

Sweet Love 2361

Chapter 2361: Engulfed in Fire

The people on the dance floor were freely waving their hands around and twisting their bodies as they danced to the music.

The DJ put on his headphones and started working on the turntables, manipulating the sounds to bring the bar's atmosphere to the peak with his music.

"Save me! Arghhhhh! I'm burning... It's so hot... It's so hot!"

Lu Jingtian's cries for help were all in vain as they were easily drowned out by the hodgepodge of reverberating music and sonorous chattering inside the club.

Fear and despair consumed her as she rolled about the floor. That did not help in extinguishing the fire on her, though.

The fire had burned her clothes and was starting to burn her skin away. The smell of burnt skin wafted in the air.

No...

Who's going to save me?!

She cried and screamed for help as she rolled here and there in a bid to put out the flames. Alas, in her carelessness, she accidentally rolled down the stairs from the second floor.

The strange tumbling sound soon attracted the attention of several people nearby.

Those who were sitting nearer the stairs quickly noticed the strange occurrence, and when they looked over, they were appalled to see the appalling scene!

"Fire! Fire!"

Nobody knew what that huge lump of fire was—at least, not until someone with keen eyes cried in alarm, "That's a person who's on fire!"

"Ah! I'm seeing the person, too! What's on fire is a lady! Help! Quickly get some water here!"

By now, the actress was fully engulfed in fire. Like a ball of flames, she rolled down the stairs and passed out when her head repeatedly hit the steps. The burning pain, however, soon woke her up again, and she started desperately howling for help.

"Ungh... h-help... Save me, please!"

No one responded to her pleas for help, alas.

The bar's ambience was currently at its peak.

The scene on this end did not garner much of the people's attention, and no one responded to the man's yells for someone to get water.

The majority of the people here were so intoxicated by the alcohol and the blaring, rhythmic music that they failed to hear any cries and yells at all.

It was not until the fire had grown so big that it started burning the wooden walls and the smoke had spread to cover the place that more and more people noticed it.

“Fire!”

“The pub’s on fire! Hurry and make your escape!”

When the DJ standing on the platform saw this scene, he quickly cut off the music and called for the bar’s manager through his headset.

The manager rushed over and, putting on a calm facade, immediately evacuated the crowd. Some of the customers, who were in a more sober state, got so frightened by the fiery fire that they fled straight for the exit.

The bar was in a state of chaos for a moment.

The crowd swarmed toward the exit like a retreating tide.

Ten minutes later, the bar manager brought a foam fire extinguisher over and tried extinguishing the fire. Alas, due to it being too old and lacking maintenance, the bolts were all rusty, making it hard to pull open.

“Quickly get some water over!”

“Call the police and the ambulance!”

...

The police arrived at the scene some ten minutes later. By then, the fire had been extinguished and the crowd had been evacuated, leaving behind a relatively empty bar with the staff standing three meters away from the fire spot. They were all looking at the charred person lying at the corner of the stairwell, but none dared to get any closer to her.

As soon as the police arrived, they took charge of the situation and went over to check on the actress’s condition. She was still breathing and had merely lost her consciousness. The police officer looked up and asked, “Have you called for an ambulance?”

Chapter 2362: Chosen to Be the Female Lead

The bar manager immediately replied, “Yes, we’ve called for an ambulance!”

“It hasn’t arrived yet?”

“No. There’s probably a traffic jam on this street at this hour!”

“What happened here, anyway?”

Feeling equally baffled, the manager helplessly answered, “Beats me... I find this situation strange, too. When my staff reported that someone had caught fire, I immediately evacuated the crowd and sent people to extinguish the fire. The fire was burning strongly, though, so we only managed to put it out about five minutes ago. The victim has lost consciousness. None of us dares to get close to the woman, let alone touch her!”

The officer knitted his brows tightly, finding this matter to be very fishy.

He then took a look at the victim’s condition, which was one startling sight, for her body was badly burned. He could imagine how big the fire was for her to be burned to this stage.

Not long after, the ambulance arrived. The paramedics swiftly lifted the victim on a gurney and took her to the nearest hospital for emergency treatment.

...

Yun Shishi was keeping vigil at the hospital, reading the script that her manager had sent to her as she sat on the bench in the long hallway.

The script was for the new acting job that Qin Zhou had accepted for her—an urban series adaptation of a best-selling novel. This time, though, the director and the investors had specifically chosen her to be the female lead of the drama, so she could be said to have parachuted straight into the production team.

Seeing how loud her name was right now, and how her demeanor and looks suited the female lead of their drama, the production team did not hesitate to cast her on the show.

Discussions about her remuneration had just been settled between the production team and her manager earlier, yet the star agent had already delivered the script to her.

She knew very well that such an opportunity did not come easy.

As a rookie actress, she was still lacking in acting experience, but her debut film, ‘The Green Apple,’ had propelled her straight to stardom, with it becoming a dark horse among the many other films released during the New Year holiday and winning the box-office crown following its impressive results.

Of course, apart from Lin Fengtian and Gu Xingze’s appeal, her superb acting as the female lead played an important role, too.

Her pure looks and her remarkable performance had garnered her quite the popularity and die-hard fans.

The reason for them choosing her was not solely that, though.

The recent practices in the showbiz industry were terrible.

Many dramas were crudely made despite the production budget being ample with the generous funding of the investors. It was all because most of the money had gone straight into the main leads’ pockets.

Some starlets, for the sake of earning more money, would accept several acting calls and rotate between several production teams at the same time. This resulted in their poor acting performance, which subsequently led to the shows' poor production and eventual ratings.

There was even one period drama that had CGI dominating the entire show. Apart from the few front shots, most had stand-ins acting in place of the thespians.

Besides achieving overnight fame with 'The Green Apple', she received plenty of praise from others in her line of work for her professionalism and dedication.

In addition, Huanyu had dedicated quite the resources to her.

From her stunning appearance at the Fashion Week to her winning awards at the film festival, she had, at this point, become one of the hottest starlets and idols in the entertainment scene.

The star agent's request for his charge to receive remuneration of five hundred thousand and per episode was, honestly, a very reasonable amount when compared to Yang Mi's one million and Lin Zhi's eight hundred thousand per episode.

Even though she only had had one representative work thus far, the investor thought very highly of her as an artist with limitless potential and predicted that her popularity would reach new heights with the release of her latest show, 'Lethal Beauty.'

Qin Zhou even heard hearsays of Lin Zhi voluntarily lowering her remuneration, resorting to plenty of dirty tricks, and using her connections to try and take his charge's new role for herself. Alas, she failed to clinch this lead role, for the director had insisted on Yun Shishi as the female lead.

Chapter 2363: Lifting of the Ban

The director had insisted on Yun Shishi as the female lead.

Lin Zhi was utterly enraged because of that. On second thought, however, she reckoned it was not a given that the rookie's popularity would surge anew following the show's airing, for the latter was playing a villainous role in it.

'Lethal Beauty' was now at the post-production stage. It was decided that the leading satellite channel would broadcast three episodes of this long series every Saturday, between six to eight o'clock in the evening, on a primetime slot while the crew continued to work on its post-production.

She, on the other hand, might very well gain another rank with 'Lethal Beauty'. By then, would she even have to worry about receiving good scripts?

Yun Shishi had gone through the entire script in hand, and from what she had heard, the production team was trying to cast Gu Xingze as the male lead. The second male lead, meanwhile, was practically made for Hua Jin, so he was naturally confirmed as part of the cast.

Gu Xingze?!

The superstar had been banned for quite some time, but word had it that Huanyu had lifted off his acting ban.

Mixed emotions arose within her when she learned this piece of news.

She inevitably felt awkward at the thought of acting alongside him should he accept the role.

According to Qin Zhou, the investors had selected Gu Xingze as the male lead because of the soaring popularity of 'The Lucky Couple' on Weibo. Many fans of 'The Green Apple' were also looking forward to seeing the duo act as a couple again.

Even though they had only recorded a few episodes for 'The Love Diary' as an imaginary couple, they were warmly received by many fans. It was just that, due to the superstar' ban, their screentime as a couple had to, unfortunately, come to an abrupt end.

With reactions to the later imaginary celebrity couples being lukewarm, fans and film enthusiasts strongly wished to see 'The Lucky Couple' appear together again.

Thus, after his ban had been lifted, the production team of 'The Love Diary' approached the rookie actress to discuss her reappearing in the said show. She, however, declined their invitation.

It was also because of the potential market of 'The Lucky Couple' that the investors decided on the superstar as the male lead and was now in the talks with him.

The influence of 'The Green Apple' was not to be underestimated. Even though the film was no longer showing in cinemas, its popularity remained high and showed no signs of declining, much to Lin Fengtian's surprise and delight.

Meanwhile, Yun Shishi and Gu Xingze had also been named as the most-popular on-screen couple after a much intense round of online voting.

While tucking her fringe behind her ear from time to time, the woman, who was concentrating on reading the script in her hands, heard someone calling her name.

"Shishi?"

She looked up quizzically, only to see Ji Lin standing at the end of this long corridor, looking at her with some surprise.

"Producer Ji?" She placed her script aside and stood up, feeling astonished. "Hi, there."

The man smiled at her. "You're still here at this late hour? Are you keeping vigil of your father?"

She nodded and asked, "What brings you here?"

"Something happened to an artist under my care, so I'm here to settle things."

"What happened?"

He hesitatingly shook his head. "I rushed over upon receiving a call saying that Lu Jingtian's been badly burned by fire. She's still in the ER, and things aren't looking good for her."

"Badly burned?!" She furrowed her brows in shock. "How did that happen to her? What caused it?"

The producer shook his head once more, feeling equally baffled. "I was resting at home when I received a call from the police, telling me to inform Jingtian's parents that she's in the hospital for third-degree burns. I'll have to make a trip down the precinct later to find out what exactly happened to her."

Her eyelids twitched hard at that moment as she got an ominous premonition.

Chapter 2364: A Foreboding

Something fishy was going on.

This was no peaceful year at all. First, her father got splashed with acid, then Lu Jingtian was severely burned. Both were admitted to this hospital at about the same time. It was too coincidental to ignore.

Ji Lin hurried off after a brief conversation with her.

Sitting on the long bench, Yun Shishi was too distracted by her thoughts to continue with her script-reading. She walked up and stood at the entrance to her father's ward with a dazed look. Her brows furrowed as she stared at her ill father on the bed.

Her brother came for his shift shortly after.

As per the arrangement between them, he would take over the night watch at 1 AM so that she could go back to the hotel for some rest. She would then come over at nine o'clock the following morning. The dayshift was less worrisome as there would be people around to assist her in taking care of the old man.

The man arrived at 1 AM as agreed. Along the way, her brother bought some dinner for her. He then told her to return directly, so she could have enough rest.

The woman nodded woodenly. Just as she was about to walk away, he stopped her.

"Hold on a bit."

"Yes"—the woman looked over her shoulder quizzically—"what is it?"

Her brother appeared worried about her. "You look listless today. Is something bothering you?"

She was stunned by his question and hastily came up with an excuse. "Nothing much... I just received a drama's script and am now mulling over the plot."

"Are you that professional?" asked her brother with a chuckle.

"You think so?"

He walked to her anterior and planted a quick kiss on her forehead. "A goodnight kiss for you!"

He could only do this under rare circumstances when her husband was not around.

It's tough for the boy.

Yun Shishi could not help tittering.

Gong Jie nagged at her again. "It's very late now. Put aside your script and have your beauty sleep once you reach the hotel, understand?"

"Alright, alright. I know what to do. Thanks for doing this; it must be tough on you!"

"Nothing is too tough for my sister."

She smiled at her brother's reply and left the VIP ward where her father was staying. However, she did not return to the hotel immediately. Instead, she made an unplanned detour to the emergency room.

Lu Jingtian's family had gathered outside the room by then, sitting on the long bench with grave faces.

A middle-aged man was impatiently pacing about by the ER entrance. Looking at the anxious and distraught look on his face, the actress deduced that this man was the missy's father.

"What happened? How did Tiantian... end up getting burned by fire for no reason?!"

Two, young ladies, who were standing on the side, quickly consoled, "Auntie, don't worry; I'm sure Jingtian will pull through! The heavens look after her!"

"My daughter told me that she had asked you two out for a drink. Were you present when it happened?"

"No..." one of the ladies replied. "When we reached the bar, the area was already cordoned off by the police and the guards would not let us in. We didn't suspect anything more and were about to leave when we saw the ambulance. This was when we realized that something serious had happened!"

"We saw a charred lady being carried out on a stretcher and didn't recognize that she's our Jingtian at that time! After that we tried calling her several times but to no avail, then we overheard some employees of the bar saying that a TV star was hurt in their premises. That was when we realized that she was the one sent to the hospital from there. We chased the ambulance to this hospital, and by then, she's already been rushed into the ER!"

"Strangely though, the bar wasn't burning then. From what I've heard, she's the only one on fire and nothing else. We really don't know what's going on."

These words only caused more heartache to Lu Jingtian's mother.

At this time, the middle-aged man interjected impatiently as he stomped his foot on the ground, "What's the point of talking about this now? She's still in a critical condition. Presently, the most important thing is to keep her alive no matter what!"

Chapter 2365: An inevitable connection between the two cases?

"It's not important even if we manage to save her life; my utmost concern is how our girl will face the future after suffering such terrible burns! She's so vain that I can't imagine what her reaction will be if she ends up forever disfigured..."

Lu Jingtian's mother was worried sick. Her red and swollen eyes indicated that she had done much crying earlier.

"Cosmetic surgery has become very advanced nowadays. She can do a skin transplant if she's disfigured!"

"The doctor told us that her burns cover an enormous surface area. Her face will definitely be gone. In fact, I'm afraid no parts of her body have been left intact..."

Yun Shishi listened at the side with furrowed brows. She was pondering on this latest incident when her eyes seemingly caught a flash of light going off outside the window.

She walked to the window and looked down. Below the building, groups of reporters had gathered outside the hospital, ready with their cameras. They were attempting to break through the barricade of security guards so that they could get a snoop.

Apparently, the reporters possessed strong intuitions. Once they heard that a TV actress had gotten into trouble, they huddled over at the quickest possible time.

How frightening...

How could these paparazzi be so cold and heartless to do this while the woman was struggling for her life in the ER?

With the nosy reporters hustling at the hospital entrance, naturally she could not be seen leaving the place in a hurry. If she were to be caught by these unconscientious people, they would definitely try to cook up sensational stories for sure.

Thus, she returned to her father's ward. Gong Jie was quite startled to see her back. "Shouldn't you be on your way back to the hotel?"

"There are paparazzi lying in wait outside the hospital, so I can't leave yet."

"Paparazzi?" The man frowned. He jumped up from his seat to look outside, only to be taken aback by the chaotic scene below.

"Why are there so many of them?"

"I believe some are even waiting at the back door. The whole hospital must be presently teeming with them."

Her brother was astounded. "What happened? Why have they turned up here all of a sudden?"

Yun Shishi replied, "One of our artists, who got burned, is being resuscitated in the hospital right now. I heard that she had suffered extensive third-degree burns."

"Burned?" Gong Jie was not too bothered by the news, though. Cocking a brow, he chuckled suddenly. "It looks like you can't leave this place tonight."

"Well, it's good to keep you company, too."

"Do you want some supper? I bought takeouts but forgot to ask if you want to eat earlier."

The woman glanced at the food, comprising beef stew noodles and pan-fried dumplings, her brother brought. Honestly, other than grilled skewers, there were not many choices at this ungodly hour.

However, the charred pan-fried dumplings somehow reminded her of Lu Jingtian's ghastly situation. The moment she thought of how the young woman was engulfed by raging fire earlier, she just felt like throwing up.

"No, I'm not hungry."

"You aren't hungry?" Her brother could not help teasing her. "Don't tell me you aren't eating because you want to lose weight?"

The woman tried to find an excuse. "I put on four pounds during the New Year holiday, so it's time to exercise restraint in my diet."

"Oh, I thought your body constitution is one that never grows fat! I didn't know you could get scared of putting on weight."

"Stop teasing me."

She walked to the long bench to take a seat. As she held the script in her hand, her mind drew a blank. She just could not get a word in.

Her sixth sense was telling her that this series of events involving her father and the young actress was connected in some way, despite them appearing to be isolated matters on the surface.

However, she knew that this was purely her sixth sense talking. Right now, there was no evidence or clue to support her suspicion.

At 3 AM, the head producer came to the hospital to check on the young actress. The latter was still in the ER. After checking in with the family members on her condition, he went up to where Yun Shishi was.

When the actress saw the head producer, she walked up to him with a worried look and asked for an update on the situation.

"What did you find from the police?"

The man did not look well. It was apparent that he had had a bad scare.

Chapter 2366: No Skin Left Intact

"The police took the surveillance footage. Unfortunately, Jingtian was sitting at a blindspot on the second floor, so they could only see her suddenly catching fire but was unclear on how it started at all. Still, they did see a suspicious character coming down the stairs and leaving the bar surreptitiously when the fire was happening. The police suspected that the person had something to do with the fire, and they are currently investigating the matter now."

“How did she catch fire?”

“Through on-site investigation, they determined that Jingtian’s body was spilled with ethanol. They also found remains of a lighter at the scene.” The producer relayed the result of the police investigation to her.

From their inspection of the remains of the victim’s clothes and the lighter, they established that the fire was no accident.

Clinging onto Lu Jingtian’s clothes was flammable liquid, residue from a large amount of ethanol. Coupled with the ZIPPO lighter, the police surmised that the open flame had directly ignited the ethanol substance in the fabric. As a result, fire rapidly enveloped her.

“Ethanol?”

“Yes, it will burn quickly when encountering flame; plus, with Jingtian wearing black stockings, the fire spread even faster.”

The actress was so alarmed by what she heard that she was struck speechless for some time.

“Isn’t this murder?”

“It’s too early to tell, but the probability is high.”

“What about that person?” She persisted with the question. “Was the face caught on camera?”

Ji Lin shook his head. “No. That person was wearing a cap, so the face came unclear. The person’s outfit also lacked any distinguishing features. Nobody would notice such a person in a crowd.” As the actress remained silent, he continued speaking. “Now, the police can only proceed with their investigation starting from the fingerprints found at the scene. Hopefully, the lighter will lead to some clues.”

She nodded. “How is Lu Jingtian now? Is she still in the emergency room?”

“Eh,” he responded, “it’s unclear if she can survive, actually.”

“Is it so serious?”

The actress recalled how her father had gone through a similar life-threatening situation, where every minute and second felt like torture as she stood guard outside the ER.

“This is too cruel. Why did the person have such a cruel thing on her? It must be hell to be set on fire like that.”

“The doctor said that the surface area burned might go as high as eighty-five percent, but that’s just an estimation. She may be suffering more than that.”

“Eight-five percent?!”

What did it mean to suffer such an extensive burn? One would probably have no skin left intact afterward.

She could not help shuddering at the thought of the perpetrator’s cruelty.

"I saw a bunch of paparazzi thronging the entrance when I came in earlier. It appears that you can't leave here tonight."

"Those people get their news fast."

"The media trade is fiercely competitive nowadays; coupled with the decline in the market over the years, various news orgs will do anything to get an explosive scoop just to increase their portal's traffic and click-through rate. It's hard to stop them," explained the man, adding, "Shishi, you have to watch out for your safety, too. The company will be sending people to protect you. I have to rush back to the office now for a meeting. With Jingtian in this state, we need to settle our PR stuff."

"Okay, and be safe!"

After the producer left, she sat on the long bench in deep thoughts. Her brother saw her depressed look and quietly picked up a dumpling to stuff in her mouth.

Chapter 2367: Birth of an Evil Personality

After the producer left, she sat on the long bench in deep thoughts. Her brother saw her depressed look and quietly picked up a dumpling to stuff in her mouth.

She was shocked and had to force herself to swallow the dumpling. After that she glared darkly at her brother. "Hey, what do you think you're doing?"

"What are you thinking about?"

The woman merely pouted and refused to answer him.

He ruffled her hair and said, "This has nothing to do with us; you don't have to let your thoughts run wild because of that actress."

"I have a bad feeling."

"Don't spout nonsense." The man embraced her and patted her shoulder gently. "Rest assured; as long as I'm around, nobody can hurt you."

"Xiao Jie..."

"Hm?"

"Do you still remember my adoptive mother and her daughter, Yun Na? I've mentioned them to you before. She's the biological daughter of my adoptive parents."

"I don't remember her name, but you've indeed mentioned her to me in the past." After a pause, he showed a somewhat surprised look. "Why did you bring her name up all of a sudden?"

"She suddenly went missing with my adoptive mother last year."

The man's eyelids twitched harshly at that.

Youyou had also mentioned this matter to him when the old man was admitted to the hospital.

The boy had divulged something about himself and the mother-daughter pair. At that time, his nephew was looking down and out, too.

Their disappearance was his doing, though the boy did not tell him exactly what he had done. He only said that he had dumped them into the sea like a bunch of rubbish, so he did not know the specifics.

Toward the end of last year, the body of that adoptive mother was picked up by a fisherman when he was out fishing. Her body was badly eaten by fishes and he was told that she had died a horrible death.

His nephew admitted feeling terribly guilty about what he had done. He also admitted that he was emotionally out of control when he issued that order to throw them out into the sea back then. That was why he could not recall the reason for his ruthlessness. It was as if he had been possessed.

In fact, he could not remember what he had said or done at that time.

Youyou did not know that he had an alter ego of a dark nature in him. This evil, secondary self of his was conceived after a prolonged period of traumatic childhood fraught with torment and misery.

That incident was just a fuse that led to the boy fully developing a dissociative identity disorder. Once his other personality emerged, what he did was beyond his control. The kid did not know that he was capable of such cruelty, so much so that it left a lingering fear in his heart.

Back then, he found out the various unkind deeds Yun Na had done to his mother through the thug Li Dongqiang's mouth. He was immensely agitated to the point where evil consumed him. When he realized that a monster was hiding inside him, it truly caused him some discomfort.

'Uncle, is it possible for someone to escape alive after being thrown into the sea?'

His nephew had asked him then, believing the incident involving his grandfather might have something to do with his adoptive aunt.

There was nothing to support his suspicion, of course, except for his inert sixth sense at work. Somehow, he got this feeling that one of the tragic pair had not died, and she was now lurking in the dark, biding her time as she secretly plotted each of their demise.

The boy did not suspect his aunt at first, but that day when he was keeping watch of his grandfather, he heard the old man mumbling his biological daughter's name in his dream.

"Nana... n-no... st-stop..."

The boy, who was next to his grandfather's bed, instantly became alert when he heard that name.

Chapter 2368: A Horrible Scene in the Video Clip

Yun Yecheng's larynx had been badly damaged; thus, it was difficult for him to vocalize. Perhaps the nightmares were too much for the old man that he would attempt to say his daughter's name in his guttural voice, which eventually woke his grandson up.

Other than the possibility of his missing daughter returning to seek vengeance, the boy could not come up with any other person who could do such a sadistic thing to the old man.

Hence, Youyou had been investigating this matter secretly these past few days.

His father also told the police to check on Yun Na's whereabouts.

The thing was, the girl had been registered as a missing person all this time; it meant that the police were at a loss, unable to find a trace of that woman, about all this.

There was absolutely no news on her.

Soon, the matter about Lu Jingtian getting burned leaked.

More and more media personalities gathered outside the hospital to get additional information on this. TV stations, the Internet, and various media portals were all keeping an eye on the progress of this matter.

When Yun Shishi browsed on Weibo, what was topping the trending chart was 'Lu Jingtian was set on fire'.

Unfortunately for the paparazzi and celebrity reporters alike, the hospital was heavily guarded, and on top of that, the young actress's father was not someone to be trifled with. With his daughter in a critical condition, he would definitely not allow the hateful media personnel to disturb his family. He had his men keep watch of the entrance. The security was so tight that not even a mosquito could make its way through.

The media, though, would not easily give up; they tried various ways and means to sneak into the hospital, including disguising as hospital patients or visitors. That only prompted the man to set up another line of defense just outside the operating room, where no one was allowed to get close.

[Huanyu's artist, Lu Jingtian, set herself on fire by accident on February 16, leading to eighty-five percent of her skin getting burned. She's still in a critical condition inside the ER. According to the doctor, her larynx was severely damaged, so there's a possibility of her being unable to speak in the future...

[The surveillance camera inside the bar, which captured the scene, has gone viral and taken everyone's attention.

[It's been three hours since the incident, but Lu Jingtian is still inside the emergency room. There are many constant discussions and speculations surrounding the incident. Some netizens suspect that this dubious matter may not have been an accident, after all.

[Reporters visited the bar, where the accident occurred, to interview its owner. The owner said that, from the surveillance camera, the actress was observed to have entered the bar by herself at about eleven o'clock that night of the incident. She went straight to a private booth on the second floor. As it's located in a blindspot of the club's surveillance camera, it was unclear what actually happened twenty minutes before the fire erupted.

[There was just a sudden burst of bright light seen on the security footage fifteen minutes later, then Lu Jingtian was shown rolling on the floor, struggling for her life, yet nobody inside the bar noticed or heard

her cries for help until ten minutes later when the flames grew in intensity. The fire was eventually put out by the bar workers, who rushed over to help her.]

...

Yun Shishi checked through reports after reports until a video clip popped up on her screen. She hesitated for a while before finally clicking it open. What she saw was a fiery flash appearing on the second floor before a person on fire rolled about on the floor while calling for help. At the same time, a person in black could be seen exiting the bar in all nonchalance at the left corner of the screen.

The actress was taken aback.

It was not so much about the scene being terrifying but rather, the behavior of the person in black was sinisterly disconcerting.

Chapter 2369: Anxious

One could imagine how unusually composed and coldly detached the person was to ignore the fire happening behind them. A normal adult would surely take notice of another person in distress at such proximity. Unlike all those young people that night who were congregated in the main hall below and too engrossed in the energetic music to be aware of the disaster happening on the second floor, the person in black was close enough to notice Lu Jingtian on fire, yet they just calmly walked down the stairs and left the bar.

It was a spine-chilling thought.

That person... must have something to do with this!

This thought suddenly erupted in the actress's mind.

That person is too suspicious to ignore!

There was even the unabridged footage available for viewing online. She clicked on the clip to see that only about twenty minutes passed from the time Lu Jingtian entered the bar until she was set on fire. Even though the private seat was at an optical blindspot, the actress still noticed that it was an abrupt combustion and not one that had only gradually intensified.

She recalled what her lead producer had told her, about the police finding traces of ethanol on the victim's clothes.

Ethanol?

It means that it was no accident; it's premeditated!

Perhaps, this can't be called that. The perpetrator wasn't after Lu Jingtian's life but rather... They were out to make her suffer a lifetime of torment from this disfigurement...

An idea flashed across her mind out of the blue, which caused her to be so startled that the phone slipped from her hand unknowingly. As the phone landed on the floor with a *thud*, she broke out in a cold sweat at the newfound realization.

The connection between her father and the young actress was suddenly apparent!

The fact that Yun Yecheng and Lu Jingtian were consecutively attacked with similar modus operandi was no coincidence. The perpetrator had used similar ruthless means against the two not to kill them but to inflict unimaginable pain on them, instead.

Only a few days had barely passed after the acid attack on her father when the young actress had met a similar, tragic fate. The two events might seem unrelated at first, but she was able to astutely figure out the commonalities between the two.

That person must have harbored a deep hatred against the two victims.

Her thoughts returned to one security footage released by the media in the past...

In last year's Huanyu gala, Yun Na was fiercely tortured by Lu Jingtian, where the latter used an eyebrow shaving knife to disfigure her at the staircase.

It would not be surprising for the latter to nurse a deep grudge against the starlet after that incident.

Likewise, she bore hatred toward her biological father.

It's Yun Na?!

The shocking thought surfaced in the actress's mind.

She took a deep breath as her breathing started to grow irregular!

*D*mn it!*

I should've made the connection earlier!

The common thread between these two was Yun Na!

*Oh, sh*t...*

The actress picked up the phone on the ground in a hurry and made a quick call to her younger son with trembling fingers.

After a few seconds of the ringing tone, the phone got through and she could hear her son's groggy voice over the earpiece. "Yes, mommy..."

Her heart settled somewhat when she heard his voice. "Are you asleep, Youyou?"

"Yes..."

"Where's daddy?"

"He's in the study room." The boy's interest was piqued by then. "Mommy, why are you calling me so late at night? Has something happened?"

“Nothing much! I’m just worried about you and your brother. Did you bolt the balcony door when you went to bed earlier?”

“Yup!”

“How about...”

“The stove has been shut off and the backyard’s door has been locked from the inside, too. Be rest assured, mommy!”

Chapter 2370: I will feel lonely if you behave this way.

“The stove has been shut off and the backyard’s door has been locked from the inside, too. Be rest assured, mommy!”

“Alright; good to know!”

The woman felt slightly better after this.

“Mommy, are you still in the hospital?”

“Yes.”

Her boy reassured her gently, “Since grandfather’s condition has settled, you don’t have to overwork yourself. Please have an early rest.”

“Alright.”

After hanging up the call, she continued to clench the phone tightly until her breathing eased.

Her brother walked over and passed a cup of coffee to her. She looked somewhat dazed as she received it.

“Sis, what happened? You looked restless.”

She responded quietly, “The recent unrest has caused me to be flustered.”

The man was quiet for a while, and thinking that his sister might still be feeling shaken over the sight of the burned actress, he said, “Something unfortunate is always happening in this world every day. There are countless accidents that happen every minute and second. A life may be strong yet fragile at the same time. We can lose our lives in a split second, so we live not to be fearful of our last days but to welcome a better tomorrow.”

In war-torn areas, many refugees had to live with trepidation as they were surrounded by constant fighting. This was especially true in African nations.

When he was young, he followed his father’s troops to Uganda. In the span of twenty-odd years, the rebel group, ‘Holy Resistance Army’, had been unceasingly exchanging fire with the incumbent government as they tried to overthrow the latter’s regime.

He had once witnessed a little girl crawling on a pile of corpses to look for food, only to die in a grenade attack.

He had also seen refugees who had lost their land, slumped on the ground as they tried to swallow pieces of mud they dug from the ground as food.

This world had never been fair from the day one was born.

All over the world, the strong would wallop the weak, so instead of being fearful of the dark side, one might as well learn to be stronger and strive to live better.

One could only protect those they wanted to protect when they were sufficiently good and exceptional.

“Xiao Jie, I didn’t expect to hear such profound musings from you.”

His sister burst into peals of laughter.

The man muttered grudgingly, “You are always treating me like a kid.”

“Well, the image of your naughty, young self is too deeply entrenched in my memory to ignore.”

The two of them smiled at each other, but both had their issues to reckon with.

Gong Jie believed that his sister refused to share her thoughts with him because she had been regarding him as a kid or that she did not understand the implication of his status and background. She did not know that the Gongs were powerful, as well as ruthless, but this was also the very reason he did not want to introduce their paternal family to her.

He observed her without a word and narrowed his eyes at her worried look.

“Sis, you haven’t changed one bit.”

“Hm?”

The man leaned back. “Do you remember how you used to run home after being bullied when you were young? Each time, you would wipe away the tears completely before you entered the house. No matter how upset or depressed you felt, you would never tell me about it.”

Yun Shishi pursed her lips momentarily. “You were so impulsive when you were young. If I were to tell you about it, you would beat my bully to a pulp, right?”

The man was not affected by her words in the least, however. “What’s wrong with that? The more you bear with the misery, the more others will bully you, for they think you are weak; isn’t it so? In those days, nobody dared to bully me because they knew that it’d lead to consequences they could not bear. This was why they would think twice before trifling with me.”