

His Beloved Treasure

Chapter 8 - 08 Old Acquaintances_1

It seemed like this way, by tomorrow they could go their separate ways, and she would owe him no more.

Before the sun even rose, Mu Yichen had woken up, his dark eyes gazing at the woman beside him, his gaze quietly trailing from her forehead down, as memories of last night surfaced, he got out of bed.

Later, he leaned against the window and smoked a cigarette, his mind still filled with their past.

He started smoking in his eighth grade year, back then he was trying to be cool, brandishing a cigarette in front of her while giving her orders and asking her to call him "Brother Yichen." Remembering the way she looked at him then, like a delinquent, he couldn't help but let out a laugh.

When Qin Mu woke up, he had already made breakfast.

Standing in front of the dining table, looking at his cooked breakfast, she felt a bit awkward as expected, as she wasn't very good at cooking Chinese cuisine.

"It smells delicious."

One's voice softens when they eat another's cooking, she complimented with a smile as she sat down.

Mu Yichen glanced at her, his eyes clearly cold, yet his gaze made her shiver.

"You should be mentally prepared for the people you might see at the banquet tonight."

As Qin Mu was appreciating his graceful manner of eating, his words made her lose her appetite.

"I'm not going," she said stubbornly, looking down, and focused on eating her meal.

Mu Yichen looked at her, knowing the reason why she didn't want to go, but some people had to be faced eventually.

"This is our hometown, we have no reason to avoid anyone, and those who have hurt you are not worth your evasion."

He was indeed a few years older, even his words sounded so reasonable.

Qin Mu lifted her watery eyes, then, feeling helpless, she put down her spoon and looked at him earnestly, sighing as she asked, "Why do I have to meet those people and get myself in a bad mood?"

"We are married now, I'm here, and naturally, you should be here too, and we will have many more opportunities to meet people in the future."

He spoke frankly, his gaze so sincere that it took her breath away.

"Mu Yichen, Brother Yichen, why on earth did you marry a girl like me, who has nothing and is as irritable as hell?"

Qin Mu asked, unable to help but smile wryly.

"Who knows? Perhaps it's habit."

He watched her for several seconds before he replied, then lowered his head to continue eating, no longer interested in continuing the conversation.

Qin Mu also lowered her head, feeling that to ask further would be to degrade herself.

Was it the habit developed over those years of being together?

A memory of the night she was thirteen suddenly surfaced.

Unexpectedly, her mind drifted to that far-off era, and when she snapped back to reality and looked up, she found him looking at her. She asked in a voice that involuntarily quieted, "What's wrong?"

"What are you thinking about?" he asked, rather than answering.

"Nothing, just thinking about what to do after breakfast."

"Get your hair done, then go buy a dress."

"For my hair, yes, but I've brought my own dress."

She thought she could wear it the night of the fashion show; initially too busy to prioritize comfort, and once she was free, too lazy to change.

Unexpectedly, it would come in handy tonight.

Qin Mu genuinely couldn't understand; he didn't even cajole her, just laid out the logic plainly, but his logic was based on the premise that she would settle down in Rongcheng, which she had not planned on in her heart.

Yet, that evening, she found herself standing arm in arm with him in this unfamiliar place.

The Jing Family had moved to a more opulent residence over time; naturally, the household was more luxurious. The Jing family was involved with government departments; the money, ostensibly all thanks to the famous actress Jing Qing, although that wasn't entirely the case.

Seeing those once familiar people, Qin Mu felt an overwhelming sense of loneliness.

Because these people were no longer familiar to her; strangers, distant.

Why did she come here after all?

"Xiaomu."

They had just stepped in and stood for a few seconds when Jing Qing spotted Qin Mu and immediately pulled her away from Mu Yichen's side.

"Yichen, grandfather wants you to have a chat over there, I'll take Xiaomu to greet some old friends first."

Jing Qing was very considerate, and her eyes showed a forthright sincerity when she looked at Mu Yichen.

Mu Yichen subconsciously looked at Qin Mu with his eyes, asking if she would be okay on her own. Qin Mu nodded slightly, allowing him to leave.

"I'll be right back," he whispered reassuringly, then left.

"Do you want to take off your coat?" Jing Qing asked softly, still very much like a sister.

"Sure!"

The server came forward, and Qin Mu took off her black overcoat, which the server then took away.

Jing Qing, however, changed expression slightly at the sight of Qin Mu's purple V-neck gown but quickly laughed it off when she realized her own look was amiss: You look stunning tonight, like an orchid fairy descended to earth.

Qin Mu didn't feel that the image of an orchid fairy suited her and merely smiled faintly.

"Let's go, Yang Bo, Rong Tian, and Helian Hao are waiting for you over there," Jing Qing said, taking Qin Mu's hand and leading her into the crowd.

The people around them were quietly sizing up the unfamiliar girl in the purple gown. Walking beside the famed actress, she didn't look dimmed or overshadowed in the least; her calm and composed demeanor was striking.

"Guess who I've brought to you?"

A few pairs of men and women, all in expensive suits and gowns, looked curiously in Jing Qing's direction.

Jing Qing was tall, but Qin Mu was also quite tall. Standing together, Qin Mu's slender figure made her look even more outstanding.

However, the past events involving the Qin Family had made this stunning beauty someone people felt they couldn't approach or no longer wanted to.

It had been many years.

Qin Mu certainly felt that way too: she had spent several years with them as a child, but once she had gone abroad, not one of them had taken the time to ask after her. So now, aside from Mu Qingchen, she wouldn't talk about feelings with anyone, just nodding and returning greetings, her black eyes shrewd, not initiating conversation or making any indiscreet moves.

The more reserved she was, the more puzzled and rejecting the looks she received were. But what did that matter?

"You are Qin Mu?"

"Hello, I'm Qin Mu!"

Why hadn't she changed her name later on? Her mother's surname was Mu, and her parents had been deeply in love. Her name had been a source of pride to her mother, and although she had contemplated changing it a thousand times, she ultimately didn't, fearing it would sadden her mother in the afterlife.

But the name brought her pain.

Helian Hao sighed helplessly at the way everyone was looking at her, then stepped forward and said faintly, "You finally deigned to return."

Qin Mu looked at her and inexplicably smiled.

"You brat, not even letting Yichen give me your contact information."

Helian Hao raised her hand to give Qin Mu a gentle push, and just when she seemed on the verge of bursting with frustration, she suddenly threw herself into Qin Mu's arms.

Helian Hao and Qin Mu were born on the exact same day and had been best friends as children. When Qin Mu was sent away, Helian Hao had chased the car down the street, crying non-stop from the heartache.

The old friends didn't say a word, just watched the two embrace in public, even shedding tears.

Jing Feng came over and asked quietly, "What's happening?"

Only then did Helian Hao let go of Qin Mu, wiping away her tears but still gripping Qin Mu's hand, not willing to let go: "Well, I've waited for her."

When Helian Hao said those words, she sounded particularly proud, as if her lover had finally returned to her arms. Jing Feng just smiled faintly, "Is it Qin Mu?"

Qin Mu didn't greet him, merely holding his gaze with calmness. There was hostility in his eyes towards her, so she saw no need to exchange pleasantries, and his tone was also quite cold.

Mu Yichen arrived behind Jing Feng, and seeing Qin Mu's distant expression towards others, he came to her side and took her shoulder with ease: "Everything alright?"

Qin Mu smiled faintly and looked up at him, then calmly faced the hostile gazes before them.

Everyone was united in the impression that when Mu Yichen was by her side, it was as if he saw no one else, as if he had embraced her many times before, like he was holding his most cherished treasure.

"Mr. Jing, Mr. Mu, Mr. and Mrs. Qin have arrived," the butler reported, prompting everyone to instinctively look in that direction, but no one noticed her body suddenly stiffening except for the person holding her shoulder.