

As Agreed 501

Chapter 501: Minds Games

Gu Shaoting sensed Shu Pan's reluctance to come over for lunch and didn't force the matter.

He looked at the time. It was almost lunchtime. He walked straight to the secretary pool area.

"Charlene, it's almost lunchtime, let's go," Gu Shaoting said.

"Okay." Charlene's sweet voice rang out. When she saw Gu Shaoting, she immediately grabbed her bag and excitedly walked out with him.

"Where's Mr. Zhang?" Gu Shaoting suddenly remembered not seeing Mr. Zhang in the secretary pool area just now.

"He's very busy today. I haven't seen him since he brought me in this morning." Charlene replied.

Actually, Charlene told Mr. Zhang that Mr. Gu wanted him to get some information from the sales department when she came out of Gu Shaoting's office.

Mr. Zhang believed her since he saw her walk out of the CEO's office until he went to the sales department and was told that there was no such request, and he was mistaken.

The back and forth had wasted a lot of time, so naturally, he missed the lunch appointment between Gu Shaoting and Charlene.

Since Mr. Zhang was busy, Gu Shaoting didn't insist on waiting for him.

Gu Shaoting and Charlene stepped out of the elevator together into the lunch crowd. The office lobby was extremely busy. The people who saw them together couldn't help but wonder if they were lovers.

As Shu Pan kept a low profile and rarely came to Gu Group, many people didn't know that Gu Shaoting actually had a girlfriend.

When they saw Joy last time, they assumed that she was Gu Shaoting's illegitimate daughter.

Charlene was secretly delighted as she looked at Gu Shaoting beside her. She wanted everyone to misunderstand that they were romantically involved.

She felt even more smug when she saw everyone's inquisitive gazes. She believed that news about them being a couple would spread very quickly.

Who in the country didn't know of Gu Shaoting? The current CEO of Gu Group was successful and recognized by all as a dazzling star in the business world.

His business persona aside, he was also a man worthy of women falling head over heels over him. Although there were very few photos of him in the public arena, the few out there were worthy of shrieks from any woman.

Charlene saw a photo of him that really affected her. In that photo, Gu Shaoting was sharp-eyed, tall, and handsome in a black tailored suit as he walked out of an airport via the VIP exit, surrounded by a group of bodyguards. She fell for him the moment she saw that photo.

She knew that she had fallen for him even more now.

It was a feeling she never had.

They walked out of the office lobby under everyone's watchful eyes and speculations.

All Gu Shaoting had on his mind was Shu Pan. He didn't take the young girl's flirtatious thoughts to heart and just treated her as a friend's daughter.

When they arrived at the restaurant, Charlene requested a small private room on the grounds that the main dining area was too noisy.

Seeing that there were only two of them in the private room, Charlene felt like they were on a date, and her heart pounded nervously.

"What would you like to have?" Gu Shaoting asked in his deep and magnetic voice as he handed her the menu.

Charlene took the menu shyly and pretended to peruse through it to hide her nervousness.

They finally put in their order. While waiting for lunch to be served, Charlene asked, "Brother Gu, it must be hard for you to manage such a large corporation."

"It's not that bad." Gu Shaoting took a sip of tea.

"That's not true. Look at how my father is losing hair managing a big company. He's almost bald." Charlene sighed.

Fortunately, Brother Gu was not like her father.

"Brother Gu, when is it convenient for you? I would like to visit Auntie." Charlene found out today that her mother had visited Gu Shaoting's mother before.

She didn't want to waste the mom card and would like to get on his mother's good side as soon as possible.

Chapter 502: Ulterior Motives

Gu Shaoting couldn't help but frown when he heard that.

Charlene would like to visit his mother?

They were not that close, right?

Charlene saw Gu Shaoting's reaction and suddenly thought that her request might have been too much.

She couldn't wait to give herself a tight slap. Didn't she understand the principle of haste making waste?

She licked her lips awkwardly and said, "Brother Gu, I'm sorry. Maybe I'm asking too much. I just thought that you are doing me a favor with this internship and my father has taught me to be grateful. That's why I wanted to visit Auntie. After all, she's your closest relative."

Gu Shaoting had no choice but to give Charlene face since she brought up her father.

He could only agree. "Oh, maybe someday. My mother likes to travel everywhere nowadays. Sometimes, I don't even know where she is."

"Alright." Charlene saw Gu Shaoting's expression turn normal and heaved a sigh of relief.

Gu Shaoting had his own worries too. His mother didn't like Shu Pan and couldn't wait to break them up.

She would probably like any woman who was presented to her now. She would think that anyone was better than Shu Pan, let alone a wealthy young miss like Charlene. She would happily shove her into Gu Shaoting's arms.

His life was finally more peaceful now. He didn't want to invite any trouble.

The two of them ate in silence. Charlene noticed that Gu Shaoting didn't like onions; he only ate fish and soup.

She made a mental note about his food preferences.

The atmosphere in the private room was awkward as none of them spoke.

Suddenly, a ringing phone broke the silence.

Gu Shaoting picked up his phone and saw that it was Shu Pan calling. That was odd. Why would Shu Pan call him at this hour?

He was usually the one who called her. This must be something urgent.

He quickly pressed the answer button. "What's the matter? Have you had lunch?"

"Shaoting, Joy's teacher just called and said that Joy has a high fever. I'm going to take her to a doctor now." Shu Pan was so anxious that she felt like her heart was in her mouth.

"What? Wait for me at your office lobby. I'm coming to pick you up now." Although Gu Shaoting was anxious, his expression was still very calm.

Shu Pan felt much more at ease when she heard his voice.

After hanging up the phone, Gu Shaoting looked at Charlene and said apologetically, "I have something urgent to attend to now, so I can't finish this welcome lunch with you. Please stay and enjoy the meal. I've already signed for the bill. Feel free to order more if you'd like."

Gu Shaoting had already opened the door to the private room when he said that.

"Brother Gu, is there anything I can help with?" Charlene had no idea what was going on.

“No need, thanks. Please stay and enjoy lunch.” Gu Shaoting left in a hurry after he said that.

How did a perfectly good meal end up like this? Charlene still didn’t know who Gu Shaoting was talking to, and what made him so anxious...

She sat down dejectedly and was in no mood to eat. She didn’t really care about the lunch anyway.

She thought for a bit and then picked up her phone to call Mr. Zhang.

“Mr. Zhang, it’s Charlene. Have you had lunch?” Charlene asked naturally in a very sweet voice.

“Not yet. I was just about to go eat.” Mr. Zhang felt a little down today. He felt that he had been played by CEO Gu. He told him that the sales department had documents for him, but they didn’t.

“Perfect. I’m going to text you an address. Please join me for lunch. I’ve already ordered.” Charlene invited him warmly.

“Sure, thank you in advance.” Mr. Zhang finally smiled. Not long after they hung up, he received a text from Charlene.

He took a taxi to the address.

One could tell at a glance that everything served at this restaurant was expensive.

Chapter 503: He Has A Fiancée?

Mr. Zhang thought to himself that rich young misses were indeed different. Even the food and drinks they consumed must be of the best quality or the most expensive.

Mr. Zhang saw the table full of dishes as he sat down. He was so shocked that his mouth fell open in a gape of astonishment.

“You... You ordered so many dishes for yourself?” Mr. Zhang was starting to question his life. This kind of behavior was too extravagant and wasteful.

“No, these were ordered by Brother Gu. It’s meant to be my welcome lunch. He even asked me to invite you. But someone called Brother Gu just now and he suddenly left to deal with something urgent.”

Charlene watched Mr. Zhang’s expression closely, hoping to discover some non-verbal clues.

“Something urgent? It’s probably a private matter. I’m not aware of any emergencies at work.” Mr. Zhang blurted out.

Charlene got the answer she wanted. She initially thought that it was Mr. Zhang who called Gu Shaoting away.

It seemed like it was a private matter.

“Maybe. Maybe something happened to his family.” Charlene put down her chopsticks and said worriedly.

“Don’t worry about CEO Gu. He can solve any problem.” Mr. Zhang said as he ate.

“Maybe it’s about his girlfriend?” Charlene probed.

“Girlfriend?” Mr. Zhang paused before he said with a smile, “Let me share a gossip with you. CEO Gu doesn’t have a girlfriend, but he has a fiancée. They are probably getting married soon.”

“Fiancée?” Charlene was shocked; that wasn’t an acceptable answer to her. *freeweβnovel.com*

She almost lost her composure, but fortunately, she managed to control herself. Mr. Zhang was busy eating and not paying attention to her.

“That’s right. He just proposed not long ago. Their wedding is probably around the corner.” Mr. Zhang was very happy for CEO Gu as he finally got the woman of his dreams.

After all the ups and downs, true love found its way.

But he didn’t want to tell Charlene too much. He just wanted to let her know that CEO Gu was taken.

“Brother Gu’s fiancée must be as beautiful as a goddess.” Charlene sounded a little forlorn as she muttered.

“She’s very gentle and considerate. A very nice lady.” Mr. Zhang didn’t want Charlene to fall further for Gu Shaoting.

He had already noticed Charlene’s interest in his boss after spending two days with her. It was better for her to drop the idea as soon as possible.

Her interest in CEO Gu was understandable. After all, most women who had met him fell for his charm.

Charlene stopped talking and ate quietly.

Only she knew how bland the food tasted in her mouth.

She suddenly had a strong desire to meet Gu Shaoting’s fiancée.

She wanted to see what she was like. Charlene didn’t think that she was inferior to his fiancée. Brother Gu probably hadn’t seen her good qualities because they had spent so little time together.

Charlene sipped her soup slowly and her expression returned to normal.

Gu Shaoting arrived at Shu Pan's office to pick her up.

"I ate a little lunch. What did Joy's teacher say? Why did she suddenly have a fever?" Gu Shaoting asked worriedly.

"It's probably a throat inflammation. She's been coughing the past two days." It was common for children to catch a cold or get the flu.

"Then, it's probably not something serious." Gu Shaoting comforted Shu Pan quickly to ease her anxiety.

"Weren't you at a welcome lunch? It's not nice to leave suddenly like that." Shu Pan wondered if she had made a mountain out of a molehill.

This wasn't the first time Joy had a fever. It happened throughout her childhood. She used to be strong and decisive and took Joy to the doctor right away when she had a fever in the past. But now that she had Gu Shaoting, she relied on him for everything.

She would think of him for even the smallest thing.

"It's fine. We're just ordinary friends." Gu Shaoting said plainly.

Shu Pan didn't probe further after hearing his words.

When they arrived at the kindergarten, the two of them got Joy and took her to a hospital.

Chapter 504: A Chance Meeting, Part 1

Gu Shaoting didn't return to the office the entire afternoon. Charlene had been paying attention.

She had also asked around and people told her that he had something on in the afternoon and wouldn't be coming back to the office.

Charlene was very disappointed. She was listless and distracted the whole afternoon. Xiaoyu called out to her a few times before she snapped out of her daze.

"Charlene, are you okay? You don't look well." Xiaoyu asked with concern.

"I'm fine. Maybe because I didn't sleep well last night." Charlene shook her head.

Suddenly, Charlene's tone changed. "Xiaoyu, have you met CEO Gu's fiancée?"

"CEO Gu's fiancée? Are you referring to the supermodel, Tong Fei?" Xiaoyu asked.

"Supermodel?" Why was Xiaoyu's description of Gu Shaoting's fiancée so different from Mr. Zhang's?

The fiancée Mr. Zhang described was a woman who enjoyed staying at home and running the family, nothing close to a supermodel.

"Yup. CEO Gu had a supermodel fiancée, but there's news that they've broken up, but I don't know if it's fake news."

Xiaoyu felt that life as a celebrity was hard as they had absolutely no privacy.

Charlene felt like she was on an emotional roller coaster as she tried to figure out what was going on.

“If she’s CEO Gu’s fiancée, she probably comes here quite often and you guys would know if they’ve broken up.” Charlene suddenly felt that Mr. Zhang had duped her.

But he didn’t need to do that, right? She couldn’t figure it out.

The more she thought about it, the more frustrated she got. Things were much more complicated than she had imagined.

Never mind. She would stop thinking about it for now and go out and relax tonight.

“Xiaoyu, are you busy after work?” Charlene asked.

“No, I’m going straight home.” Xiaoyu’s family wasn’t from Bin City. She lived alone and spent her afterwork hours alone too.

“I just arrived here and not familiar with Bin City. Would you like to go shopping with me after work?” Charlene said.

“Sure,” Xiaoyu readily agreed.

After work, the two of them went straight to the largest shopping mall in Bin City.

The mall was crowded and there was a dazzling array of goods. When Charlene shopped, she’d just pick the best brands and buy whatever she wanted.

She didn’t care about the price. She only cared about whether she liked the item. Xiaoyu’s heart palpitated when she saw Charlene’s behavior.

Nouveau riche. Charlene was one of them.

The two of them walked around for a bit, picking up items as they went, until their hands were full with shopping.

They were all Charlene's shopping.

"Charlene, I think it's time to wrap up." Xiaoyu was worried that they wouldn't be able to carry all her shopping home.

"Don't worry, soon." Charlene was looking for brands that were more suited for middle-aged people.

Although Brother Gu said that she didn't have to visit his mother, she must mind her manner. She'd get his mother a gift so she'd be ready to visit her whenever the opportunity came up.

The boutique they walked into specialized in clothing for the middle-aged. It was a very famous brand.

Even if Charlene seldom bought such clothes, she had heard of the brand.

There were a few customers browsing in the boutique. One could tell from the way they dressed that they were all rich wives. Each of them had remarkable demeanor.

Charlene finally had her eye on a shawl.

As she did not know Mrs. Gu's height and weight, and whether she was thin or fat, she couldn't buy her clothes. freewebnovel.com

A shawl was a better and more practical choice.

Just as Charlene was about to call the sales assistant to show her the shawl, the changing room door opened.

An elegant and noble lady happened to be trying on the same shawl.

When Charlene saw her, she couldn't help but sigh in her heart that the shawl really suited the lady. Whether the style or color, the shawl made her look extremely noble and elegant.

Charlene couldn't help but say out loud, "Madam, this shawl really suits you. I'm going to get the same one as a gift for someone."

Chapter 505: A Chance Meeting, Part 2

When Song Can heard Charlene's compliment, she couldn't help but turn around. She learned that the sweet voice belonged to a pretty, young girl with bags of shopping hanging off both her arms.

The bags were all from luxury brands. This young girl obviously came from money.

Song Can was delighted. "Young lady, does this really look good on me?"

Charlene nodded quickly.

"Very much so."

Song Can chuckled. What a lovely girl.

Sigh, it was so much better to have daughters. Daughters were much more caring, unlike her son, who disregarded all parental advice when he was grown.

Sometimes, when he came home, they would start arguing after just a couple of verbal exchanges. Grown sons never listened to their mothers.

Plus, their arguments were always about Shu Pan. Song Can couldn't help but sometimes wonder if Shu Pan was the bane of her existence.

Why did her son meet her? Gu Shaoting became like this probably under the influence of Shu Pan.

She was so upset the last time that she went on yet another trip with her friends. Out of sight, out of mind. She had just arrived home yesterday.

She didn't even tell Gu Shaoting that she was back. She figured that he didn't care anyway, so she couldn't be bothered to tell him.

It wouldn't make any difference anyway.

She felt quite sad thinking about it. A girl she had just met could make her so happy while her son was so infuriating.

"It's really nice, Song Can. This shawl looks like it was designed for you." Song Can's friend added when she heard Charlene's compliment.

Song Can felt like she was on cloud nine.

"Alright, since everyone says it looks good on me, I'll get it." Song Can did not look at the price and was taking off the shawl to ask a sales assistant to wrap it up.

Charlene peeked at the price tag and got a shock. Even when Charlene bought branded goods all the time, she was shocked at the price. The shawl cost a five-figure sum, but this rich lady didn't even blink an eye and just asked the sales assistant to wrap it up.

"Just buy. You're the mother of the CEO of Gu Group. Why look at the price tag when you shop? Just get it if you like it." Her friend teased.

“Please don’t say that. I’ll be the butt of people’s jokes.” Song Can said unhappily. She only had this kind of false reputation. Gu Shaoting still wouldn’t heed her advice.

The more she thought about it, the angrier she got. That was why she couldn’t be bothered to call him even when she was back.

Charlene thought that she misheard this noble lady’s friend. Did she just refer to this lady as the mother of the CEO of Gu Group?

There was only one Gu Group in Bin City, right? Could this noble lady in front of her be Gu Shaoting’s mother?

She couldn’t believe her luck.

She had been racking her brain on how she could get close to Mrs. Gu and the heavens granted her a chance meeting like this...

“Xiaoyu, is this lady CEO Gu’s mother?” Charlene wanted to confirm.

Xiaoyu thought for a moment and replied, “I’m not sure. She rarely comes to the office. She appeared once but left in a hurry. This lady looks to be her.”

Charlene knew what she had to do. She walked up to Song Can and said, “It still looks better on you.”

“You’re too sweet. Aren’t you going to buy the same shawl?” Song Can saw that Charlene was empty-handed.

“I wouldn’t want to create a fashion faux pas for you. I’ll find something else.” Charlene said cleverly.

“Don’t be silly. What does it matter?” Song Can liked this girl.

She felt an instant connection with her.

“What’s your name, young lady?” Song Can asked.

“Charlene.” She answered quickly.

“That’s a nice name, as sweet as a person.” Song Can said with a smile.

Charlene felt a little shy.

“I don’t know why I felt a sense of familiarity when I met you.” Charlene said fawningly.

Chapter 506: Fate

Song Can also took a liking to this young girl at first sight, probably because her own son was so troublesome, she always found other people’s children adorable.

“If you two get along so well, why not spend more time together? Isn’t it trendy nowadays to have godmothers and goddaughters?” Song Can’s friend teased as she watched them chatting enthusiastically.

She knew Song Can was too lonely, always fretting over her son and his ex-wife.

In fact, as her good friends, they had advised her many times to let go and trust that her son would find happiness.

But Song Can couldn’t do it. Because she liked Tong Fei before, she couldn’t accept the one her son liked.

People sometimes get more confused as they get older.

“Yeah, Charlene, we seem to hit it off. We should meet up for tea or shopping sometime. As we get older, we also want to bask in the vitality of the young,” Song Can said with a smile.

“Sure thing, Auntie,” Charlene felt that coming out to shop tonight was a very wise decision. It seemed her sincerity had touched the heavens, giving her such a great opportunity. It must be said that the world was really small. In such a place, she met the person she was looking for.

Xiaoyu returned from the neighboring store and saw them chatting happily together, so she went over to greet them.

Seeing that it was getting late, Charlene and Song Can exchanged numbers, and then Charlene left with Xiaoyu.

“Charlene, was that really Mr. Gu’s mother?” Xiaoyu asked, somewhat puzzled.

“I don’t know, I didn’t ask,” Charlene didn’t want Xiaoyu to know too much, to avoid unnecessary gossip.

Back at the hotel, Charlene put away her loot and immediately sent a message to Gu Shaoting, “Brother Gu, I didn’t see you back at the office this afternoon. Are you okay?”

The message was full of concern.

After sending it, she waited for a long time without hearing her phone ring.

Charlene disappointedly set down her phone and decided to take a shower and go to bed.

Just before going to sleep, her phone chimed. Charlene quickly picked it up and saw it was from Gu Shaoting, containing only one cold word, “fine.”

Charlene pursed her lips and slowly put down the phone, knowing that even if she replied, he probably wouldn't respond again.

She lay in bed, tossing and turning, her mind a jumble of thoughts.

In a daze, she thought of something. She should find an apartment first. It wasn't possible to keep staying in a hotel.

Hmm, she would ask Secretary Zhang about it tomorrow.

...

Because Joy had a high fever, Gu Shaoting and Shu Pan didn't dare to leave her side for a moment, taking care of her tirelessly.

After Shu Pan gave Joy some fever-reducing medicine and was already exhausted.

"You go and rest, I'll take over," Gu Shaoting looked at Shu Pan with concern. Being a mother was truly admirable. He wasn't there when this happened. He wondered how she managed during that time.

"It's okay. Aren't you signing a contract tomorrow? Get some rest. She has taken the medicine now. After her fever goes down, I'll wipe her sweat and then take a nap," Shu Pan insisted, worried about Gu Shaoting's lack of experience in taking care of a sick child.

Gu Shaoting couldn't argue with her and could only listen.

Throughout the night, Shu Pan dozed off for only half an hour.

Worried that Joy might have another fever, Shu Pan felt dizzy when she woke up in the morning.

Fortunately, Joy didn't have a fever again. Shu Pan took the day off to take care of her, while Gu Shaoting left early.

Today, he had an early meeting and a contract signing.

Seeing how tired Shu Pan was, Gu Shaoting arranged for Mrs. Li to come and help cook porridge and meals, allowing Shu Pan to rest for a while.

It seemed like they needed to move to Qiyuan as soon as possible.

Chapter 507: Complaining

Shu Pan slept until noon, stretching lazily as she saw Joy quietly playing with her toys beside her.

She reached out and touched Joy's forehead, relieved to find that her fever was completely gone. A weight lifted off her heart.

"Are you hungry, Joy?" Shu Pan's voice was hoarse as she just woke up.

"I had congee. Auntie gave it to me," Joy said in her childish voice.

"That's good. You can go out. Mommy is getting up," Shu Pan said, planning to change her clothes.

After Joy left, Shu Pan's phone suddenly rang.

"Congratulations, Madam," came Xiaomeng's voice from the other end of the line.

"Why are you calling me that?" Shu Pan said, a bit annoyed. She still felt a bit shy about this title.

“He Ming told me about it. I never thought Gu Shaoting could be so romantic. It’s really surprising, isn’t it?” Xiaomeng sounded somewhat sentimental.

“I guess he read it in a book. His emotional intelligence isn’t that high,” Shu Pan quipped.

“When are you free? Let’s go out and celebrate,” Xiaomeng suggested.

“Joy had a fever last night. She’s fine now, but I need to keep an eye on her. I’ll make plans with you when I’m free,” Shu Pan said as she got out of bed and walked to the window.

“Is she okay now? Children are more prone to fevers and colds in this weather,” Xiaomeng said sympathetically.

“I know, Xiaomeng. Have you checked yourself? Any issues?” Shu Pan brought up the topic again.

“They say everything’s fine, but I still can’t get pregnant,” Xiaomeng sighed heavily, feeling dejected.

“Don’t dwell on it too much. Just go with the flow,” Shu Pan said, feeling helpless about the situation.

“Yeah, since I can’t get pregnant, I don’t plan to marry He Ming either. His mom is probably already looking for a suitable match for him,” Xiaomeng said, resigned to her fate. Seeing He Ming avoiding her and answering his mom’s calls, she knew it wasn’t going to end well.

She knew He Ming cared about her, but he was an only child, and she didn’t want to make things difficult for him.

“Don’t think like that. It’s just that the timing isn’t right. Relax,” Shu Pan advised.

“Heh, I’ve come to terms with it,” Xiaomeng said, feeling like she’s always been unlucky. She thought meeting He Ming was a blessing from heaven, but who knew there would be such a hurdle?

“Xiaomeng...” Shu Pan sighed helplessly.

“Hey girl, do you have any time later? How about we go out for a few days and relax?” Ye Xiaomeng suddenly suggested.

“Just the two of us?” Shu Pan asked.

“Yeah, I feel like I’m suffocating lately and I need to get out and clear my head,” Ye Xiaomeng felt like she needed some space to herself, especially since she felt caught between He Ming and Mother He.

Shu Pan thought for a moment. Joy’s kindergarten would be on break soon, and she could send Joy to her dad and Auntie Lu’s place. It would be a good time for her to take a few days off.

“Sure, when Joy’s on break next week, I’ll send her to my dad’s place, and then we can go,” Shu Pan agreed.

“Is there any place you really want to go?” Ye Xiaomeng asked.

“Not really, you decide,” Shu Pan felt that Xiaomeng had a broader range of experiences than her.

“Okay, do you want to let Mr. Gu know first? Will he agree? Or will he worry that I may lose you?” Ye Xiaomeng chuckled.

“It’s fine, do I not have any freedom in my life? I’ll let him know once we’ve decided on a place,” Shu Pan didn’t think Gu Shaoting would object.

“Alright, I’ll plan out the route and then we’ll decide,” Ye Xiaomeng was eager to have something to keep her busy and distract her mind. Her current job was relatively idle, with fewer business trips, so she had a lot of time to overthink things.

Actually, He Ming had also suggested that she go somewhere, but this time she wanted to go on a trip with her bestie, leaving the men aside.

Chapter 508: Difficulty in Company

After finishing her conversation with Ye Xiaomeng, Shu Pan hung up the phone, finished washing up, and came out. Joy, seeing her, said somewhat unhappily, "Mommy, you're so slow!"

"Sorry, sweetie, Mommy was chatting with godmother," Shu Pan replied.

"Madam, come and have your meal," Auntie Li called out as she saw Shu Pan come out.

"Auntie Li, just call me Shu Pan," Shu Pan corrected her again. She really wasn't used to being called "Madam," and besides, she wasn't one yet. Who knows what might change?

Auntie Li smiled. Madam really had no airs about her.

"Mommy, I'm so bored at home," Joy said, feeling a bit bored after staying home all morning.

"Where do you want to go then?" Shu Pan asked casually as she sipped her soup.

"Let's go to Daddy's office. I miss him," Joy finally decided after thinking for a while.

"But Daddy is busy with work. We might disturb him if we go," Shu Pan patiently explained.

"No, I want to go see Daddy," Joy started to pout a little.

Thinking about how Joy had just recovered from her illness, Shu Pan agreed.

After finishing their meal, Shu Pan went back to her room, changed into a simple and elegant long skirt, put on a pair of slightly heeled shoes, and applied light makeup.

“Mommy, you look so beautiful today!” Joy, the little flatterer, remarked.

“Isn’t Mommy always beautiful?” Shu Pan teased her.

“You’re always beautiful, but today you’re the most beautiful,” Joy said, grabbing Shu Pan’s hand and leading her outside.

“Let Mommy make a call first, just in case Daddy is busy,” Shu Pan suggested worriedly. She thought it might be too abrupt for them to just show up.

“No, don’t call. Mommy, let’s surprise Daddy!” Joy, mischievous as always, wanted to surprise her dad. Hopefully, it wouldn’t end up being a shock.

“Alright, we’ll do it your way,” Shu Pan conceded. She blamed Gu Shaoting for spoiling Joy with his idea that daughters should be raised in luxury. Now Joy was getting a bit spoiled.

The two of them arrived at Gu Group, and after getting out of the car, Shu Pan was feeling a bit hesitant.

But Joy dragged her inside, looking happily.

“Hello, could you please inform Mr. Gu?” Shu Pan, coming for the first time for personal matters, wasn’t sure what procedures to follow, so she decided to have the receptionist notify him.

“Sorry, do you have an appointment?” The receptionist, who had only been here for two months, was following protocol.

“No, if it’s convenient, please let him know. Otherwise, I can also look for Secretary Zhang.” Shu Pan thought about it, worrying that Gu Shaoting might be in a meeting.

“Alright, let me check with the secretary’s office.” The receptionist dialed the number for the secretary’s office, but Xiaoyu and Secretary Zhang were both unavailable, leaving only Charlene.

“Hello, is Mr. Gu available? There’s a Ms. Shu looking for him,” the receptionist inquired.

“Do you have an appointment? If not, he won’t see you. The CEO is very busy; he doesn’t just see anyone who walks in,” Charlene frowned.

“She just asked to pass on a message; Mr. Gu will see her,” the receptionist replied, feeling pressured by Charlene’s aggressive tone.

“Is it business or personal?” Charlene continued to inquire.

“Personal,” the receptionist replied, feeling a bit intimidated by Charlene’s assertiveness.

Personal matters? Who is this Ms. Shu? Are women nowadays so bold? Coming to the office and causing a scene?

“The CEO is busy,” Charlene said before promptly hanging up the phone.

The receptionist looked bewildered, staring at the now disconnected call, feeling somewhat lost.

“Sorry, the CEO is busy,” the receptionist could only say.

“It’s okay,” Shu Pan smiled, not wanting to make things difficult for her. She understood the rules of a large corporation.

She crouched down to Joy’s eye level and said, “Sweetheart, Daddy is busy. How about we go home and wait for him there?”

Chapter 509: She Doesn't Need Permission to Come

"No, I want Daddy," Joy's eyes started to well up with tears.

Shu Pan rubbed her temples, feeling a headache coming on.

"Mommy, why don't you call Daddy?" Joy didn't want to surprise her dad anymore. That lady downstairs wouldn't let them up anyway.

"You, little troublemaker..." Shu Pan pinched Joy's nose affectionately.

With a sigh, Shu Pan took out her phone and dialed Gu Shaoting's number.

If Xiaomeng were here, she would probably say Shu Pan was being overdramatic. With her current status, she could simply take Joy upstairs.

But that wasn't Shu Pan's style. She preferred to keep a low profile. She didn't want to come to the company and become the center of attention, with everyone gossiping about her like she was some circus monkey.

Just thinking about it made her scalp tingle.

As Shu Pan called Gu Shaoting, he was in the midst of giving the upper management a piece of his mind.

The executives were all feeling like they were being scolded like misbehaved children by Gu Shaoting.

Seething with anger, Gu Shaoting initially considered ignoring the phone call. But when he saw it was from Shu Pan, he took a quick glance. Could it be that Joy was sick again?

Seeing that it was almost time anyway, he waved his hand, signaling for them to leave.

The executives couldn't help but breathe a sigh of relief. Who was this great savior who had rescued them?

As soon as the executives departed, Gu Shaoting quickly answered the call.

"What's wrong, Honey?" Gu Shaoting asked anxiously, his tone completely different from when he was reprimanding the executives just moments ago.

"Are you available to come down to the lobby for a moment? Your precious daughter wants to see you," Shu Pan didn't mention the receptionist's refusal. After all, they were just following company protocols, and she hadn't informed them of her identity.

"What? You're here at the company? Alright, don't move, I'll be right down," Gu Shaoting hurriedly headed downstairs.

As the elevator doors opened, Gu Shaoting stepped out, his expression somewhat stern. He strode purposefully towards them.

"Daddy!" Joy immediately called out as soon as she saw her father.

"Little darling, are you all better now? Why didn't you ask Daddy to arrange for a driver to pick you up?" Gu Shaoting felt all his fatigue melt away when he heard Joy's voice.

The receptionist on the side was stunned to see this scene unfold before her eyes.

The little girl just now had called Gu Shaoting "Daddy." When did their CEO get married and have such a big daughter. That woman must be Mr. Gu's wife.

She hadn't paid much attention before, but now, looking closely, she was indeed very beautiful. Slim figure, elegant posture...

"We decided to come out spontaneously. We didn't disturb you, did we?" Shu Pan interjected timely when she saw the two getting cozy.

"No, it's fine. Let's go, upstairs." Gu Shaoting held Joy with his left hand and Shu Pan's hand with his right.

As they turned around, he said sternly to the receptionist, "Remember, she can come whenever she wants."

The receptionist nodded vigorously, feeling both relieved and confused about who had just set her up in the secretary department.

Seeing Gu Shaoting and his family leave, the receptionist quickly spread the gossip to others through internal channels.

This incident was bound to shake the entire Gu Group.

"Feeling aggrieved?" Gu Shaoting asked with concern as they rode the elevator.

"No, not at all. You were busy, it wasn't right for me to come to the company to find you. It blurs the lines between personal and professional matters," Shu Pan genuinely felt it was no big deal.

"Don't spoil Joy too much. Look at how she's behaving now—willful and throwing tantrums..." Shu Pan took the opportunity to advise, hoping Gu Shaoting would understand her good intentions.

"I think Joy is just fine," Gu Shaoting said with a smile.

The news of Shu Pan and Joy's visit to Gu Group spread like wildfire within the corporation.

Chapter 510: I Don't Believe What I Heard

Of course, Charlene learned about Shu Pan and Joy's visit a little late because she hadn't left the secretary pool area. Later, Xiaoyu came back and informed her.

"Women and children? Calling Mr. Gu 'Daddy'?" Charlene's eyes widened at the news.

"Yeah, it's said to be a little girl over four years old, very cute. The girl's mom is gentle and kind-hearted, always speaking softly," Xiaoyu said with a matter-of-fact tone, relaying what she had heard passing by the administrative department.

"That's impossible, I don't believe it. Mr. Gu isn't married, how could he have a daughter?" Charlene retorted.

"But it was the receptionist who said it, so it's probably true. I heard Mr. Gu personally went down to bring them up," Xiaoyu explained.

"Mr. Gu went down himself?" Charlene muttered to herself.

"Yeah, but I heard before that Mr. Gu had a daughter out of wedlock. It seems she's been to the company before, but I wasn't here then, so I'm not sure," Xiaoyu said, thinking it wasn't such a big deal even if Mr. Gu did have a daughter.

Some gossip about the boss was normal, who would take it seriously? Certainly not like Charlene, who seemed overly concerned.

The phrase "daughter" once again shook Charlene.

She was just hearing this and that, not knowing what was true.

She needed to find out and then get closer to Brother Gu. After all, knowing oneself and knowing the enemy results in a hundred victories.

“Alright, let’s get back to work. Aren’t you supposed to prepare a document for Mr. Gu?” Xiaoyu noticed Charlene was lost in thought and quickly reminded her.

Charlene snapped back to reality and returned to her seat.

But even as she sat there, her mind was elsewhere.

Could this be the rumored fiancée? The description matches up, unlike that Tong Fei.

Gentle and soft-spoken? Was that the type Brother Gu likes?

If she’s the fiancée, was this child hers? Or was she willing to be a stepmother?

But women nowadays were more materialistic; they would do anything for money.

Her mind was in turmoil because she had just arrived and didn’t know who to ask for accurate information.

Wait, why had she forgotten? Brother Gu’s mother would surely know her son’s situation best. Asking her would definitely yield accurate information.

Charlene made up her mind to invite her out for dinner on the weekend.

During Charlene’s daydreaming, Xiaoyu had efficiently prepared all the documents Mr. Gu needed.

“Charlene, I’ll go and deliver the documents to Mr. Gu,” Xiaoyu said, holding the files. Usually, it was Secretary Zhang who did this, but she had been busy outside for the past few days, and they weren’t sure if she was back yet.

“Xiaoyu, why don’t you let me do it instead? I’ve been cooped up in the office all day today, so it’s a good opportunity for me to stretch my legs,” Charlene suddenly felt it was a good chance to take a look at that woman. Everyone described her as gentle, not pretty, so she probably wasn’t very attractive.

Charlene thought scornfully to herself.

“Okay, thank you. If Mr. Gu isn’t in, just leave it on his desk,” Xiaoyu instructed.

“Sure.” Charlene took the files from Xiaoyu and headed toward Gu Shaoting’s office.

As she approached the office, just about to knock, Secretary Zhang suddenly emerged from the elevator. She saw Charlene about to knock.

“Charlene, do you need something from Mr. Gu?” Secretary Zhang asked as she approached, noticing the files meant for Mr. Gu. Wasn’t Xiaoyu supposed to deliver these? Looked like she was slacking off again.

“Oh, I’m just delivering some documents to Mr. Gu,” Charlene gestured with her chin towards the files.

“I happen to have something to discuss with Mr. Gu. Let me take them in,” Secretary Zhang said, without waiting for Charlene’s response, he simply took the files from Charlene’s hand.