through philanthropic activities.

Yun Shishi particularly despised people like her.

In her heart, as long as a movie was not a slipshod work and could gain the audience's acknowledgment and love, it had its merit.

'The Green Apple' was an excellent movie to her, and she would not tolerate anyone trying to demean it.

It could also be said that Han Yuyan was brought to fame by Lin Fengtian, yet she was being eccentrically contemptuous of her respected teacher's work, making one resentful of this ungrateful actress.

Qin Zhou was shocked that Yun Shishi had the cheek to engage in a sarcastic repartee, yet he was also vexed by the veteran actress's deliberate and petty criticism.

"You seem to have quite a lot to say. If those lips of yours are feeling too idle, I won't mind helping you to sew them up!"

His words were unyielding.

Han Yuyan snorted coldly upon hearing that and then turned around for fear of him saying more.

However, her hatred toward Yun Shishi had reached a pinnacle.

Before the newbie artist, Lin Fengtian had worked with many female celebs. He was different from other directors. To guarantee sales in the box office, most would offer high prices to hire A-listers. This way, the movie would have sufficient influence without requiring much publicity.

The director of the year was not the same in that aspect.

The production cost he offered was based on the actors' and actresses' performance.

He would rather spend over ten million on the post-production of the film and the shooting expenses.

As for choosing the roles, he still mostly preferred hiring newbies.

First, newbies could be easily molded. Although they were not famous, they were like a blank piece of paper, allowing him to carve them however he liked.

Second, newbies knew how to treasure such a rare opportunity. They would be modest and courteous, and many of them were actually more remarkable than some raving starlets.

Yun Shishi was one example. Her acting skills could easily crush many starlets.

In addition, he had a unique insight when it came to choosing newbies. If not for their looks, which were especially natural, it would be that they were usually gifted in acting and often understood things without much explanation.

### **Chapter 1975: Best Newcomer Award**

The thing was, before Yun Shishi came along, no 'Phoenix Lady' could match up to the veteran actress in terms of popularity.

However, when the newbie burst into the scene, shooting to fame overnight, her success was no less sensational than Han Yuyan.

Of course, this made this old-timer very unhappy. No one liked to be overshadowed.

Since the debut of this young, up-and-coming star, many had been ridiculing the actress behind her back. They said that, with her getting on in age, soon the young artist would overtake her position in showbiz. Of course, their remarks infuriated her very much.

"Don't be bothered by her. She's passé and only said that because she's jealous of you," said Qin Zhou.

"Jealous of me?"

"Isn't it so? You can act as a high-school girl, whereas the most she can pull off in this movie is the girl's mother." The agent lived up to his reputation of having a vicious tongue.

The older starlet was so mad with what he had said that she quivered in anger.

She touched her face self-consciously. Knowing the significance of youthfulness in this industry, she had ensured a strict regime on face care. Still, age was not something within her control. She had

overworked herself in the last few years, too. The stress from a hectic schedule of work had led to a hormonal imbalance, resulting in her poor skin condition.

Indeed, she could only pass off as the newcomer's mother in a chick flick like 'The Green Apple'!

Moreover, as her acting skills could not surpass the young artist, and without any good director or a good script to help her, there was hardly any future for her henceforth.

Qin Zhou is too much! How could he make fun of me in this way?!

If not for being scheduled to present the next award, she would leave in a huff right there and then!

On the other hand, Yun Shishi had a good laugh. "You are exaggerating, aren't you?"

"Look at her; she may look good now, but once she removes that thick layer of makeup on her face, she's no better than an aged witch."

His companion stuck out her tongue in jest.

The actress in question was looking uptight by then, trying her best to suppress her mounting fury with gritted teeth. As the newbie had her formidable agent next to her, the older woman could do nothing more except to glare furiously at her.

Meanwhile, the awards ceremony was still underway.

The next presentation would be the category of Best Rookie Actor/Actress. This award was given to the most promising actor and actress, and both winners would receive the award on stage together.

Han Yuyan was the presenter for this category and glamorously stepped on stage when it was her turn.

The newbie's heart skipped a beat when she learned that the one who would give the award was the actress they had just made fun of moments ago.

"Why is she the one to give out this award?"

"This is prearranged by the organizers. It appears that you're in for the Best Rookie Actress Award this time."

"Why do you say that?" asked Yun Shishi quizzically. "Don't tell me that this award is also another setup?"

"You see, a live telecast like this event can be boring, so the organizers will need to have gimmicks to spruce up the ambience and build publicity. By having Han Yuyan as the presenter and then you as the winner, they will have the 'Phoenix Ladies' appearing on stage at the same time! This arrangement will surely bring controversies and comparisons, which is what the organizers are after."

She understood what was going on after listening to her agent's logical and coherent explanation.

The Best Rookie Actor/Actress was the only award based entirely on online votes. The voting process was fair, just, and transparent.



The official website would start the selection process by releasing fifty names picked by the members of the media, such as the producers, filmmakers, and journalists, as well as the broadcasting professionals. Ten names would be selected from these fifty nominees to enter the competition.

## **Chapter 1976: Honor and Glory**

The name of the winners would not be announced until the end of the ceremony's voting process. The total tally would be announced simultaneously, too.

The entire process would be witnessed by the notarial office to guarantee that this award was free from manipulation and tampering.

There were ten names lined up for the newcomer award.

Yun Shishi had seen the list before it was hidden, and she noted that she remained the one with the highest number of votes among the nominees. She could see how 'The Green Apple' was able to bring about such resounding success.

On the mega-sized screen, the organizers started to feature snippets of the representing movie of each nominee.

The audience immediately raptured into loud and overwhelming applause when the screen came to her part in 'The Green Apple'.

The actress was taken aback by the warm reception.

"Are they paid to do this?"

"I don't think so..."

"Wow. Isn't it too enthusiastic..." She still found this to be unbelievable.

Her agent replied with a smile, "Silly girl, don't you know that your portrayal of 'Yin Xiachun' has charmed the pants off many 'uncles'? Do you think the praises and compliments lavished on you were merely lip-service? You really put up a fantastic performance."

She returned a nervous smile at him.

Han Yuyan stood gracefully on the stage. With her hand holding the cue card, she announced with a smile, "The winners for the nineteenth edition of the Best Rookie Actor/Actress go to..." As the audience held their breath with anticipation, she paused before revealing the result, "Yun Shishi and Hua Jin! Congratulations!"

The outcome was what Qin Zhou had expected.

His charge truly won this award.

Thunderous applause could be heard from below. Just as what they were hoping for, she won this honor.

The camera lens immediately panned in her direction after the names were announced.

The actress smiled in acknowledgement. Even though this was the first time she had received such an honor, she appeared calm, betraying no excessive emotions on her face.

Everyone was astounded by her reaction. They did not expect a debutant to display such calm composure in the face of glory.

While he clapped his hands, her agent urged her to go up on stage to receive the prize, reminding gently, "Watch your facial expression; don't be too nervous!"

"Eh!"

She slowly got up off her seat. Hua Jin, who had won the Best Rookie Actor Award, walked up and waited for her like a true gentleman. He took her hand, perked a kiss on the back of her palm, and led her up the stage, hand in hand.

Han Yuyan looked gracious as she watched the winners approached with a smile on her face, but deep inside her, she was fuming in anger.

The young actress was regal and elegant as she stood next to the male idol; her quiet charm was especially prominent on stage.

Her kind of charisma was not something that could be cultivated through nurture. There were those who were born with such classic charms, which none could hold a candle to.

The senior starlet might look impeccable with her exquisite makeup, but standing next to the junior, she could tell that the latter had easily overshadowed her presence.

She knew her glamor had been robbed by this newcomer, and that made her so mad. On the surface, though, she kept her poise.

As Yun Shishi took the trophy from her senior's hands, her heart swelled with emotions.

This trophy, which weighed heavily in her hands, was her very first win in her acting career, so it was very meaningful and memorable to her.

Although the prior speculations she had heard did set some expectations on her part, a sense of pride still welled up in her when she stood on the stage with the prize in hand.

Hua Jin was beside her, blessing her with his smile.

## **Chapter 1977: A Bumper Harvest for 'The Green Apple'**

"Congrats, Shishi! You deserve this award!"

"Thank you."

Han Yuyan, who appeared especially imposing on her ten-centimeter stilettos, which she had specifically worn for the film festival, looked down and leaned over to the rookie actress.

The senior thespian appeared to be congratulating her junior in the eyes of others, but once she was out of the microphone range, the woman spat threatening words with a gracious smile.

“Don’t you be too smug! Flying too high might result in you falling from great heights and ending crushed!”

The newcomer lifted her eyes and met the other’s sharp gaze briefly.

This woman was, at most, a famous actress who had been nominated for various awards due to her outstanding performance, yet she spoke so harshly to her with such a warm smile on her face.

Undaunted, the rookie gazed back and retorted at the older woman while smiling equally graciously.

“Ms. Han, you don’t have to be so jealous of me. Do you know what’s the first thing I will do after reaching a certain level of fame?”

“What?” Feeling puzzled, the veteran starlet arched a brow.

She beamed at her, the corners of her lips growing increasingly gentle.

“I’ll trample over you.”

“You—”

“It’s time to present the award to Mr. Hua!” The concierge beside them reminded the actress.

Only then did Han Yuyan snap out of it to present the other award to Hua Jin. The way she looked at her rival, however, became deep and meaningful.

It was then time for Yun Shishi to give her award speech.

While holding the award in one hand, she held the mic in the other. “To be honest... I didn’t think I’d be able to receive this award. I, as a newly debuted actress, was constantly fraught with fear and trepidation, always worrying that my performance wasn’t good enough. The release of the movie, though, truly gave me many pleasant surprises. I was lucky enough to receive the support of the esteemed director, the concern of the seniors in the industry, and the acknowledgment of the fans. What I can be certain is that I wouldn’t be here on this stage at this moment without all of you.”

Later, when she went back to her seat off-stage, her manager asked, “What did Han Yuyan say to you earlier?”

“It’s just some well-wishes from a senior.”

“Huh?”

Qin Zhou did not buy a word of it as he knew for sure that nothing good could come out of that woman’s mouth.

“Why bother about her?”

His charge, however, could not care less and did not take the seasoned actress’s words to heart.

Despite the numerous mental preparation, her heart still started racing when she felt the weight of the award in her hands.

Joy and happiness filled her.

At that moment, she suddenly felt that all her efforts might have been worthwhile.

After all, receiving the award for the Best Rookie Actress was a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to a beginner thespian—an honor that could not be exchanged no matter how many awards one might receive in the future.

She was very lucky and honored to receive it.

Her failure to do so would leave regret in her acting career.

She was, in fact, quite broadminded about winning an award. Although she would just laugh it off should she fail to receive it, winning one could greatly encourage her to do better.

It was just that this glorious moment did not seem to hold such profound meaning anymore since a certain man was not present to witness it!

As the awards ceremony continued to proceed, almost all the awards had been presented to the respective winners.

Many celebrities had already left the venue, but Yun Shishi insisted on staying to the very end of the awards ceremony to show her respect for films.

Witnessing this, Qin Zhou felt increasingly certain that he was right about his judgment of his charge.

Someone who knew how to respect others was worthy of being acknowledged in aspects like their moral conduct and upbringing!

‘The Green Apple’ received quite a bumper harvest that night, sweeping in awards, such as Best Screenwriter, Best Director, Most Popular Film of the Year, Best Newcomer, and Best Film Editing.

The film failed to win the Best Production award, though. In consideration of a fair balance of the awards, the organizers decided that they could not present all the awards into just one film.

### **Chapter 1978: I will be waiting for you on the rooftop.**

While ‘The Green Apple’ was indeed an outstanding piece of work, there were other films equally worthy of receiving recognition.

Something happened later, however.

...

Truthfully speaking, the winner of the Best Actress for this film fest had been internally decided.

When the Mu Group heavily invested in the event, Mu Yazhe raised an uncompromising condition to the organizers: The winner of the Best Actress should go to Yun Shishi and no one else.

Thus, she could have won that award.

There was a discord among the judges, unfortunately.

Seeing that the wielder of the highest power in the Mu Group was absent, the organizers started holding selfish motives and ended up helping another investor tamper with the results, causing the chosen winner to be overturned. As such, the award, which was originally meant for the rookie actress, went to Lin Zhi, instead.

She only knew of this matter through Qin Zhou after returning to the hotel.

The manager also only found out about it at the end of the awards ceremony, and it got him fuming. He realized that there was a disagreement among the judging panel when they were about to present the award; they were seemingly arguing heatedly about something earlier.

As it turned out, someone had resorted to dirty tricks to rob his charge of the Best Actress Award.

Without this episode, the award would have ultimately gone to her.

It would have been such a historical moment in the film festival!

Winning the Best Rookie Actress and Best Actress awards would have been such a great honor and significance to her.

Also, she would become the youngest actress in history to win both awards at the same time at the Golden Eagle Film Festival. It would be something unprecedented.

It would be such an amazing privilege to a young rookie in showbiz!

Alas, due to various reasons, this matter had turned into regret, instead!

The man did not inform her of this while they were on their way back to the hotel, for fear that she would be greatly disappointed and break down into tears as a result.

In reality, though, she was not at all crestfallen by the news. Even though Lin Zhi and her team had indeed manipulated the results, Mu Yazhe had done the very same thing, too.

Nothing mattered more than his absence to the film festival.

The woman reassured her manager, "Don't worry; I'm not that fragile. I'm satisfied with receiving the award for the best newcomer."

"You've got a strong mentality, indeed! If this happened to other female celebs, they would probably be crying under the blankets right now," lamented Qin Zhou ruefully.

"One shouldn't be too greedy and should learn how to be content."

He nodded before reminding her, "It's getting late. You should get some rest in preparation for our return to the capital tomorrow morning."

"Alright."

...

Thus, Yun Shishi returned to an empty hotel room where she placed her award on the table and blankly stared at it for a while. She then headed to the bathroom to wash up. Once she was done, she decided to turn in early for the night.

However, with her mind being in a state of disarray, she found it hard to fall asleep, no matter how long she lay in bed or how much she tossed and turned.

Her mind buzzed the moment she shut her eyes.

Just as she was about to doze off, her phone lit up.

It was a new text.

The woman unlocked the screen and clicked it to read the message, which was from Qin Zhou.

[I'll be waiting for you on the rooftop.]

It was just a short sentence of eight words.

Rooftop?

The hotel that they were staying at had a rooftop, which was located on the twenty-eighth floor. Why did he suddenly ask me to go there?

It's already this late into the night. Isn't he going to sleep?

She called him right back, but the call went unanswered.

That's weird!

She made several calls, but they were to no avail.

### **Chapter 1979: It turns out to be just wistful thinking on his part.**

She made several calls, but they were to no avail.

*Is the hotel's signal poor?*

*That's strange, though.*

Qin Zhou had the habit of keeping his phone on at all times, and his phone's receiving signal was excellent. There were times when her phone failed to receive a single bar of signal whereas his was full.

Yun Shishi made a dozen or so calls in total, yet not once did the line connect.

It got her frowning. She left the bed and went to change her clothes, specifically adding a layer of jacket due to the cold weather tonight, before leaving the hotel room with her room keycard.

From what she recalled, her manager was staying in Room 1502.

Her room was on the fourteenth floor, while his was on the fifteenth floor. The man mentioned his room number to her earlier and told her that she could look for him there in the case that something happened.

Alas, the artist did not pay close attention to what he said then; thus, she did not clearly take note of his room number.

For a moment, she felt a bit annoyed with herself but could only try to search for him based on her fuzzy memory.

When the elevator reached the fifteenth floor, she walked out of it and headed straight to Room 1502. The actress gently pressed on the doorbell.

*Ding dong—*

It rang several times, but no one answered the door.

That got her frowning and feeling confused. *Isn't his room number 1502?*

Just as she was about to leave, she heard the door being unlocked behind her.

The woman turned around in surprise, only to see the now open door revealing a tired-looking Hua Jin. He even spoke in a curt and harsh tone, "Who's there—ah..."

His sentence was left hanging when he saw who it was outside. A streak of surprise flashed across his eyes. The icy look on his face faded off and was replaced by a smile.

"Shishi? Are you looking for me?"

The man was wearing a bathrobe and his damp hair was stuck messily to his forehead. The pleasant surprise he felt made his charming, almond-shaped eyes shone slightly.

Meanwhile, her gaze involuntarily drifted down his body, where the bathrobe, which accentuated his long, slender figure, revealed the sexily defined muscles on his chest slightly.

On set, he was usually seen wearing a form-fitting period costume, which made him look just like a handsome gentleman of ancient times with his slender frame. His waist appeared to be so thin that it could easily snap.

She never imagined that he would be the type to appear slim in clothes yet muscular and stylish with his clothes off.

Realizing that she was gawking at him, the smiling, young man followed her line of sight and looked at his chest, too. He then somewhat shyly adjusted his bathrobe as a teasing smirk grew on his face.

"Is the view nice?"

"..."

Her face turned beet-red at once as she tore her gaze away with a turn of her head. She cleared her throat. "I saw nothing."

"Yep, I know."

The smiling crescents deepened, but he did not expose her lie.

The woman felt thoroughly embarrassed when she sensed his good intentions. Thus, she spun on her feet at once, all ready to leave.

That instantly wiped the smirk off his face as he nervously asked, "Where are you going?!"

"I'm going back to my room."

"Aren't you looking for me?" He called her. "What's the matter?"

She turned around and immediately explained, "No... I got the wrong room; that's all. I thought Qin Zhou was staying in that room."

Hua Jin's expression froze before a look of desolation settled on his face. He soon understood that the actress had come knocking at his door because she had misremembered her manager's room number.

Disappointment grew in him. He thought that she had come looking for him; alas, it turned out to be just his wistful thinking.

"You're actually looking for your manager and not me?"

"Yes."

His question amused her.

### **Chapter 1980: There are plenty of things we can do together.**

His question amused her.

"Why would I look for you in the middle of the night?"

"Well, you can find me whenever you want," answered the idol matter-of-factly. "There are plenty of things we can do together."

It got her raising a brow in puzzlement as she shot him a doubtful look.

He could tell that there was a deep, profound meaning in those eyes; in case the woman would let her imagination run wild, he immediately explained himself in a gentlemanly manner. "We can chat and play cards."

Yun Shishi shook her head with a smile. "I can't play cards for the life of me. My skills at playing 'Fight the Landlord'<sup>1</sup> is only at an average level. I'll only be losing money."

"I can always give you a handicap if you're a lousy player," offered the actor with a laugh.

She mischievously retorted, "What a rich man you are."

"We can always play mahjong."

"I don't know how to play that, either."



The man gaped at her. “What do you know, then?”

She did not bother to give him a reply. Having already wasted a lot of time, she was anxious to find her manager and ask him why he was looking for her. “Hmph! I’m not telling you. Don’t get me involved with your crazy antics just because you’re bored and not sleepy. I’ll be heading back to my room to rest for the night once I locate Qin Zhou. I have an early morning flight to catch tomorrow.”

“Shishi, just a sec!” He hastily cried when he saw her turning to leave.

“What do you want?”

The actress regarded him warily, unsure of what he was up to.

“You don’t know what your agent’s room number is, do you?”

“Yeah. What about it?”

“I can help you ask around.”

Five minutes later, the artist sat quite uncomfortably in the idol’s room as she surveyed her surroundings.

The luxurious suite he was staying in was twice as big as hers. More importantly, it came with a garden terrace overlooking the stunning nightscape. She felt as though she were high up in the vast, starry sky when she looked in the distance.

Sitting by the side table, Hua Jin, who had a phone in his hand, could not resist laughing when he saw the woman marveling at the garden terrace. “Do you like it a lot?”

“Yes, I love it!” she gushed. “It’s lovely here. This is truly such a luxurious suite.”

“One can quietly appreciate the nightscape in this garden suite.”

While he dialed the number of the front desk, he smilingly said, “You can stay here tonight if you like it so much.”

It earned him a pillow whack from the woman. “Zip it! Are you playing the gangster here?”

“No, I wouldn’t dare—ow! It hurts...”

He covered his nose and repeatedly begged for mercy. Amid their jesting, the call to the reception connected. The idol immediately asked, “Hello. I’d like to inquire about a guest’s room number.”

Standing at the side, Yun Shishi was hit by a sudden realization.

*To think I was wondering why he’s calling the front desk. It turns out that I could’ve asked the receptionist for Qin Zhou’s room number.*

*How stupid of me!*

*How did I fail to think of that?*

*I’m such a dimwit.*

She then noticed a frown on the actor's face, who soon adopted a puzzled look. "What do you mean by 'the system got hacked'?"

"It's like this... The front-desk server was hacked earlier, resulting in the hotel's system to crash. Our technicians are already working on the issue and trying to repair the system. It happened so suddenly and without warning that we were caught unprepared. Our apologies for any inconvenience this may have caused you. We've already registered your query, but due to the crash of our system, I'm afraid that we won't be able to provide the information you need any time soon."

The receptionist was apparently feeling very sorry about it for she apologized profusely to him.

Soon, he ended the call; the actress immediately asked, "How is it?"

"The receptionist said that they're unable to check the room information on their system as it has crashed due to their server getting hacked."