

Full Marks Hidden Marriage: Pick Up a Son, Get a Free Husband

Chapter 171: The Prettiest Princess

That guess was like a stone thrown into a calm pool, sending up ripples of fervent comments:

“How could that be?! Lu Tingxiao is single, alright? Although he has a son, he doesn’t have a woman by his side!”

“If that’s really him, then it would be explosive news, tsk tsk...”

“No matter how explosive it is, what can you do about it? Would you dare to report it? Have you forgotten how the magazine publishing company VIO went bankrupt back then?”

“Uh, of course I remember. It was because they secretly took a picture of Lu Tingxiao and they even dared to publish it...”

After that reminder, everyone quickly gave up on the temptation of reporting the news. Those who had taken photos also started deleting the photos with trembling hands.

Lu Tingxiao was famous for being low-key in the media circle. He never accepted any interview offers from any magazine or media outlets. The little prince was protected so tightly that not even a fly could get through. No matter how curious they were about what had happened today and that woman’s identity, not a single media outlet would dare to walk this road to death.

In the elevator.

Ning Xi raised her head from within Lu Tingxiao’s embrace. She glanced at the big bun, then took a look at the little bun, her heart full of mixed feelings.

So this was what it felt like... to be protected by someone...

“Are you alright? I’ll move you to another hospital at once!” Lu Tingxiao’s expression was still a little dark. He had been too rushed when sending her to the hospital, it was only just now that he had found out about the unhappy coincidence.

“There’s no need to take the trouble to do that. My body’s fine now. Why don’t we return home? Actually, I really hate staying in the hospital...”

“Alright.”

“Speaking of which, where did those two bodyguards come from?” Ning Xi asked with suspicion.

“They’ve always been nearby. Your situation’s a little special now, so I let them follow you just in case.” He wasn’t going to let another incident like that time when she had been attacked and hurt by fans happen.

“I haven’t even officially signed a contract with Golden Age, and I’m already enjoying benefits like that?” Ning Xi felt humbled by the favour. After she finished speaking, she caught sight of herself in the mirror in the elevator...

Ning Xi faced the mirror and touched her face, “Oh, were those reporters blind? I was standing right in front of them and none of them recognised me! They even said... that I looked like a good wife and mother, a noble and refined air, a sweet lady and that I looked cute...? Aren’t I clearly more like Snow White’s stepmother or the wolf acting as Little Red Riding Hood’s grandmother?”

While speaking, she looked herself up and down in the mirror and finally realised what her current appearance was like: dressed in a loose hospital gown, her hair tied up in a convenient, casual braid and the pink hair clip that Little Treasure had given her, with a gentle, refined and soft expression...

Damn! She really did look like a sweet lady!

Ning Xi was surprised by herself.

Had she always looked like this in front of the big bun and the little bun? It wasn’t like her at all!

At this moment, after he had heard Ning Xi’s words, the little bun quickly brought out the pocket-sized notebook he always carried around. He busied himself with writing for a long while before hurriedly bringing over for her to read.

“Darling, what do you want to say?” Ning Xi accepted the little notebook. After reading it, she blushed.

“What’s wrong?” Seeing that Ning Xi’s expression was a little strange, Lu Tingxiao asked as he stood by her side.

Ning Xi covered her burning cheeks, her eyes full of complaints, “Lu Tingxiao, it’s all your fault! Look at what your son did!”

“What did he do?” Lu Tingxiao felt rather innocent in the face of her complaints, thus he checked what Little Treasure had said. Upon reading it, he became silent.

On the little notebook, in carefully written letters:

[You're the brightest star in the sky, and your eyes are warmer and sweeter than chocolate. When I'm looking at you, it's like I'm looking at a fairytale princess with everlasting beauty.]

Chapter 172: His Son Surpassed Him

After hearing Ning Xi's self-deprecating words, Little Treasure had decisively brought out the big guns...

Ning Xi was both touched and worried at the same time, "Lu Tingxiao, Little Treasure definitely inherited this from you. Isn't he a little too good at making girls happy? What will we do when he grows up! I don't even dare to imagine how much I'll be wrapped around his little finger if he could talk!"

Especially that last line, it had poked her right in her soft spot.

He had actually called her a princess...

She had always wanted to become a queen, because that was the only way she could face all the tough and dangerous times she had gone through without fear.

When looking at the 'princess' word that Little Treasure had written, the young girl's heart that had been buried deep within her had been drawn out...

Would any girl not want to be a carefree princess? She simply had no other choice.

Lu Tingxiao looked at his son with laments in his heart. This had already gone beyond inheritance: his son had already surpassed him.

Seeing Little Treasure standing there with a serious expression, looking up at her, Ning Xi could only chuckle helplessly before bending down to hug him, "Alright, alright! I get it! I know that I'm the most beautiful person in your eyes! I won't undervalue myself from now on, okay?"

It was only then that Little Treasure was satisfied. Copying how she usually rewarded him, he placed a gentle kiss on her cheek.

Ning Xi couldn't resist hugging the little bun and snuggling her cheek against his, "Ah, what should I do? I really want to steal you away when your dad isn't looking!"

Little Treasure blinked a few times, and looked like he was looking forward to it. He even nodded in approval, as if saying: Hurry up and steal me away!

Ning Xi: "Pfft..."

Lu Tingxiao: "... Why did he have the déjà vu of being a third wheel?"

At the same time, in Ning Xueluo's ward.

Since the reporters weren't able to catch Ning Xi, they could only return to interviewing Ning Xueluo.

Everyone was going crazy looking for Ning Xi now, but she seemed to have evaporated off the face of this world. There wasn't even a trace of information about her, the reporters couldn't find her at her apartment, the set, or even her company.

If they found out that Ning Xi had been staying on the same level as Ning Xueluo, and had even had a brief encounter with them just now, they would probably go mad.

Out of concern for Ning Xueluo's health, Su Yan interrupted them after they had asked a few more questions, "I'm sorry, everyone. Xueluo is still injured and her body's still a little weak. Let's stop today's interview here!"

"Oh yes, my body isn't too well. I'm sorry to disappoint everyone!"

Although the reporters weren't too happy, they could only express their understanding and pass on their well wishes before leaving.

Chang Li escorted them out politely, "Thank you for your concern towards Xueluo, everyone. I believe that everyone understands what is just and fair, and that everyone has a measure in their heart. It wasn't easy for all of you to come over on such a hot day, this is a little convenience fee for everyone's efforts!"

After saying so, the assistant Cui Caijing started handing out red envelopes filled with money to each of them.

The reporters were well aware of what was going on. They each expressed that they would definitely demand justice for Ning Xueluo.

On the hospital bed, Ning Xueluo seemed to have thought of something as she displayed her suspicions on her face, "Yan-gege, what happened to the reporters just now? Why did all of them suddenly run outside? Did Ning Xi really come over?"

"It wasn't. They got the wrong person." Su Yan pulled her covers a little higher absent-mindedly.

Most of those reporters had never seen Ning Xi in person, but he was different. Just now, he had caught a blurry glimpse of that figure and she did look like Ning Xi. He was practically certain that she really was Ning Xi.

But how could that be possible? Why would Ning Xi be so intimate with a man, with a kid beside them?

Chapter 173: A Quick Lesson

Late night, in the Lu residence.

After catching up with some entertainment news online, Ning Xi was preparing to sleep when a bunch of messages popped up on MSN.

The messages were from Su Yan.

Su Yan: [Xiao Xi, where are you right now? I saw someone at Xueluo's hospital today, was it you?]

Su Yan: [You really went overboard with this matter. You can't keep using the guilt that we feel towards you to act without any restraint. Our tolerance is wearing thin!]

Su Yan: [Escaping from your problems doesn't solve anything, you owe Xueluo an apology!]

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Ning Xi scoffed lightly before mashing out a reply: [I bought a watch last year!]

At that moment, three knocks sounded from the door.

“Come in~”

Lu Tingxiao pushed the door open and walked in holding a mug of warm milk. Seeing that she was still sprawled out and using her laptop, he immediately frowned, “Why are you still surfing the web? You need to rest.”

“I was about to sleep, but I got disgusted with something right before bed.” Ning Xi complained.

Lu Tingxiao walked over and passed the mug to her, “What happened?”

Ning Xi received the mug of milk with thanks. Without any thought of hiding what had happened, she then moved the laptop over to show him the chat logs on screen.

Lu Tingxiao's expression turned slightly darker after he glanced at the screen. He showed a doubtful expression, “I bought a watch last year, what does that mean?”

“Pfft...” After hearing Lu Tingxiao read out that phrase in such an upright manner, Ning Xi almost spat the milk out. She explained awkwardly while coughing, “Uh, it's some internet slang, it's a... it's a classic phrase used to openly scold someone else!”

“Is it? What does it mean?” Lu Tingxiao modestly requested her explanation.

Ning Xi had no other choice but to start teaching him earnestly: “The abbreviation for ‘I bought a watch last year’ is ‘WQNMLGB’... Uh, do you understand?”

Lu Tingxiao nodded after understanding the meaning in just seconds.

Ning Xi heaved a sigh of relief. Luckily the great demon king had a high IQ. Otherwise, she would really have been a little embarrassed if she had to say a curse like ‘**** your mum’ out loud.

Over at Su Yan’s side, upon seeing Ning Xi’s reply, he immediately sent over another wave of messages, mostly along the lines of ‘it’s not too late to repent’. Without even bothering with the messages, Ning Xi signed out of MSN and turned off her laptop.

Seeing how Ning Xi had neatly ignored the messages, Lu Tingxiao’s mood seemed to lift, “I’ve already contacted Ning Xueluo for you.”

“Really? What did you say?” Ning Xi immediately asked.

Lu Tingxiao pulled out his phone, opened an email and showed it to her.

Ning Xi hurriedly moved closer to him to look at it. When she finished reading it, she turned completely speechless, “...”

In Lu Tingxiao’s email to Ning Xueluo, other than the evidence and an account number, there were only a few words and there wasn’t even any punctuation: 8 million yuan in 24 hours.

It was extremely like Lu Tingxiao’s way of doing things.

“Not bad, not bad. The simpler it is, the easier it is to cause panic. This is pretty good.” Ning Xi made a show of taking things seriously, nodding as she praised him.

“You can terminate your contract with Starlight when the money comes in. I’ll send a lawyer to accompany you there when the time comes, so they can’t cause any trouble for you.”

“I’ve already gotten Jingli to prepare your contract with Golden Age and I’ll show it to you tomorrow morning. If there’s anything you want to change, we can discuss it later. After signing with Golden Age, the company will arrange for a press conference at an appropriate time and reveal the evidence. From there, we’ll start on the legal proceedings...” Lu Tingxiao’s low voice resounded like a cello as he spoke calmly of the upcoming plans and arrangements.

Ning Xi was in a daze while listening to him. She could only nod and nod, before finally asking, “Is there anything you need me to do?”

“Eat, sleep and rest.”

“Okay...”

TL's Note:

'I bought a watch last year' is Chinese Internet slang for... ahem, '**** your mum'.

The original Chinese words for '**** your mum' sound almost the same as 'I bought a watch last year' in Chinese, so 'I bought a watch last year' ended up becoming an alternate form for this curse. The pinyin is 'Wǒ qù nián mǎi le gè biǎo', so the abbreviation for this phrase is: WQNMLGB.

Also, as a side note, 8 million yuan = USD ~1.16 million (as of today's rate).

- Chapter 174: A Midnight Scare

Chapter 174: A Midnight Scare

The First People's Hospital.

Ning Xueluo laid in her hospital bed contentedly with red wine in one hand and her phone with the other. She was in absolute delight as she scrolled through Weibo, reading online comments flaming Ning Xi.

Cui Caijing massaged her calves while speaking in a flattering tone, "Xueluo-jie, your legs are so shapely. They're so long and so straight!"

Actually, they were only slightly better looking than the legs of most people. The amount she spent on maintaining her shape every year ran into a few hundred thousand yuan, how could her legs not look good?

However, Ning Xueluo clearly enjoyed the praise. Pleased with herself, she said, "I was born like this."

For some reason, Chang Li felt uneasy and spoke up with concern, "Xueluo, Ning Xi hasn't appeared for so long. She couldn't possibly be scheming against us, right?"

Hearing that, Ning Xueluo replied with undisguised ridicule and disdain in her voice, "You're overestimating her. Even if she sells her body to a hundred men, she won't be able to turn the tables on this matter!"

"That's true. In the entertainment circle, artistes with a bad track record like this usually end up in a situation worse than Jia Qingqing's! It'll be useless even if anyone tries to help her clear the air!" Chang Li's heart calmed down a little, "Right, I just sent Ning Xi an email. I gave her an ultimatum: she has to come down to the office tomorrow before 6pm or we'll crush her public image. I believe she'll come out of hiding tomorrow!"

"Remember to arrange for some reporters to wait for her!" Ning Xueluo was all smiles.

As she was replying the concerned comments of her fans, a new email notification suddenly popped up on her screen.

Who would send her an email this late at night? It was her personal email as well...

Ning Xueluo didn't think much of it and casually opened the email. However, with one glance, she immediately froze in shock and spilled red wine all over herself.

"Oh no, Xueluo-jie, what happened to you?" Cui Caijing hurriedly brought over paper towels for her to wipe away the spilled wine.

"Xueluo, what happened?" Chang Li asked with suspicion upon seeing the frightened expression on Ning Xueluo's face.

"See for yourself!" Ning Xueluo threw her phone at Cui Caijing's head with hands trembling in rage. "How did you handle everything? You left such a huge trace behind! Why did you send that email from my apartment? And didn't I tell you a million times to use an anonymous account to send the money?"

Dazed, Cui Caijing took a long while to recover from getting hit in the head. She held onto her forehead as she read the email, before freezing in shock. With a panicked expression, she exclaimed, "Xueluo-jie, this isn't my fault! I used an anonymous account! As for the email... You were there when I sent the email and you didn't say anything then!"

Ning Xueluo threw the wine glass to the floor. Immediately after that, the sound of shattered glass echoed in the ward, accompanying her shouts, "Even if I didn't mention it, couldn't you have thought of it yourself? If you need me to tell you everything, then what's the use of having you around?"

When Chang Li finished reading the email, her expression turned grave. "My biggest worries came true! I was afraid that someone would discover some traces of evidence... Who sent that email? Could it be Zhang Qiang?"

Ning Xueluo's face seemed dark and sinister as she replied confidently, "That's impossible! Zhang Qiang is just some hoodlum with barely any education. He wouldn't know anything about IP addresses and anonymous accounts!"

"Then this is rather strange... No matter what, Zhang Qiang is the only one who knows about this, excluding us. He must have been the one to leak the news! Could he have conspired with someone else? But Zhang Qiang already ran off ages ago, we can't contact him to ask!" Chang Li said anxiously.

Ning Xueluo violently paced back and forth in the ward, "What's the use of saying so much? Most importantly, how should we solve this problem?!"

Chapter 175: She Finally Appeared

Chang Li stabilised her emotions before reassuring her: “Xueluo, calm down. The email said that we have to send 8 million yuan to that account within 24 hours, so they’re clearly here for money! Just give them the money then! A problem that can be solved with money isn’t a problem at all!”

Ning Xueluo replied irritably, “8 million yuan! In a day! Where am I supposed to get that much cash?”

Although she earned a lot of money, she spent a lot of it as well. She had to keep up appearances, curry favour with the Ning family and people within the entertainment circle... All of that took money.

“If you gather it from various sources... you should still be able to gather that amount somehow!” Chang Li muttered to herself. Inwardly, she thought to herself that the blackmailer had really picked the right price; it was just about the maximum amount that they could raise.

It was at this moment that Ning Xueluo thought of something: “Since they can trace our information, why can’t we do the same?”

Chang Li shook her head, “Are anonymous accounts that easy to trace? You have to hack into the bank’s system! Even if we spend the money to hire someone to do that, we won’t be able to find a hacker of that caliber in such a short amount of time! Furthermore, even if we find out who it is, what can we do? The evidence is stacked against us, this sum... We still have to give it to them no matter what!”

“Damnit...” Ning Xueluo glared fiercely at Cui Caijing, who was trying to burrow into a corner, “What a failure!”

She had blackmail against Cui Caijing in her hands, so she felt safer using her for tasks like this. If not for that, she would have driven her out long ago.

Cui Caijing wanted to retort, but she didn’t dare to speak protests despite the anger in her heart. She was really innocent, okay?!

Ning Xueluo worked hard to recover from her earlier fright. With a forced calm, she urged, “Chang-jie, help me withdraw money now! Hurry! Also, hire more fans to attack Ning Xi online! We have to force Ning Xi into a dead end in a week!”

“Xueluo, we have Zhang Qiang’s verbal testimony anyway. Do you think we should... throw her into jail and be done with her once and for all?”

“We can’t. Although the Ning family doesn’t look too kindly on her, it’s not to the point that they’ll let her go to jail. Remember, don’t let her terminate her contract. Make her stay in the company for the rest of her life to pay off her debt. Otherwise, if she gets desperate and runs back to the Ning family, it’ll be hard for me to control her then...”

“Also, to prevent any unforeseen incidents tomorrow, I’ll arrange for a good lawyer to meet us there tomorrow!”

Ning Xueluo racked her brains and gave them orders. After making sure that there weren’t any gaps in her plan, she finally settled down.

Everything had been going so smoothly. She hadn’t expected such a huge wrinkle to appear in her plans. Luckily, it was just as Chang Li had said. A problem that can be solved with money isn’t a problem at all! She absolutely wouldn’t allow anything else to go wrong from now on!

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The next day.

Ning Xi received the 8 million yuan without a hitch. At 6pm exactly, she entered Starlight Entertainment together with the lawyer that Lu Tingxiao had arranged for her.

It just happened to be the time that everyone was knocking off work. When they saw Ning Xi, they immediately stared at her in surprise before hurriedly running off to report. They posted news and photos in their chat groups, online, and on their Weibos—— Ning Xi, who had seemingly disappeared off the face of the planet, had finally appeared again!

“Heaven! Ning Xi! It’s really her! She actually dared to come out of hiding!”

“Yeah! She’s pretty gutsy! If it were me, I would definitely have run away, what would I come back for?”

“That’s right, there’s no way she’s going to be able to continue staying in the entertainment circle after that incident. If things get worse, she might even be sued and get sent to jail. It would probably have been better if she had just run away!”

“Did you see that man by her side? He looked pretty elite! I wonder what his background is?”

“He doesn’t seem like a lover, could he be an assistant?”

“How could that be possible?! She’s already in such dire straits, how could she afford to hire an assistant?”

“She could probably sell herself out to a rich master for money, after all.”

“Hehe, I’d like to see what kind of master has the ability to settle a huge matter like this one!”

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TL Note: 8 million yuan = USD ~1.16 million (as of today's rate).

Chapter 176: I Want to Change My Company

At the reception.

When Chang Li saw that Ning Xi had finally arrived, she gloated in a very predictable manner, “Our big celebrity Ning has finally decided to grace us with her presence! You’ve certainly made me wait for a long time!”

While speaking, she shot a funny look at the stern man walking next to Ning Xi. “Who is this? Don’t you know that you’re not allowed to bring outsiders into the company as you like?”

Ning Xi gave Chang Li a sideways glance, “My lawyer.”

“Hoh! You even have a lawyer!” Chang Li assumed that Ning Xi had just casually hired one for appearances’ sake, so she snorted disdainfully. “I can’t believe that you’re still being unreasonable and putting on airs in front of me even though we’ve reached this point. Haven’t you realised how big a mess you’ve made this time around? If I hadn’t kept pleading with the company to go easy on you, you would have been cut loose long ago!”

Ning Xi raised an eyebrow and laughed lightly, “Heh, you pled on my behalf? I’d like to know what resulted from your pleas. Chang-jie?”

Chang Li threw a document at her, “The company will hold a press conference soon. As long as you issue a public apology at the press conference and voluntarily withdraw from the cast of 《Land Under Heaven》, Xueluo is generously willing to drop any legal action against you and give you a chance to turn over a new leaf. However, even if I try to guarantee your good behaviour from now on, there probably won’t be any production that would dare to use an actress with such a wicked character.”

After threatening her with the stick, Chang Li then switched gears to give her the carrot. Wearing an earnest expression, she spoke, “Don’t lose heart. The company won’t cast you aside if you truly repent. You should know that some directors don’t care about scandals. As a matter of fact, I’ve already accepted another role on your behalf. As long as you cooperate, there’s a chance that you’ll be able to make a comeback!”

Ning Xi looked at her with a faint smile and spoke softly, “A big production huh... I wonder which project Chang-jie has accepted on my behalf?”

Seeing that Ning Xi had taken the bait, Chang Li sneered at her before replying. “What, are you scared that I’ll screw you over? You must have heard of 《Blooming Like It’s Spring》 before, right?”

Ning Xi’s finger tapped idly against the armrest, “Jiang Penghai’s new project?”

“That’s right! It’s by Director Jiang! You should know that every single one of Director Jiang’s movies has become a box office hit. When he was making movies in Hong Kong, Guo Qisheng wasn’t even on the radar yet!”

Ning Xi almost couldn’t resist the urge to laugh out loud while listening to Chang Li’s earnest praise for Jiang Penghai. A sharp glint suddenly flashed through her eyes, “Chang-jie, if you want me to sell myself, you can just tell it to me straight! There’s no need to beat around the bush!”

Jiang Penghai had started his career by shooting pornography. Later on, he had tried to clean up his image but he wasn’t very successful. The part that most people took issue with was Jiang Penghai’s behaviour.

This guy was extremely lecherous and he had slept with almost all of the actresses who starred in his productions. Last year, he had almost been taken to court because he had relations with a minor.

She really had to thank them for going the extra mile to find a role like this for her. It must have been a lot of trouble finding a big production with such an illustrious director at the helm.

Chang Li frowned after hearing Ning Xi speak, “What do you mean, I want you to sell yourself?! Isn’t the rating just a little more on the mature side?! What, you’re not willing to do it? If not for my recommendation, they wouldn’t necessarily be willing to take in trash like you! Just think about how much of a loss you’ve caused the company this time around! Are you thinking of freeloading off the company if you can’t land any roles?”

“Sorry, but I won’t be accepting this role.” Ning Xi didn’t feel like listening to Chang Li as she continued to reach new lows, so she simply stated her refusal outright.

Chang Li flared up on the spot and slammed the table with force, “Ning Xi, you’ve been disobeying me time and time again! Are you so stuck up that you won’t even listen to your manager anymore? I’m telling you now, you’re going to act in Director Jiang’s movie, even if you don’t want to!”

“My manager?” Ning Xi sneered, “That’s a title you won’t be holding any longer.”

“Haha, you’re still trying to change managers? You’ll have to see if anyone in Starlight is brave enough to take you on!” Chang Li said fearlessly.

“What I want to change is the company.”

Chapter 177: An Unexpected Reversal

“You want to terminate your contract?” Chang Li’s expression finally showed some change, but she quickly returned to a calm state, “Ning Xi, don’t use the contract to threaten me. Do you know how much the penalty for breaking a contract is? There are still four years left in the contract you have with the company. The penalty is 2 million yuan for every year, coming to a total of 8 million yuan!”

Ning Xi shot a look at the lawyer waiting to one side.

The expressionless lawyer pulled out a black briefcase and flipped it open... whoosh! It was filled with money; cold hard cash!

Ning Xi pushed the briefcase to Chang Li, “Here’s 8 million yuan. Do you want to count it all?”

“You...” Chang Li stared, flabbergasted, at the pile of cash before her, “Where did you get so much money from?”

Ning Xi spoke with impatience, “That has nothing to do with you, does it?”

“Heh, didn’t you just get it from sleeping around? What are you acting all arrogant for? Did you think just 8 million was enough?!” Chang Li tossed a thick document at her: an agreement for terminating her contract. It seemed like she had already been prepared.

Ning Xi took the agreement and skimmed through the pages. As she continued reading, she became more and more amused, “Chang-jie, why didn’t I ever realise I was worth so much?”

The penalty they were asking for was 60 million dollars!

She knew that it wouldn’t be easy to terminate her contract, they would definitely come up with some way to make things difficult for her.

Chang Li recovered her unperturbed expression, “This is the estimate that our specialised lawyer came up with. It’s stated clearly in the agreement that you have to pay for damages to the company in addition to the 8 million yuan penalty for terminating the contract!”

“The damages include the postponement of our activities, the discontinuation of our investment, and the grievous injuries suffered by our most valuable actress... After calculating everything, this is already the bare minimum you have to cough up! If you can’t pay up, then we’ll meet in the courts!”

Ning Xi’s brows knitted together after hearing this. She didn’t know how good Lawyer Chen was, and whether he would be able to settle everything...

Lawyer Chen simply glanced at the agreement. After that, his expression remained cold and respectful as before, without any visible changes in emotion.

Seeing that Ning Xi was hesitating, Chang Li immediately softened her tone,” Ning Xi, think carefully. Do you really want to terminate your contract? Actually, it’s not like we can’t discuss about this. If you’re not willing to take on 《Blooming Like It’s Spring》, we can make other arrangements. I have a few screenplays on hand and they’re all big projects. I’ll let you pick from them.”

Ning Xi sneered inwardly. What big projects? They were likely the same kind of setup for her, just under different names!

Ning Xueluo was clearly desperate to make her stay at Starlight so that she could keep her under her thumb and keep her in shackles for the rest of her life. However, she was also afraid that Ning Xi would give up and return to the Ning family if she was pressured too much...

At this moment, the sound of knocking came from the door. Starlight’s lawyers had arrived, and there were even three of them all at once.

Ning Xi even recognised one of them: one of the top lawyers at Ning Corporation, Cai Yingyong.

Damn! Ning Xueluo was really putting her all into making things difficult for her!

Ning Xi looked at the lonely Lawyer Chen on her side and uncertainty rose in her heart.

Now that Chang Li had gotten her backup, she crossed her arms over her chest and looked haughty, “Ning Xi, it’s not too late for you to change your mind.”

There were specialised ways to counteract these legal measures, but Ning Xi really had no idea about legal matters at all. She could only look towards Lawyer Chen with hope.

Lawyer Chen... remained silent.

Ning Xi was about to go crazy from desperation. Weren’t all lawyers supposed to be really eloquent? On top of being so stiff, why did this guy have to act like he was mute? Was it going to be okay or not?!

However...

The events that followed made Ning Xi feel like she was watching a drama.

Lawyer Chen slowly stood up and took out a stack of documents from his briefcase. He finally spoke up: “Firstly, as far as I know, your company discontinued your investment in order to threaten the production team, it has nothing to do with my client.”

“Secondly, Ning Corporation has no relation with my client, so their losses shouldn’t be borne by my client.”

“Thirdly, your company’s employee suffered injury on set, so this should be borne by your company, the production team and the insurance company. Since my client hasn’t been deemed guilty by any court, my client has no responsibility to bear those costs.”

“Furthermore, from the medical report of your company’s actress, Miss Ning Xueluo, she only suffered mild superficial wounds. At most, we will compensate her with 252.40 yuan. As for the other expenses such as the stay in the high-class ward and maintenance fees, those shouldn’t be borne by my client...”

While facing three other lawyers by himself, Lawyer Chen fired off his rebuttals in quick-fire succession. He spoke for half an hour without getting short of breath, leaving the three lawyers on the other side speechless as they sweated profusely. He successfully helped her to terminate her contract, and except for that 8 million yuan, they didn’t spend a single cent more...

Oh, wait, they spent an extra 252.40 yuan...

TL Note:

You know how much 8 million yuan is in USD by now!! ????

252.40 yuan is USD 36.56 exactly~ Whew~

Chapter 178: Ning Xi’s Backer?

In the end, the results were: the other party was willing to settle the dispute in private and didn’t dare to mention bringing it to the courts anymore.

Ning Xi looked on with a stupefied expression. So Lawyer Chen had only been saving his strength to bring out his finishing move?

Chang Li was even more flabbergasted.

The three lawyers facing them were in a similar state too.

Just as Ning Xi and Lawyer Chen were preparing to leave, the lawyer from the Ning family, Cai Yingyong abruptly stood up in excitement. With an expression that was equal parts shock and suspicion, he asked Lawyer Chen, “Please wait a moment! If I may be so bold, I’d like to ask you a question! Are you... Are you, by any chance, the great Lawyer Chen, Chen Jing?”

The other two lawyers standing at his side displayed their shock on their faces upon hearing that, “What... Chen Jing? Which Chen Jing? It... It couldn't possibly be that Lawyer Chen, could it?!”

They had completely looked down upon the mystery lawyer that Ning Xi had brought in just now, so they hadn't asked for his identity. However, the more they thought about it now, the more it seemed like something wasn't quite right.

Although they had never seen Chen Jing with their own eyes before, they had long heard of the way he worked.

He was a man of few words to the point that people would think he was mute, but once he started working, it was as if he had flipped the crazy switch; rapid-fire speech, irrefutable logic, words straight to the points, explosive fighting power...

Lawyer Chen completely ignored Cai Yingyong and walked out of the meeting room without a single pause in his stride.

Left behind in the room, Chang Li collapsed onto a chair, all the blood drained out of her face.

They were done for!

Ning Xueluo had repeatedly told them not to let Ning Xi break her contract, but now, their plans were all spoiled.

The lawyer that Ning Xi had hired turned out to be the number one lawyer in the capital, the great Lawyer Chen?

Why would the great Lawyer Chen come all the way here just to help Ning Xi negotiate a matter as small as terminating a contract?

This lawyer charged by the minute, and it cost an arm and a leg to hire him!

Could it be... that Ning Xi's backer was this lawyer?

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Even until she had walked out of Starlight's building, Ning Xi was still a little dazed. She hadn't expected that this stuffy and stiff-looking lawyer could actually be that fierce.

Were all the lawyers in Golden Age's legal department so epic?

While lost in her lamentations, a large group of reporters suddenly swarmed around her at the entrance to the building——

“Ning Xi! Ning Xi! Have you come to give yourself up?”

“Do you have anything to say about how you attempted to kill Ning Xueluo?”

“Ning Xueluo has generously announced that she’ll give you a chance to turn over a new leaf as long as you apologise. Do you feel ashamed for your actions?”

“May I ask if you were also the one behind the previous matter with Jia Qingqing?”

“I heard that Starlight Entertainment is going to terminate your contract and blacklist you, is that true?”

.....

The reporters kept pushing forward in a craze, squeezing Ning Xi in. She only had two arms to defend herself against the swarm and it wouldn’t be very good for her image if she started beating up the reporters, so her hands were tied. Just as she was trying to think of a way to extract herself from the crowd, five well-trained bodyguards in black suits came out of nowhere and controlled the crowd in no more than ten seconds. They protected Ning Xi in the center without letting anyone through.

The reporters exchanged glances.

What was happening?

Where had these people come from?

How could a little actress like Ning Xi, without any power, money or background and in dire straits, hire bodyguards like these guys? There were even five of them all at once!

In order to avoid causing a scandal and unwanted rumours for Ning Xi, the bodyguards didn’t carry any emblems identifying that they worked for the Lu family. However, it was enough to scare off those reporters.

Ning Xi stood within the bodyguards’ protective circle and faced all the reporters with a cool and calm expression. She pitched her voice so they could all hear: “Firstly, I’m innocent, so I don’t have to give myself up. There’s also no reason for me to feel ashamed.”

“Secondly, the truth for Jia Qingqing’s incident has already been made clear, please don’t try to obscure the facts and mislead the public, otherwise that’s slander!”

“Thirdly, I have terminated my contract with Starlight, just a few minutes ago. However, I was the one to initiate the termination and they weren’t the ones to cancel my contract.”

“Lastly, if they want to blacklist me, then I’d like to see them try!”

Chapter 179: That Person's Sexual Orientation is Undetermined

After she finished speaking, Ning Xi simply ignored the uproar behind her and entered the black car that had just driven up and stopped nearby.

It was all thanks to Lu Tingxiao's perfect planning. He had most likely predicted that the reporters would come swarming at her today, even the bodyguards and driver had all appeared in the nick of time.

"Miss Xi, where to next?" The driver asked.

"Let's go home." Ning Xi paused for a moment and couldn't resist asking, "Why do you call me Miss Xi and not Miss Ning?"

When she thought carefully about it, the servants in the Lu residence and even Lu Tingxiao's subordinates all called her Miss Xi, or Miss Xiao Xi...

"It was CEO Lu's orders." The driver replied.

"So that's why..."

That guy was too attentive... He probably knew that she didn't like the surname Ning!

At the same time, at the Lu residence.

Lu Jingli was collapsed on the sofa like a dead fish, "Bro! You've already been browsing through those for an entire day! We have so many brilliant managers at our company, and you didn't take a liking to any of them? What about Lei Ming? He's been in the business for a long time, he has lots of experience and connections both here and abroad. He's already familiar with Ning Xi too!"

Lu Tingxiao: "He's Jiang Muye's manager."

Lu Jingli: "Alright... Then what about Hao Shuai? At least he has nothing to do with Jiang Muye, right?"

Lu Tingxiao: "No males."

Lu Jingli's mouth twitched, "Then Ye Shenglan! One of our top managers! Her capabilities are top-notch!"

Lu Tingxiao: "Her sexual orientation is undetermined."

“Pfft... It’s rumoured that she likes women... Crap! Bro, isn’t your info a little too detailed?!” Lu Jingli’s expression was falling apart, “Then Zhao Meixin should be okay, right? She’s female, has a boyfriend, and she’s the manager of Su Yimo, the number one actress in our company!”

Lu Tingxiao: “Her character fails to meet the standards.”

Lu Jingli was completely speechless. “Even the emperor wasn’t as picky as you when he was selecting his concubines! Then what exactly do you want?”

Lu Tingxiao muttered to himself for a moment before asking: “Why didn’t you give me Lin Zhizhi’s information?”

“Lin Zhizhi’s on break. She said that she doesn’t want to take on a new artiste anytime soon. I’m guessing it’s probably to avoid Jiang Muye, tsk tsk...”

“Then she’ll be Ning Xi’s manager.” Lu Tingxiao said decisively.

“Uh... Bro, you’re too evil... “ Lu Jingli couldn’t help but have a moment of silence for Jiang Muye in his heart. When he was done, it was time to mourn for himself, “You’re really good at giving me extra work! Lin Zhizhi’s already said that she doesn’t want to manage any new artistes!”

As the two of them were in the midst of discussion, Ning Xi returned from outside——

“I’m back! Is anyone at home?”

Just as her voice finished echoing in the house, her leg was hugged by a soft little bun. The little bun even had an aggrieved expression on his face, as if they had parted for three years and not three hours.

The little bun had become really attached to her recently. It was only after Ning Xi hugged and soothed him for a long while that he finally cracked a smile.

“You’re back. Did everything go well with terminating your contract?” Lu Tingxiao walked over to ask.

When he mentioned the contract, Ning Xi got excited, “It went super well! The lawyer that the company arranged for me was really awesome! He fought alone against three lawyers and came out victorious in a war of words! Chang Li was trying to demand an exorbitant 60 million yuan from me at first, but I didn’t have to spend a single cent in the end! Oh wait, I only spent 250 yuan on Ning Xueluo’s medical fees! He was brilliant! Are the lawyers in Golden Age Entertainment’s legal department all so awesome? I heard them call him the great Lawyer Chen...”

At this moment, Lu Jingli slowly spoke up from behind them: “What do you mean the legal department of Golden Age? Chen Jing is the top legal consultant for the Lu Corporation!”

“Pfft...” Ning Xi was so shocked that she would done a spit take if she had been drinking. She turned to Lu Tingxiao in utter disbelief, “Lu Tingxiao, you sent a specialised company lawyer who handles cases covering billions of yuan to help me settle a puny 8 million yuan case?”

Chapter 180: I’ll Help You Count the Spoils

This felt completely like the emperor, Lu Tingxiao, had sent a grand official to help a poor citizen, Ning Xi, with the case of a pig being stolen...

“Just in case.” Lu Tingxiao replied with an unperturbed expression.

Anything that had to do with her wasn’t a small matter at all.

Ning Xi didn’t want to say anything anymore, the great demon king always did things removed from common sense.

“Have you finished looking through the contract I passed to you this morning?” Lu Tingxiao asked.

Ning Xi ran a hand through her hair, “It was so thick, I felt dizzy just reading it. Anyway, I glanced through most of it and I’ve already signed it. I’ll pass it back to you later!”

Lu Tingxiao frowned slightly, “You’re so trusting towards me?”

Ning Xi shrugged: “I’ll even help you count the spoils if you sell me off!”

Lu Tingxiao smiled with a dotting expression.

Lu Jingli: “...” Ow, my single dog eyes! I’m going blind from all these displays of affection! It’s becoming impossible to live in this house.

“If no surprises pop up, you can report at the company the day after. You rest at home for a day tomorrow.”

“Okay, that’s great!” Ning Xi nodded.

Lu Jingli wanted to smash his head against something after hearing that. The day after? Didn’t that mean he only had one day to convince Lin Zhizhi?

How heartless of his bro!

Lu Tingxiao seemed to have seen through Lu Jingli's inner complaints. He turned to his little brother and said: "After you complete this task, you can go on holiday."

"Awright! I'll go right now!" Lu Jingli recovered all his spirit.

.....

That night, in a VIP ward in the First People's Hospital.

Ning Xueluo was staring dead-on at the woman on the TV screen.

Outside Starlight's office building, despite disappearing for so many days, Ning Xi didn't look weak or haggard at all. Conversely, she looked radiant and practically glowed from the inside. Surrounded on all sides by five bodyguards in black, she faced the reporters' attacks with a domineering expression: "Firstly, I'm innocent, so I don't have to give myself up. There's also no reason for me to feel ashamed."

"Secondly, the truth for Jia Qingqing's incident has already been made clear, please don't try to obscure the facts and mislead the public, otherwise that's slander!"

"Thirdly, I have terminated my contract with Starlight, just a few minutes ago. However, I was the one to initiate the termination and they weren't the ones to cancel my contract."

"Lastly, if they want to blacklist me, then I'd like to see them try!"

When she heard Ning Xi's last words, Ning Xueluo abruptly threw the desk lamp by her side at the screen. After the impact, the screen fizzled and some smoke rose off the top of it, before it went completely dark.

"Chang Li! What's the meaning of this? It was enough that Cui Caijing committed such a low-level mistake, but now even you're making mistakes? What did I tell you? You absolutely can't let her terminate her contract!"

Ning Xueluo was the kind of person who would react to problems by scolding others. Chang Li was used to Ning Xueluo's personality, but even so, her expression turned a little ugly now, "I've already told you long ago. With Ning Xi's looks, if she managed to find a backer with power and money, I wouldn't be able to keep her suppressed any longer! Since you forced her to that point, this kind of result is within our expectations..."

"Then are you telling me to just watch her change her fortunes just like that? I paid such a huge price! And even spent 8 million yuan for nothing!" Ning Xueluo was in hysteria, unable to accept their plans failing for the umpteenth time.

"Xueluo, it's not as bad as you think. Ning Xi's reputation has already been completely ruined in the entertainment circle. Even if she found a backer, she can't recover her reputation anymore.

Besides, who would dare to use an artiste that our Starlight has blacklisted? Her career in this industry has come to an end!”

“Not only that, just think about it, she caused such a ruckus this time and simply tossed out 8 million yuan just like that. She was even picked up by bodyguards and a branded car; is there anyone in the world who wouldn’t be able to tell that she’s being kept? How would the Ning family even be able to accept her? Can she even enter high society like that?”

After listening up to this point, Ning Xueluo’s anger had finally subsided a little, “Have you sent orders to the fan army?”

“Don’t worry! When this happened, I already sent orders down to them. Besides, even if we don’t do anything, those reporters will surely frame things that way!” Chang Li was absolutely confident.