

Chapter 211: A Tigress In The House

"I'll do it." The Tigress stood up and grabbed the secretary's phone. Before she could grab it, however, her eyes fell upon the documents on the table. She immediately forgot about calling the ambulance again as she picked up the professionally written report and the stack of evidence meticulously put together by Lu Yi: the list of crimes on the report was enough to ruin a person forever.

She learned from the report that her husband had been in an illicit affair with Xiao Rongrong for the last three years, and had used his money and influence to land a large number of acting roles for her. The report also included the complete list of all the actors and actresses he had iced at his mistress's request.

"Zuo Fanrui! You bastard!" The Tigress slapped the documents forcefully onto the table. She knelt down and slapped her husband across the face with her large, fan-like hands. "I was good to you. I gave you a son and a daughter, I did your laundry and cooked for you. I lost my figure and aged badly because I worked like a maid for you, and how did you repay me? You cheated on me because I was too old and ugly for you!"

Whack! Another slap.

The secretary stood to one side, the corner of his mouth twitching involuntarily with every slap.

The slaps sounded incredibly painful.

"I'm going to kill you, you dirty, heartless cheat, you shameless dog!" She slapped Zuo Fanrui's face again and again. Within a minute, Zuo Fanrui's swollen face had become indistinguishable from a radish.

But the sight of his red, swollen face was not enough to appease Tigress Zuo; she got to her feet and thought of how she had served the man before her for most of her life. How dare he get a mistress just because she had gotten old? And he had done so many wicked, unscrupulous things to help his mistress's career. Bitter anger surged through Tigress Zuo as she recalled what her husband had said to her the last time she had tried to get him to do something as simple as shopping for clothes with her: "What's the point? Nothing looks good on you, not with that figure of yours. Why don't you just wear a sack or something?"

What was wrong with her figure? She had lost her shapely figure after having children, but was that her fault? She thought of her own husband and the despicable vixen who had seduced him into romping in bed, and her eyes grew red with fury.

She lowered her head and glared at Zuo Fanrui's groin. Her eyes seemed to burn with an intense anger; the secretary standing beside her swallowed heavily as he automatically clamped his legs shut in second-hand fear.

Before the secretary could say anything, Tigress Zuo lifted her foot and stomped ruthlessly on Zuo Fanrui's groin.

Thud!

What happened?

Zuo Fanrui's family jewels had been crushed.

Zuo Fanrui's eyes flew open as his ghostly white face turned red, and then blue. A second later, an ear-piercing scream—like that of a pig being slaughtered—sounded from the office. Two birds that had been flying past the office window outside were so startled by the unholy shriek they dropped a few feathers in their haste to get away.

The ambulance arrived, and Zuo Fanrui was finally sent to the hospital. His face injury was not particularly serious—the swelling would go away in a few days—but the same could not be said for the injury to his private parts. The doctor tried his best, but in the end he could only shake his head and say apologetically: “Well, at least he'll still be able to pee.”

Tigress Zuo did not admit to stepping on her husband's family jewels, of course. She merely said that a heavy object had fallen on his groin; Zuo Fanrui was still unconscious and would not be able to prove otherwise. His secretary was an astute man who knew that it was better not to be involved with the domestic affairs of his employer; he shrugged and pretended not to know anything when asked.

It was no longer possible for Zuo Fanrui to cheat on his wife again, now that Tigress Zuo had crushed his testicles with her foot. But that was not enough to quell her anger—she vowed to herself to find the shameless homewrecker who had seduced her husband and teach her a lesson. If it had not been for Xiao Rongrong, Zuo Fanrui would not have been investigated and indicted, and she, his wife, would not have been subject to such public humiliation.

Chapter 212: Where's The Homewrecker?

Zuo Fanrui was well-connected, as evidenced by his current position and influence, but Tigress Zuo was no slouch when it came to her personal network of friends and acquaintances either. She found the current whereabouts of the homewrecker almost immediately, and wasted no time in buying a plane ticket to get to the set where Xiao Rongrong's show was being filmed. She left Zuo Fanrui in the hospital, not caring whether he lived or died; she was now obsessed with the thought of avenging herself on the despicable vixen. She swore on her name and family honor that she would expose Xiao Rongrong for the shameless slut that she was.

Lu Yi knew what Tigress Zuo was up to, but he did not care. He would indict Zuo Fanrui; everything else was none of his concern. He had only investigated Zuo Fanrui because he had tried to ice Yan Huan, and once Lu Yi realized that Zuo Fanrui had broken the law several times with his flagrant abuse of power, well, it was time for Zuo Fanrui to pay for his crimes.

Just then, Li Changqing was reviewing the report he had just received. He had to cancel all of the acting jobs he had arranged for Yan Huan and get other actresses to replace her for her celebrity endorsement deals. He had also been forced to return several promising movie scripts that had been offered to Yan Huan, on the vague pretext that she “would not be available.” As soon as he finished the arrangements, he was overcome with mental and spiritual exhaustion.

He was still trying to think of the best way to break the news to Yan Huan.

It was cruel news to break to a young, 21-year-old woman. Many actors and actresses had been iced over the years—it was nothing new—but somehow, he could not bear the thought of letting such a

lively, promising talent such as Yan Huan to go to waste. But Li Changqing knew Yan Huan's fate had been sealed—she had offended someone important, and she did not have anyone powerful to back her.

He looked up Yan Huan's number. It was dinner time; he was sure that Yan Huan would be able to take his call if he called her now.

He entered Yan Huan's number, but chickened out of calling. He repeated this a few times; finally, after a long struggle with himself, he let out a long sigh and entered the number again. He was about to press the Call button when his desk phone suddenly rang, catching him by surprise. It was so unexpected he almost dropped his phone to the floor.

He did a double-take when he saw the strange caller number: the number actually ended with 123456. Who on earth could be using such a unique, flashy number?

"Hello." Li Changqing made sure to sound polite and respectful; anyone who possessed a phone number like that was quite clearly not an ordinary person. There were only a few possibilities: an immensely wealthy person who had bought the number, someone from the mafia, or a high-ranking official from the government.

"Am I speaking to Manager Li Changqing?" The voice that enunciated Li Changqing's name clearly and correctly was deep and pleasant to listen to.

"Yes. Who is this?" Li Changqing was quite sure he did not know the voice on the other end of the line. He did not recognize the strange phone number, either.

"This is Lu Yi." Lu Yi was sitting on his sofa, caressing Little Bean's head with his fingers. The cat was drowsy on his lap, and finally put her head down to sleep, content with the attention given to her.

Lu Yi? Li Changqing was momentarily stunned. Lu Yi? Which Lu Yi?

He could not possibly be talking to that famous Lu Yi, could he?

But Li Changqing could only think of the Lu Yi from the Lu family—the youngest, most famous prosecutor in Sea City, the man who struck fear in everyone's hearts. But why was Lu Yi calling him? Li Changqing broke into a cold sweat; everyone said expect the worst if Lu Yi initiated contact.

"Is this Prosecutor Lu?" he asked cautiously, hoping that the answer would be "no."

"Yes, that's me."

Li Changqing's expression froze at Lu Yi's reply. He wondered if he had somehow run afoul of the law.

Chapter 213: She Has Someone Backing Her

Li Changqing sucked in a deep breath before asking: "To what do I owe the honor of this phone call, Mr. Lu?" He hoped that the phone call was actually good news, and not bad news. Even if it was bad news, well, there was no avoiding it now; he might as well get it over with before the fear and suspense triggered a heart attack.

"What did Zuo Fanrui ask you to do to Yan Huan?" Lu Yi asked in his usual toneless voice. His fingers had stilled on top of Little Bean's round, tiny head.

“Yan Huan?”

Li Changqing frowned as he wondered whether to tell the truth or lie. He finally settled on telling the truth; Lu Yi was not someone who was easily deceived. More importantly, Li Changqing knew he would be in deep trouble if he tried to lie to Lu Yi.

“He asked me to ice Yan Huan.”

“I see...” Lu Yi lapsed into silence. He moved his phone from his right ear to his left, and then moved Little Bean from his lap to the sofa. He got up and walked towards his balcony.

“Zuo Fanrui’s fall from grace will be made public very soon. Do you understand what I’m getting at?”

Li Changqing stared uncomprehendingly at the documents on his desk. It was a long moment before he finally understood what Lu Yi was saying. Was Lu Yi acting on Yan Huan’s behalf? Zuo Fanrui had fallen from grace? When? It had only been half a day since Zuo Fanrui walked out of Li Changqing’s office after threatening him and ordering him to ice Yan Huan—had he fallen from grace right after that? Was such supernatural efficiency possible?

“Mr. Lu, do you actually know Ms. Yan?” Li Changqing asked tentatively.

Lu Yi leaned against the railing of his balcony, his clear eyes fixed upon the view in the distance. It was a long way down—at this perilous height, he would smash into smithereens upon the ground if he slipped and fell, but the height did not faze him. Instead, he half-closed his eyes in contentment as he inhaled the fresh air.

“If anything happens to her in the future, let me know. This is my private number.”

Lu Yi had sidestepped Li Changqing’s question, but Li Changqing was no fool—he had understood the hidden implication behind what Lu Yi had just said. The message was crystal clear.

Li Changqing let out a long sigh of relief when the call finally ended. He picked up the reports and documents on his desk, feeling like a victim of a tasteless prank: one man had tried to get him to ice Yan Huan, and when he had finally completed all the messy, troublesome arrangements, another man had appeared to save her.

He wondered when and how Yan Huan had been acquainted with Lu Yi. Li Changqing had been worried for Yan Huan; he was afraid that her career was advancing too quickly, that someone would resent her rapidly growing popularity and try to knock her down a peg. Showbiz was a stormy, treacherous industry, after all.

But he knew now that he had been worried for nothing: Yan Huan had someone backing her, and that person was Lu Yi. Lu Yi! That man was at least ten times more powerful than Zuo Fanrui. Zuo Fanrui was powerful enough to ice any actress at any time, but Lu Yi had pulled the mighty Zuo Fanrui down from his lofty horse within half a day. What a plot twist!

Li Changqing did not know that Zuo Fanrui was, at that moment, lying in a hospital, unconscious, his testicles crushed by his wife. The entire situation was so bizarre Li Changqing would not have known how to react to it.

Li Changqing got out his phone and dialed Yan Huan's number happily. It had pained him a moment ago to have to enter her number, but now he did it easily, with open delight.

"Okay, understood." Yan Huan spoke into her phone as she adjusted the gold crown on her head. She had been on the phone with Li Changqing for more than five minutes now.

"Thank you, Manager Li." Yan Huan thanked him before hanging up.

She dialed another number. She knew that she had to thank Lu Yi personally for saving her from such a huge mess; she owed him that much, at least. No, she corrected herself, I owe him many "Thank You"s, not just one.

Chapter 214: The Last Laugh

A moment later, the call went through. She heard Lu Yi's husky, slightly hoarse voice from the other end of the line, and wondered whether he had been asleep.

She had guessed correctly—Lu Yi and Little Bean had been asleep, but Lu Yi immediately sat up in bed, awake and alert. Little Bean, on the other hand, had been caught off-guard by Lu Yi's sudden movement. She rolled off of him and onto the floor, but quickly jumped back onto the bed and nestled herself next to him. She was no longer content with sleeping on the sofa outside; she preferred Lu Yi's blanket now.

"Lu Yi, it's me, Yan Huan."

Yan Huan steadied the gold crown on her head. She wished it were made of real gold—she would destroy it at once and pawn it off for money.

"I know." Lu Yi opened his eyes; his gaze was clear, without a single trace of groggy confusion. He was wide awake now.

"Um..." Yan Huan kicked a pebble near her feet. "Thanks for helping me out."

"You don't have to thank me." Lu Yi meant what he said; he did things because he wanted to, not because he expected to be thanked in return. "I told you, I'll protect you for as long as I live. You made the right decision telling me about your problem this time."

He frowned. He did not want to see Yan Huan jump from a window again. She seemed easygoing on the outside, but Yan Huan was clearly tough as nails on the inside. The small, petite woman put most men to shame when it came to inner strength and willpower.

Yan Huan kicked the pebble again.

"How about I treat you to dinner when I get back?" As soon as she said that, it suddenly occurred to her that he might not take her up on her offer. Lu Yi had a reputation for being a busy man who did not take appointments; it was just as difficult to return the favor as it was to get him to help you out in the first place.

But Yan Huan had assumed wrong.

"Okay." Lu Yi agreed easily, without hesitation. "I'll be waiting."

That simple “I’ll be waiting” sent Yan Huan’s heart racing. She could practically see manga bubbles of joy and happiness appear before her and break upon her face as they kissed her cheeks.

She did not know what else to say, so she ended the call.

She recalled Li Changqing’s well-meaning advice to her: her meteoric rise in popularity was both a good thing and a bad thing. There were many more Zuo Fanrui’s out there, and Li Changqing had suggested that she cling onto Lu Yi’s thigh like a koala; no one would dare mess with her then.

But she had to ask herself whether she was okay with clinging onto him.

She did not want to be involved with the Lu family again, not even Lu Yi. But somehow, the invisible strings of fate seemed to pull them together; she had ended up staying in the same apartment building as him, and had bumped into him several times. More importantly, he had saved her a number of times now.

She had to repay her debt to him.

But her debt to him had snowballed into something so massive she did not think she could ever repay it in full.

Oh, whatever, she told herself as she adjusted the gold crown on her head again, if I have to cling to someone it might as well be Lu Yi. At least I know what kind of person he is—he’s still the same Lu Yi from my previous life.

Cold on the outside, but warm on the inside.

“Yan Huan, you’re up next.” It was Director Zheng, calling for her.

Yan Huan quickly stood up and handed her phone to Yi Ling. The next scene was another scene with Concubine Mi, the scenes she enjoyed most. She relished every opportunity to crush Xiao Rongrong both in real life and within the story.

“Cut!” yelled the director once they finished the scene. Yan Huan’s acting skills had improved again; she had decimated Xiao Rongrong almost as soon as the camera rolled.

“I’ll wipe that smile off your face soon enough.” Xiao Rongrong sneered.

Yan Huan merely smiled politely at that; she did not rebuke Xiao Rongrong. Yan Huan did not know for sure if she would be able to get the last laugh in this life, but she was confident that she would outlast someone like Xiao Rongrong, at the very least.

Chapter 215: Homewrecker

The production was running on a tight schedule now/ Director Zheng had to seize every second to make up for the time they had wasted on Xiao Rongrong’s previous retakes. They only had five months to wrap up principal photography; if they did not finish in time, they ran the risk of not being able to secure a good broadcast slot for the show. The production team was so busy now they had to work every waking minute of the day, and could only take a breather during their bathroom breaks and meal breaks.

Xiao Rongrong had not bothered to contact Zuo Fanrui for a follow up; she had assumed that he had already done everything necessary to end Yan Huan's career. He hadn't had any problems icing all the other actors and actresses so far, and Xiao Rongrong was confident that Yan Huan would not be able to escape her fate, either.

Xiao Rongrong could not wait to get her inevitable Best Actress award at the Oscars. In her mind, Yan Huan would be a pathetic beggar shoveling dirt into her mouth then.

Xiao Rongrong was not aware that a plump middle-aged woman, bedecked in expensive jewelry, was currently headed towards the set in a bus. Her bulldog jowls, the heavy frown on her face, and the undisguised anger in her eyes combined to form a murderous aura around her. The other passengers on the bus tried to move as far away from her as possible.

Xiao Rongrong had been in such a good mood during the past several days that she had relished every meal and slept soundly every night. But her acting skills had not improved; her scenes with the other actors were passable—because the other actors were on the same level—but as soon as she had to act with Yan Huan in the same scene, Xiao Rongrong's mediocre acting immediately nosedived into "embarrassing to watch" territory. She buckled under Yan Huan's incredible aura and regal expressions.

Xiao Rongrong was not happy about Yan Huan outshining her. She lost count of the number of times she had mentally cursed Yan Huan. If looks could kill, Xiao Rongrong would have sliced Yan Huan into a thousand pieces by now.

The weather was colder and gloomier than usual. Everyone shivered and sniffled in the cold; this was the weather for winter coats, but the actors' costumes were made of thin, sheer fabric. They could not put on a coat to protect themselves from the cold, at least not while they were shooting their scenes.

Break time was the only time they could put on an extra layer of clothes to keep warm.

Yan Huan, wrapped in a coat, was sitting in a chair and leafing through her script to review and memorize her lines when a middle-aged woman barged into the room with a murderous look in her eyes.

"Do you know a woman named Xiao Rongrong?" the middle-aged woman asked Yan Huan. She appraised Yan Huan with her wide, hostile eyes, as though trying to pry open her secrets.

Well, Tigress Zuo thought to herself, this old woman can't possibly be the temptress who seduced my husband. Tigress Zuo had never met Xiao Rongrong in person, but she had seen Xiao Rongrong in one of her TV shows, and had even gushed over how beautiful she was to Zuo Fanrui. Dammit! She cursed herself for ever having said anything nice about the homewrecker.

Seducing Zuo Fanrui was tantamount to spitting in Tigress Zuo's face. As far as Tigress Zuo was concerned, that shameless homewrecker had signed her own death warrant the moment she laid hands on her husband.

Yan Huan was not aware of Tigress Zuo's internal monologue. If she knew that the middle-aged woman before her actually thought she was "old," she would probably have laughed until she cried.

Old? Yan Huan was only 21 years old. The makeup artist had done an excellent job, turning a young lady who was barely in her 20s into a woman in her 40s. It was either that, or Yan Huan's inner exhaustion from her previous life was showing on her face.

But Yan Huan did not reflect on any of that, as she did not know what Tigress Zuo was thinking. She was merely puzzled by the woman's sudden entrance; the set was supposed to be off-limits to outsiders.

Yan Huan was right about the set being off-limits to unauthorized personnel, but she was wrong about the fat woman before her. She was not an "outsider"—she was Zuo Fanrui's wife. Zuo Fanrui was one of the most important men in Sea City's entertainment industry; he had been supporting Sea City's showbiz for many years now, and was powerful enough to influence the State Administration of Press, Publication, Radio, Film and Television. As his wife, Tigress Zuo naturally had connections of her own; all she had to do was place a phone call to get into the set.

Chapter 216: Beating Up The Mistress

Tigress Zuo scanned the set, looking for the shameless temptress. But she did not see her.

She decided not to waste any time looking for the actress herself. She asked Yan Huan: "Where's Xiao Rongrong?"

Tigress Zuo was quite sure that someone on the production team would be able to tell her where Xiao Rongrong could be found.

Yan Huan pointed at the small resting room before her. It was a makeshift room with walls and a proper ceiling; unlike the other no-name actors, Xiao Rongrong did not have to sit outside in the biting wind.

"She's in there," answered Yan Huan honestly. She did not ask what the woman wanted with Xiao Rongrong; the middle-aged woman did not look like she was happy with Xiao Rongrong, but then again the two of them could be family, for all she knew.

She ran through a few different scenarios in her head as she tried to guess the middle-aged woman's relationship with Xiao Rongrong, but quickly dropped it. It was none of her business. She picked up her cup of warm water and drank from it as she adjusted the gold crown on her head with her other hand. The thought of having to wear the gold crown for the next few months made her feel sorry for her little neck.

She idly wondered whether wearing the gold crown for extended periods of time would result in spinal disorders such as scoliosis later. She hoped not.

Out of the corner of her eye, she saw the middle-aged woman enter the resting room. She sighed wistfully; she wished she had a resting room of her own, but that was a privilege exclusive to A-list stars. It was not meant for no-name actors like her.

She was also slightly envious of Xiao Rongrong for having relatives to visit her at work. Yan Huan never had anyone visit her, because she did not have any relatives at all. Her mother was no longer with her.

She reflected on this sadly as she took another sip from the warm cup in her hands.

Suddenly, there was a loud scream from the resting room. Yan Huan nearly jumped out of her skin.

What happened? Was it an earthquake?

Yi Ling quickly ran over to Yan Huan and pulled her to a secluded corner to hide. She did not know what was going on, but whatever it was, she did not want Yan Huan to get caught up in it.

Just as everyone was wondering what was going on, a second scream pierced the air, followed by the sounds of weeping and cursing from two women. Soon after, a middle-aged woman with bulldog jowls walked out of the resting room, dragging Xiao Rongrong behind her by the hair.

Xiao Rongrong was wailing like a banshee now. Her costume was in tatters, and there were claw marks on her face. Her makeup had smudged into an unsightly mess; her tears left a trail of eyeliner and mascara down her cheeks.

“You seduced my husband, you slut, and then you made him do nasty, illegal things for you. Well, karma’s finally caught up to him, and now I’m going to deal with you.”

“What’s wrong? You enjoy seducing men, don’t you? You like sleeping with my husband, don’t you? I’ll strip you naked, you should thank me for the opportunity to show off that body of yours. It’s not like any of this is new to you, is it?”

With that, the Tigress began to tear what remained of Xiao Rongrong’s costume from her.

Xiao Rongrong cried and screamed, but she could not defend herself against the large, thick-waisted Tigress before her. A few members of the production crew tried to run over to her to help her, but the Tigress turned around and yelled:

“Don’t you dare stick your noses in this! This is between me and this slut here. If you want to help her, go ahead, I’ll strip you naked, too.”

As soon as she said that, the staff that had tried to approach her stopped in their tracks. The director and producer had temporarily left the set, which meant that no one was around to take control of the situation. The rest of the crew had turned into rubbernecks, eager for a good show.

Chapter 217: The Female Lead Was Beaten Up

Xiao Rongrong was not on good terms with most of the production team, and it showed; most of the staff members stood at a careful distance to gawk at the spectacle. The women secretly rubbed their hands in glee at Xiao Rongrong’s misfortune, while the men hung about to watch the stripshow.

Rrrrrriiiiiip! The Tigress ripped Xiao Rongrong’s costume apart. A moment later, Xiao Rongrong shrieked hoarsely as her clothes scattered about her.

Yan Huan fingered her own costume, wondering whether it was actually made of paper. How was it possible for the costume to tear so easily?

The ripping sounds continued. Yi Ling stepped in front of Yan Huan and said gravely, “Huanhuan, don’t even think about going over to help Xiao Rongrong. This isn’t the time to be a saint, so don’t be stupid now.”

Yan Huan was embarrassed by Yi Ling’s friendly reminder. Did she look like a saint to Yi Ling? In her previous life, Yan Huan had been far from a saint, and she was not about to start becoming one in this

life. She was not foolish enough to save her enemy; if it had not been for Lu Yi, Yan Huan would have suffered a fate worse than what Xiao Rongrong was going through now. Would Xiao Rongrong have helped her then? Of course not. She would have sooner kicked Yan Huan when she was down than pull her up from the ground.

Rrrrrriiiiiip! Xiao Rongrong was now completely naked; she did not even have any underwear on. Her milky white “puppies” bounced in the air.

The Tigress clamped her hands around Xiao Rongrong’s breasts. Yan Huan knew that if she were in Xiao Rongrong’s place, she would have attempted suicide by dashing her head against the wall by now; death seemed preferable to the humiliation of having an unfamiliar woman squeeze her naked breasts in front of so many people.

The Tigress ruthlessly squeezed Xiao Rongrong’s breasts. “I see now why you were able to seduce so many men. You’ve added a little something inside, haven’t you?”

Pffffft! One of the staff members, in the middle of drinking a cup of water, sprayed his mouthful of water onto the floor when he heard what the Tigress had said.

Added something, eh? Everyone on the set knew exactly what that meant.

It meant that Xiao Rongrong had breast augmentation surgery, which explained the size of her melons. Everyone wondered if the actress dared to fly on a plane; surely there was a risk of her giant implants exploding from the change in altitude?

When Director Zheng finally returned to the set, he was startled to see the mess on the set, and the naked woman lying on the floor. The sight burned his eyes, but he had to take a closer look—wait, that was his female lead!

What was going on? He stared at the scene before him, dumbfounded. It was a long moment before he finally collected himself.

“Pull them apart, quickly!” he shouted at the staff beside him. This was a movie set, not a fighting ring. He could not understand why a woman had barged on to his set to beat up his female lead, and then strip her naked. Director Zheng quickly averted his eyes when he realized what he was looking at; he was not the type to ogle Xiao Rongrong’s nude body in the midst of all the chaos.

A few of the male staff finally approached Tigress Zuo when they heard the director’s orders. They pulled her away from Xiao Rongrong, who had already fainted from embarrassment, anger, and pain. The men could not stop themselves from stealing glances at the actress: she was almost entirely naked. There was a scrap of cloth over her groin, but it was so tiny it might as well not be there.

“Hands off! I’m going to beat this homewrecker to death! Xiao Rongrong, you shameless slut, you seduced my husband and caused him to be indicted by a prosecutor. You’ve ruined his life! You’ve destroyed my future, and my children’s, too! Xiao Rongrong, I hope you die a horrible death, you whore, you slut...”

Chapter 218: Unlikable Person

The Tigress cursed Xiao Rongrong, her choice of words becoming increasingly nasty in her seemingly never-ending rant. But her voice eventually faded away as the men dragged her out of the set.

Even after the Tigress had left, no one moved to help Xiao Rongrong cover up. Her pale, naked flesh remained exposed for everyone to see; even the men began to find the sight repulsive.

Ke-chack! Suddenly, there was the sound of a camera shutter.

Yi Ling quickly pulled Yan Huan around a corner, and then lifted her coat to shield Yan Huan's face with it, in case someone was trying to take unauthorized photos of her..

Director Zheng jumped out of his skin when he heard the camera shutter. He immediately stepped in front of Xiao Rongrong to shield her from view; some distance away, a young man realized that he had been discovered, and took off with his camera. He was a tall, lanky man who seemed to be a professional paparazzi; he ran like the wind, and was gone before the director had a chance to yell: "Get him!"

Luo Lin finally emerged from the resting room, looking groggy. She slapped herself on the head a few times to clear it. Her jaw dropped when she saw Xiao Rongrong lying naked on the floor, but she was a professional manager who knew how to deal with every situation: she removed her coat and hurried to cover Xiao Rongrong with it. After that, she called for several of the production staff to help carry the actress into the resting room so that the doctor on the production team would be able to check her injuries.

Luo Lin hugged her head in despair; she hoped that she would not have to take Xiao Rongrong to the hospital. She had to be discreet, or risk having Xiao Rongrong become famous for all the wrong reasons.

But it was too late: the following day, Xiao Rongrong had become famous in the whole country, thanks to her high-resolution nude photo, which left nothing to the imagination. Every single person in the country—over 1 billion people—had seen Xiao Rongrong in her birthday suit.

It was game over for Xiao Rongrong.

The scandal was a massive headache for Luo Lin, but her troubles were nothing compared to Director Zheng's—how was he supposed to continue shooting his show now? It was impossible to get another actress to replace Xiao Rongrong so late in the game, but he knew could not keep Xiao Rongrong on the project either.

He had no choice but to continue with the shoot. He mentally kicked himself for casting Xiao Rongrong as the female lead, and then again for not switching her out as soon as he realized she was incompetent and a huge liability to the production.

But Xiao Rongrong's scandal brought about certain benefits as well: the more discussion it generated, the more publicity it created for the show. In fact, the show had become the talk of the town before it had gone on air, or even finished filming.

Director Zheng was not happy about it, however. He would gladly give the "extra publicity" to any other director who wanted it. He found it horrifically embarrassing to have his ambitious, big-budget project become famous overnight because of the female lead's scandalous news.

There was a doctor among the production crew, on standby to deal with accidents on the set. The doctor checked Xiao Rongrong's injuries, and declared that she was not seriously injured: she had merely fainted due to the force of the Tigress's slaps.

In truth, the doctor suspected that the actress may have fainted from anger because no one had rushed to her aid, but he kept his suspicions to himself.

=The doctor clucked his tongue. The actress had only herself to blame. She had been a nasty, unlikable person who had succeeded in stepping on everyone's toes; it was only natural for most people to laugh at her misfortune instead of feeling sorry for her.

The doctor's assumptions were correct, but he had actually underestimated the number of enemies Xiao Rongrong had made.

She had sabotaged a large number of actresses over the years, but had never suffered any consequences for her actions until now, because none of her earlier victims had been as fortunate as Yan Huan. In fact, if Yan Huan did not have Lu Yi looking out for her, she would have sunk like a ship as well, never to resurface in showbiz.

Chapter 219: GTFO Of Showbiz

Xiao Rongrong had more than just her reputation to worry about now; she had to watch out for her past victims, who were all waiting to avenge themselves once she had fallen from grace.

Director Zheng did not know how to deal with the mess. Luo Lin, too, was now faced with what seemed to be the worst nightmare in her career so far; she had to call her agency to ask for advice on how to deal with the situation. Xiao Rongrong's nude photo was a huge problem; nude photos usually did not have long-lasting, negative consequences for an actress's career, but this was not any ordinary nude photo. It was a photo of Xiao Rongrong after the Tigress had beaten her and stripped her naked for seducing her husband and sleeping with him.

The higher-ups at Xiao Rongrong's agency were at their wits' end. The Tigress, for her part, was not done yet: her family's future had been destroyed by Xiao Rongrong, and she was not going to let her get away with it so easily. She shifted the blame for the injury to her husband's genitals to Xiao Rongrong; the Tigress had decided to go all out because she had nothing else to lose.

If she was going down, she was taking Xiao Rongrong with her. The Tigress appeared on TV, her voice breaking as she wept openly in front of reporters. It was masterful acting, a convincing portrayal of a wife who had been wronged by her husband; Yan Huan, sitting before the TV, could only gape in amazement at her acting skills. The Tigress deserved an Oscar for Best Actress.

Yan Huan had trouble reconciling the woman weeping tragically on TV as she lamented her sad fate with the fierce Tigress who had ruthlessly beat Xiao Rongrong, stripped her naked, and then had to be restrained by five men.

The Tigress cried as she recounted how wonderful her life had been because of her caring husband. But all of that changed as soon as Xiao Rongrong seduced him: her husband had become obsessed with his mistress, to the point of neglecting his wife and children. He had even helped his mistress sabotage the

careers of many newcomers to showbiz, and now he was being investigated for it. This was all Xiao Rongrong's fault, the Tigress wailed. The actress had destroyed the Tigress's family.

The Tigress's press conference dispelled any doubt of Xiao Rongrong being Zuo Fanrui's mistress. This, coupled with the photo that had leaked onto the internet, showing Xiao Rongrong naked as the day she was born, sealed the actress's fate. The photo had originally been uploaded in high resolution, leaving nothing to the imagination, but the uploader, possibly afraid that they would be arrested for uploading pornographic material, eventually replaced the photo with an edited version that covered her private parts with a mosaic filter.

But it was too late. Some of the smarter netizens had foreseen this and downloaded the photo beforehand.

The photo, although sensational, paled in comparison to the comments it generated.

"Her boobs are fake. Look, they stand up even when she's lying down, you can tell right away they're fake. I wonder how much silicone is in there?"

"I heard that she's a frequent flier. Man, I'd be afraid of my silicone bags exploding in mid-air if I were her."

"I think she's had plastic surgery on her face too. Look at that chin of hers, my god, it's so pointy she can probably stab someone to death with it."

"Being a mistress and homewrecker is bad enough, but this nasty woman actually sabotaged other actors, and I can't forgive her for that. I was wondering what happened to a young actress I really liked, and it turns out that she got iced by Xiao Rongrong too."

"Eh, I'd take her as my mistress any day. So what if her boobs are fake? She has a hot body. I mean, look at Zuo Fanrui's wife, I can't blame him for cheating on her."

"Xiao Rongrong, scram, you don't deserve to be in showbiz."

"GTFO Xiao Rongrong!"

The voices of condemnation grew louder with each passing day. Xiao Rongrong's previous victims stepped forward in quick succession to tell their stories, some of which were shockingly heartbreaking.

Chapter 220: Overactive Imagination

Some of the actors who had been iced successfully won the sympathy and the support of the netizens with their tragic stories. They now stood a good chance of staging a comeback.

Xiao Rongrong, on the other hand, was now famous for all the wrong reasons. She ran the risk of having passersby throw rotten eggs at her if she walked on the streets; there were too many women out there who sympathized with the Tigress because they, too, had had their families wrecked by their husbands' extramarital affairs.

Palace Imperial Concubine, the show with Xiao Rongrong as the female lead, had also become famous overnight. Everyone was already talking about it, even before the show went on air, but it was still too

early to tell whether all the attention generated by Xiao Rongrong's scandal would work in the show's favor, or sink it.

On the internet, many keyboard warriors were now actively denouncing Xiao Rongrong. They called for a boycott of her previous work and sent requests to the online streaming platforms to remove her previous shows and movies from their catalogue.

Xiao Rongrong's reputation had taken a nosedive; there was nothing positive or wholesome about her image now. The companies that had hired her for celebrity endorsement deals and TV ads now ended their contracts with her and demanded that she compensate them for the damage done to their brand image.

It would take a miracle to save Xiao Rongrong's career now.

Director Zheng was caught between a rock and a hard place: his palace drama TV show was already more than halfway into principal photography, which meant it was no longer possible to recast the female lead. But it was also impossible to keep Xiao Rongrong on the project; Director Zheng had initially thought of having Xiao Rongrong finish her remaining scenes, but he had quickly abandoned that idea when he saw that he had grossly overestimated her mental fortitude. She was not only physically injured, but also mentally broken from the public humiliation; there was no way she would be able to act in her current state.

In the end, Director Zheng had to get his screenwriter to change the story and try to rearrange Concubine Mi's scenes during post-production editing. Concubine Mi was killed off early in the story, and Concubine Chen, the secondary female lead who had about the same amount of screentime as Concubine Mi, took over as the female lead. Director Zheng had been afraid that the story would turn into an incomprehensible mess, but he soon realized that the change actually added more drama and twists to the plot. The story was much more exciting now.

The Empress won in the end. Concubine Chen, the secondary female lead, was the Empress's accomplice.

The shoot progressed a lot faster now that Xiao Rongrong had been removed from the show. Everything went smoothly, and it was no longer necessary to have to work overtime every day because of Xiao Rongrong's mistakes. Everyone on the set had been angry and upset at Xiao Rongrong, but they gradually cheered up when they saw how much progress they were making now.

The remaining scenes were shot quickly and efficiently. Everything seemed to fall into place naturally.

In the final shot of the last scene, the Empress sat in her chair as usual, with Granny Flower standing behind her, massaging her shoulders. The Empress picked up her tea cup from the table next to her and lifted it to her lips; before she drank from it, however, her lips suddenly curved into an enigmatic, knowing smile.

Concubine Chen looked at the Empress—and smiled in the exact same manner.

That was the final scene for the show. Most of the actors were allowed to go home now that production had more or less wrapped up, but Yan Huan had to stay behind to shoot a few additional scenes to make Xiao Rongrong's abrupt departure from the show seem less jarring.

Yan Huan did not mind. The thought of being able to go home soon cheered her up. She could not wait to get back; she missed Little Bean, and also...

No, she thought, stop right there. She shook her head and reprimanded herself for her overactive imagination. She was not supposed to miss that man.

She realized then that she had left Sea City for almost five months now. The past five months had been cold and exhausting, and the recent mess with Xiao Rongrong had taken a toll on her nerves.

It was always almost dark by the time they arrived at their hotel. Yan Huan was so tired she did not feel like doing anything; she went to bed as soon as she showered. But a few minutes after she drifted off to sleep, she was awakened by the TV in the living room.