

## **I Regained 331**

### **Chapter 331: Su Ting Fainted**

Zhao Xuan, trembling, replied, "I saw Miss Gu Dai boarding a plane to the Capital this morning."

Song Ling's face turned cold as he abruptly removed the IV from his hand, "We're going back too!"

Zhao Xuan wanted to advise him to rest more, as the doctor had suggested, but seeing Song Ling's frosty demeanor, he didn't dare utter a word until they were seated on the plane.

Song Ling closed his eyes, reflecting on his behavior over the past few days, feeling like a joke.

Gu Dai had come to Xiuyang Village with Su Ting, and he hadn't even spoken a word to her before she returned to the Capital.

Feeling the increasingly cold aura emanating from Song Ling, Zhao Xuan shivered, hurriedly speaking up, "President Song, Miss Gu Dai was very concerned about you. She even visited your hospital room."

Song Ling opened his eyes in surprise, looking at Zhao Xuan.

Encouraged by his reaction, Zhao Xuan continued, "Even though she was busy, she instructed me to apply medicine to your wounds."

Song Ling's expression softened, "Really?"

Zhao Xuan, recalling that Gu Dai's visit was more due to Su Ting being in the same room and her casual remark upon seeing Song Ling, hesitated for a second before nodding firmly, "Yes!"

Song Ling's mood improved, but he then asked, "Are you sure Gu Dai was the only one who visited me in the hospital? No one else?"

He thought of the vague figure he saw in his dazed state, resembling the Legendary Doctor. Could it have been Gu Dai?

Zhao Xuan, not understanding why Song Ling asked this, hesitantly nodded.

A spark of realization flickered in Song Ling's mind, but he couldn't piece it together, pressing his temples in frustration.

Zhao Xuan glanced at Song Ling, then quickly looked away, shrinking into himself, not daring to speak.

Back in the capital, Gu Dai wanted to take Zhen Chan home but was politely refused.

"I'm used to living alone," Zhen Chan said.

Understanding Zhen Chan's preference for solitude, Gu Dai nodded, assuring before leaving, "Auntie Zhen, you can call me anytime if you need anything."

Zhen Chan smiled, "Alright."

After Zhen Chan entered the hotel, Gu Dai turned to Su Ting with a smile, "Let's go home."

Su Ting nodded obediently, "Okay."

But to Gu Dai's surprise, Su Ting fainted the moment he agreed.

Back home, Gu Dai stayed by Su Ting's bedside.

When Su Ting slowly opened his eyes and saw Gu Dai, he asked confusedly,

“Don’t talk,” Gu Dai interrupted.

Su Ting murmured, “Hmm?”

Gu Dai handed him medicine, speaking softly, “Your back injury worsened due to your relentless efforts in helping others, leading to severe inflammation. You need to rest for the next few days, okay?”

Su Ting obediently agreed, “Okay, I’ll listen to you, sis.”

Gu Dai, initially upset at Su Ting for overexerting himself, couldn’t stay angry seeing his compliant nature, shaking her head in resignation.

After Su Ting fell asleep, Gu Dai left his room quietly, only to be startled by a group of worried faces outside.

Gu Dai asked in a soft voice, “Uncle Lin, Uncle Wu, second brother, third brother, Chu Min, Yinyin, why are you all here with red eyes...”

Chu Min said earnestly, “Boss, you must tell us before you go out next time!

The earthquake was too dangerous. What if something had happened to you?”

Lin Sheng and Wu Zhen nodded in agreement.

Meng Chuan, relieved to see Gu Dai safe, sighed, “I’m glad you’re okay.”

Gu Yin hugged Gu Dai, crying, “Cousin, I’m so glad you’re safe.”

Meng Zhi immediately decided, "Daidai, from now on, wherever you go, I'll follow!"

Gu Dai was startled by their reactions, assuring them softly, "Don't worry, I'm not a child anymore. I can take care of myself. I realized the earthquake was happening quickly and saved many people."

After some persuasion, Gu Dai managed to calm them, though they still wanted to keep a constant eye on her.

Meng Chuan pondered for a moment, then said seriously, "We don't have to watch you every moment, but you must report your safety to us, once every hour!"

Gu Dai, aware of the scare she had given her family, accepted the condition, albeit with a sense of dread at the thought of reporting every hour..

#### Chapter 332: Suzhou Embroidery Competition Next Round

Gu Dai pondered for a moment before tentatively suggesting, "How about I report every ten hours when I'm not at home?"

Meng Chuan agreed, "That should be good."

As Gu Dai observed Meng Chuan's response, she felt she could have negotiated for even more time. But the idea was quickly quashed by Wu Zhen's words.

"We were all terrified when we heard the news," Wu Zhen confessed. "The young masters were crying, ready to rush off to find you. Thankfully, you called in time, or they would have already been on their way to Suzhou City." Gu Dai lowered her gaze, speaking softly, "I'm sorry for worrying you all. But rest assured, I will take good care of myself in the future."

Hearing her assurance, everyone felt more relieved.

Meng Zhi, remembering Su Ting who was still in the room, asked, "Was Su Ting injured in the earthquake?"

Gu Dai nodded, "He hurt his back protecting me. He fainted just now due to exhaustion."

Meng Zhi nodded, then spoke, "You should focus on organizing the Suzhou Embroidery competition these next few days. I'll take good care of Su Ting."

Gu Dai's eyes narrowed inquisitively, "Third Brother, how did you know about the Suzhou Embroidery competition?"

Meng Zhi was taken aback, then turned his head away without answering, his ears turning red.

Meng Chuan couldn't help but laugh, "After finding out you were safe, he cried and pestered Zheng Ming to find out why you went to Suzhou City. He even begged Zheng Ming to reveal your schedule for the next three months." Pausing for a few seconds, Meng Chuan added, "He was really upset."

Meng Zhi quickly covered Meng Chuan's mouth, desperation in his voice, "Daidai, listen to me. Although your second brother didn't ask, he cried too. I could tell he supported what I did!"

Meng Chuan pulled Meng Zhi's hand away his force, "Little sister, that's just his guess, I didn't..."

Meng Zhi crossed his arms, huffing, "Your eyes told me everything." Watching Meng Chuan and Meng Zhi bicker, Gu Dai couldn't help but laugh softly, then said, "I'll handle the Suzhou Embroidery competition now. Please take care of Su Ting. Call me if anything comes up."

Meng Chuan and Meng Zhi nodded in agreement.

However, they expressed their concern, "Daidai, you just got back. Maybe you should rest a bit first."

Gu Dai reassured them, "It's alright. I've almost finished planning the competition. I just need to check on a few things, and I'll be back soon." Reassured, they agreed to her plan.

When Gu Dai returned to the company, the employees greeted her with smiles, each saying, "Chairwoman Gu, we're glad you're safe!"

Gu Dai smiled back, "Thank you."

Zheng Ming approached her with documents, "Chairwoman Gu, these are the top two contestants from the second round of preliminaries."

Gu Dai's gaze fell on the documents. One was Wei Jia and the other was Li Ying.

Both Wei Jia and Li Ying had excellent works in the preliminary round, and both were quite attractive. However, something about Li Ying's eyes made Gu Dai feel uneasy.

Reminding herself not to judge by appearances, she handed the documents back to Zheng Ming, "I've invited Master Zhen Chan for the competition. We can start the next round tomorrow."

Zheng Ming confirmed, "Understood."

After a moment's hesitation, he asked, "Chairwoman Gu, is Master Zhen Chan participating as a contestant?"

Gu Dai shook her head, "No, she will be a judge, not a contestant."

Zheng Ming nodded, "Alright, Chairwoman Gu. I'll arrange for the next round."

Gu Dai added, "I'll also check the venue. And I'll be at the event tomorrow to observe the contestants' skills."

Zheng Ming's eyes brightened, "Chairwoman Gu, there's a lot of anticipation online to see you in person. The contestants might get too excited and lose focus in the competition!"

Considering Zheng Ming's point, Gu Dai thought seriously before replying, "During the competition, I'll appear as a special guest without revealing my true identity."

The Gu Group had been trending online recently, so the news of the Suzhou Embroidery competition drew many applicants. Despite rigorous screening, there were still many participants in the semifinals..

### Chapter 333: Competition Start

The host announced with excitement, "Welcome, everyone, to the Suzhou Embroidery Competition hosted by the Gu Group!"

Upon hearing the host's words, the audience erupted into applause, their cheers filled with exhilaration.

The host continued, "Now, let me introduce our judge, the esteemed Master Zhen Chan!"

The moment Master Zhen Chan's name was mentioned, the contestants were stunned into silence. After a few seconds, they regained their composure and expressed their disbelief, "Master Zhen Chan herself!"

"It's really Master Zhen Chan."

"My goodness, Master Zhen Chan is such a mystery. I never imagined I'd see her one day."

"Who is Master Zhen Chan?"

“You don’t know Master Zhen Chan? She is the renowned inheritor of the Suzhou embroidery intangible cultural heritage!”

Wei Jia’s eyes shone brightly as she gazed at Zhen Chan.

Her interest in Suzhou embroidery stemmed from witnessing Master Zhen Chan’s competition years ago. However, despite her efforts to find the master afterwards, she had been unable to locate her. To her astonishment, she had the chance to see Master Zhen Chan in person today!

Li Ying, noticing Wei Jia’s tearful eyes, rolled her eyes disdainfully and said, “Country bumpkin, it’s just someone skilled in Suzhou embroidery, and you’re acting so pathetic.”

Mao Ni, Wei Jia’s friend, stood up angrily, as she fought for her friend, “How can you speak like that, Li Ying? She...”

Wei Jia stopped Mao Ni and gently shook her head, whispering, “Nini, this is the competition. Let’s not bother with Li Ying. The most important thing now is what’s coming up next.”

Mao Ni felt unsatisfied but conceded to Wei Jia’s reasoning, suppressing her urge to confront Li Ying.

Gu Dai was sitting not far from Wei Jia and Li Ying and heard their conversation clearly. Her gaze towards Li Ying cooled.

It seemed her judgment yesterday wasn’t about appearances, but intuition warning her.

The host regained control of the excited crowd at the sight of Zhen Chan and continued, “Besides Master Zhen Chan, we have several other judges!”

After introducing the judges, the host’s gaze fell on Gu Dai, gesturing towards her with a smile, “Among them, we have a special guest.”

The crowd, puzzled, turned to look, but upon seeing Gu Dai, they were struck speechless.



They had never seen such a beautiful woman.

Gu Dai, without makeup and her hair tied in a simple low ponytail, wore a milk-white cheongsam embroidered with bamboo.

Despite her simplicity, her delicate features and gentle smile made her incredibly radiant.

Gu Dai, surprised by the silent admiration, tentatively said, "Hello everyone..."

"Hello, hello!"

"Miss, your voice is so ethereal, and you're so beautiful, with such a great aura!"

"Big sister, I'm a girl, but is there a chance we can be together?"

"Everyone, calm down, don't scare the beautiful lady! But she is really beautiful, I like her so much!"

Blushing slightly, not expecting everyone's warm greetings, Gu Dai responded softly, "Thank you for your kindness. Everyone, do your best in the competition and show your best skills!"

The crowd's cheers grew louder, unable to help but admire Gu Dai's beauty and cuteness.

The host, experienced in managing various events, encountered such a lively and bustling atmosphere for the first time. He even felt slightly overwhelmed, unable to control the situation. In search of assistance, his gaze turned pleadingly towards Gu Dai.

Gu Dai announced, "This competition will be conducted in a fully enclosed format. Let's wait for the host to announce the start."

“Alright!”

Seizing the calmer moment, the host declared, “The Suzhou Embroidery Competition officially begins now!”

The contest’s theme was open, allowing everyone to express themselves freely.

During the competition, Gu Dai sat beside Zhen Chan.

Zhen Chan, observing the contestants’ work, nodded with satisfaction and remarked, “I didn’t expect so many people in our country to still be dedicated to Suzhou embroidery. I feel those two young ladies did well, the one on the left even better than the one on the right.”

Gu Dai followed Zhen Chan’s gaze to see Wei Jia on the left and Li Ying on the right.

Li Ying’s work was standard, but it appeared somewhat rough compared to Wei Jia’s vibrant creations using a special embroidery technique.

Gu Dai nodded in agreement.

Li Ying, sitting farther away, couldn’t hear what Zhen Chan and Gu Dai were discussing, but she assumed they were praising her..

Chapter 334: I’m Definitely First

Li Ying looked at Wei Jia with disdain, letting out a cold snort filled with mockery. “Someone like you, a mere country bumpkin, could never create anything worthwhile. You’re bound to fail in this round of competition anyway, so why not just give up now? It would save you the embarrassment of coming in last.”

Wei Jia cast a fleeting glance at Li Ying, then returned her focus to her embroidery, unaffected by the taunts.

Li Ying, witnessing Wei Jia's unaffected demeanor, rolled her eyes in annoyance.

She had been the center of attention all her life, but Wei Jia's indifference, as if she didn't matter at all, irritated her deeply.

Li Ying believed that Wei Jia was just a proud yet poor individual who, despite appearing indifferent on the surface, surely harbored deep envy towards her inside.

Proudly tilting her head, Li Ying imagined herself as the undisputed winner of the competition.

She recalled how Zhen Chan and the other unattractive woman had paid attention to her during the contest, seemingly impressed by her work. She was convinced they had already silently acknowledged her as the victor.

The competition came to a swift conclusion. After the participants had submitted their works for the judges' evaluation, they took a moment to rest.

Gu Dai had a brief conversation with the judges and decided to step out for some fresh air. As she approached the rooftop, she overheard a heated argument.

Li Ying's voice was sharp, "Just as I thought, a poor wretch like you can only afford to munch on tasteless, filling-less buns!"

Mao Ni frowned, "Li Ying, Jiajia hasn't provoked you. Why are you always targeting her?"

Li Ying retorted, "How has she not provoked me? Her very appearance provokes me. I disliked her from the moment I laid eyes on her!"

Li Ying was especially irritated recalling how, whenever she shared a stage with Wei Jia, the men's attention seemed drawn to her.

But then, assuming a condescending air, Li Ying declared, "I'll have you know, I won't bother with you anymore."

Wei Jia remained unimpressed, waiting for Li Ying to continue as she stared coldly towards her.

Li Ying boasted, "I'm already the top contender in this round, and I'll undoubtedly win the finals too. Our statuses are worlds apart now; you're not even worth my time. I'd disdain even to have you shine my shoes!"

After this, Li Ying looked at Wei Jia with contempt.

Wei Jia, unfazed, replied, "The competition isn't over yet, and the results are still pending. How can you be so sure of your victory?"

Li Ying, with a smug smile curling at the corners of her mouth, proudly proclaimed, "Master Zhen Chan and that unsightly woman, who must have used some trick to become a special guest, watched me during my performance. They even had expressions of satisfaction."

Mao Ni scoffed, "Jiajia was competing right beside you. Maybe the judges were actually impressed with her. And just because someone glances at you, you assume you've won?"

Li Ying trembled with anger, pointing her finger at Wei Jia, "Does she even deserve the judges' attention? Besides, when the competition results are announced, you'll see if I'm the champion or not. Just wait and see who gets humiliated then!"

With that, Li Ying stormed off the rooftop, slamming the door behind her with a resounding crash.

Gu Dai emerged from the staircase, her eyes narrowing as she watched Li Ying's retreating figure.

Back at the judges' panel, the judges had reached a preliminary decision.

Zhen Chan, holding the works of both Wei Jia and Li Ying, expressed her dilemma, "Both entries are impressive. It's hard to choose."

Gu Dai, after a brief glance, decisively pointed at Wei Jia's work. "This one."

Zhen Chan, puzzled, asked, "Why?"

Gu Dai explained, "Li Ying's work, though initially striking, quickly becomes tiring to the eye. It's flawed upon closer inspection. Wei Jia's work, on the other hand, is the exact opposite."

After hearing Gu Dai's words, Auntie Zhen examined them carefully again and then nodded with a smile. "You're right, it's just as you said."

After saying this, Zhen Chan expressed her surprise. "I didn't expect you to be knowledgeable about Suzhou Embroidery."

Gu Dai pursed her lips and smiled lightly. "I studied it a bit in the past, so I know a little."

Once the two had made their decision, they shared their thoughts with the other judges. Upon hearing this, the judges unanimously agreed, nodding their heads in approval.

After finalizing their decision, everyone waited for the host to announce the final results..

Chapter 335: Apologize

The host, beaming with excitement, warmed up the atmosphere before announcing, "And now, the winner in this round of competition is—"

Li Ying lifted her head high, envisioning the spotlight on her as she delivered her victory speech, with everyone else looking on in envy.

With a confident smirk, she awaited her name.

Wei Jia, meanwhile, remained calm and composed, showing no signs of emotion.

Li Ying, glancing at Wei Jia, found her unaffected demeanor increasingly pretentious.

The host declared, "The winner is—Wei Jia!"

The announcement was met with thunderous applause. Li Ying's smug expression froze in disbelief as she stared at Wei Jia.

Wei Jia's tension eased into a smile.

Li Ying, seeing Wei Jia's smile, felt a sting of annoyance and protested, "I don't accept this result!"

The room fell silent, all eyes turning to Li Ying.

Gu Dai, arms crossed and with a sly smile, inquired, "And why don't you accept it?"

Li Ying accused, "You were clearly satisfied with my work. Why choose Wei Jia? Did she bribe you?"

Pausing, she added venomously, "No, Wei Jia is too poor. She must have used underhanded means, perhaps seducing someone influential!"

Gu Dai, with anger bubbling beneath the surface, slammed her hand on the table and spoke, struggling to suppress her fury. "Li Ying, you're a girl too. Why would you make such malicious speculations about other girls?"

Li Ying, showing no signs of remorse, continued to speak. "You're so protective of Wei Jia. Is it because you also became a special guest through backdoor dealings?"

Song Ling, arriving in the city and learning of the Suzhou embroidery contest, heard Li Ying's accusation as he approached.

His expression darkened, glaring coldly at Li Ying.

Upon witnessing the scene, Zhao Xuan spoke up, "President Song, we should go down and help Miss Gu Dai."

Song Ling declined, "No need."

Zhao Xuan scratched his head in confusion, asking, "Why not?"

Song Ling looked down, "Let's wait and see. I believe in Gu Dai's ability to handle the situation on her own. She doesn't need my help."

Zhao Xuan was momentarily stunned by this response, but Song Ling had already made up his mind, and he could only nod in agreement.

Gu Dai sat back down and smiled, "Miss Li Ying, spreading rumors is against the law. If you apologize to me now, I might let this go for the time being. But if you insist on this path, don't blame me for taking legal action."

Li Ying panicked immediately.

Though she considered her family background to be superior compared to others from small cities, her experience with lawyers was limited to television dramas.

The reality of legal proceedings terrified her, turning her face pale with fear.

Lowering her head, Li Ying hurriedly apologized, "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have slandered you for getting in through backdoor dealings."

Gu Dai had thought Li Ying, with her brazen demeanor, would be difficult to deal with. It turned out she was only strong on the surface.

Gu Dai looked down again and spoke, "You also called me an ugly woman. I hope you can apologize for that as well."

Li Ying, caught off guard that Gu Dai knew about this, wondered who had told her.

Could it be Wei Jia? It must be Wei Jia!

Her gaze turned coldly towards Wei Jia, and she asked through gritted teeth, "Was it you? Did you tell on me?"

Gu Dai answered, "No."

Li Ying was stunned, then turned to look at Mao Ni.

She had only spoken ill of Gu Dai in front of these two, so it had to be one of them!

Gu Dai, anticipating Li Ying's thoughts, spoke again, "No one told me anything. I know about this because... I heard it myself."

Heard it herself...



Li Ying looked at Gu Dai in disbelief.

Before Li Ying could say anything, the contestants erupted in discussion.

“What kind of eyes does this Li Ying have? The beautiful sister is so pretty, and she called her ugly?”

“I think she’s just jealous of someone prettier than herself. She can’t admit she’s inferior, so she constantly belittles others in her mind to feel better.”

“How disgusting, there are such people in the world..”

Chapter 336: Dominated

Li Ying, her face growing increasingly pale, listened to the voices criticizing her. Under mounting pressure, she finally bowed her head and apologized, “I’m sorry for calling you an ugly woman. Can you let me go now?”

Gu Dai replied coolly, “As I recall, you didn’t just slander me.”

Li Ying instantly understood Gu Dai’s implication. She was expected to apologize to Wei Jia as well, but the thought was unbearable.

Her disdain for Wei Jia was common knowledge; apologizing to her in public would be a humiliating blow to her own reputation.

Moreover, Wei Jia couldn’t afford a lawyer, so why should Li Ying be afraid of her?

Gu Dai spoke indifferently, "Don't get any false hope. I will hire a lawyer for Wei Jia."

Envy drove Li Ying to the brink of madness. She couldn't fathom why Gu Dai would help Wei Jia. With red eyes and a choked voice, she apologized reluctantly, "I'm sorry."

Feeling utterly humiliated, a sudden thought struck Li Ying. She looked up at Gu Dai and accused, "Did you rig the competition for Wei Jia to win first place?"

Before Gu Dai could respond, Li Ying continued, "It must be so. How else could my superior work not win first place?"

Zhen Chan, her face turning instantly cold, interjected, "Our competition was fair and impartial. Your failure to win first place was due to your technical flaws and many small imperfections."

Li Ying, momentarily stunned, regained her composure and retorted, "My work is clearly perfect. How could it have flaws? And Master Zhen Chan, you're a cultural inheritor of Suzhou Embroidery. Now, for the sake of money, you're lying. Doesn't your conscience hurt?"

Zhen Chan was so infuriated that her breathing quickened.

Gu Dai, noticing Zhen Chan's state, gently tapped a few acupuncture points on her body to help her calm down. Then, she softly consoled, "Auntie Zhen, this trivial matter is not worth getting angry over."

Gu Dai's gaze turned cold as she addressed Li Ying, "I can show you exactly where your work is flawed."

A minute later, staff handed over the materials for Suzhou embroidery to Gu Dai.

Li Ying had embroidered a scene from a wealthy family's evening banquet. To make the differences clearer, Gu Dai also chose to embroider the same scene.

With skilled movements, Gu Dai quickly finished her embroidery.

The onlookers, seeing Gu Dai put down her needle, were somewhat stunned and began whispering to each other.

“Did the beautiful sister just finish embroidering?”

“That was so fast. If it were me doing Li Ying’s piece, it would take half a day at least. She finished in less than twenty minutes?”

Hearing the crowd’s comments, Li Ying looked at Gu Dai with a sneer curling her lips.

Mao Ni, a bit worried, leaned close to Wei Jia and asked, “Jiajia, what if the beautiful sister couldn’t finish the embroidery?”

Wei Jia looked down first and then, looking at Gu Dai, said with conviction, “I believe the beautiful sister can do it!”

Li Ying happened to hear Wei Jia’s words and scoffed, “Your blind faith is really funny! I bet she doesn’t know how to continue. Even if she does finish, it will definitely be terrible!”

Gu Dai, overhearing Li Ying’s comment, glanced at her nonchalantly.

Li Ying looked around. No one was near her, yet she felt an overwhelming sense of fear.

The host took Gu Dai’s work and compared it with Li Ying’s on a large screen.

Li Ying looked up, but upon seeing Gu Dai’s Suzhou Embroidery, she was dumbfounded.

The contestants were equally shocked, and then they all erupted with excitement.

“Oh my, this work is just too perfect.”

"I thought Li Ying's work was not bad, even doubted the competition results. But after seeing the beautiful sister's work, I realized how poor her work was."

"I even feel I could never reach this level in my lifetime."

"I regret thinking the beautiful sister couldn't do it. I should have realized that someone invited as a special guest by the organizers is no ordinary person."

Li Ying, in disbelief, rushed onto the stage, pushing the host aside, and scrutinized Gu Dai's work.

The more she looked, the redder her eyes became, her face twisted in frenzy as she kept repeating, "This is Impossible, this is impossible, how could she embroider something this good!"

Li Ying turned to Gu Dai, raising her hand to point at her and accused, "You cheated, didn't you?"

#### Chapter 337: Please Pay The Penalty

Li Ying asserted with certainty, "You must have cheated!"

The contestants, even without Gu Dai's response, couldn't hold back their words.

"Li Ying, you need to have evidence to make such claims."

"The beautiful sister completed the Suzhou embroidery under the gaze of so many of us. How could she possibly cheat?"

“You’re grown up now; you should learn to accept your shortcomings, not slander others when you see them succeed.”

Under the barrage of comments, Li Ying slowly lowered her head, yet she persisted, “Her speed in making Suzhou embroidery was too fast. I don’t believe you all don’t have doubts!”

Upon hearing Li Ying’s words, a silence fell over the crowd.

Zhen Chan spoke, “We were right there. We can attest she did the embroidery on the spot.”

The other judges nodded in agreement with Zhen Chan.

Li Ying looked disdainful.

Gu Dai, seeing this, spoke calmly, “If you think they are covering for me, you can check the surveillance footage.”

The host, perceptively, had the footage displayed.

Li Ying, upon seeing Gu Dai’s confidence, felt a chill, yet she couldn’t help but hope that Gu Dai was merely feigning composure.

She said, “If there’s surveillance, let’s see it.”

Gu Dai nodded to the host, and the footage played on the big screen.

Li Ying watched intently, not daring to blink, but as she watched, her face grew paler.

Gu Dai was focused on her embroidery, and the scene unfolded with her every move, leaving no time for cheating.

The surveillance ended before they realized.

Gu Dai, yawning from fatigue, looked at Li Ying and asked, "The evidence is before you. Do you still think I cheated?"

Li Ying clenched her fists, glaring at Gu Dai, "Maybe she tampered with the surveillance. Why else would she think of showing it?"

Gu Dai had anticipated this reaction, remaining unfazed.

The others couldn't hold back, "Li Ying, you're being unreasonable. The beautiful sister has provided proof, yet you refuse to believe it and continue to slander her!"

Li Ying glared at them, then turned to the host, "What's my ranking?"

The host, trembling, replied, "Second... second place..."

Li Ying scoffed, her gaze fixed on Gu Dai, "I withdraw from the competition! Since you dare treat me this way, let Gu Group lose a future master of Suzhou embroidery. You wait till your boss reprimands you!"

With that, she stormed off.

Gu Dai called out, "Wait."

Li Ying stopped, coldly, she said, "Even if you realize your mistake now, it's too late!"

Gu Dai's lips twitched slightly, and after a few seconds of mental preparation, she mustered the courage to speak. "I'm not trying to keep you in the competition. I just want to remind you that if you withdraw now, your registration fee won't be refunded. Moreover, due to your mid-competition withdrawal, according to the contract we signed, you'll need to pay a penalty of one million."

Li Ying froze, her gaze lingering on the exit, but minutes passed without her moving.

After reminding Li Ying, Gu Dai turned away, indicating the host to continue.

The host announced, “Now, the third place—Mao Ni!”

He added with a smile, “The first prize is 500,000, the second 300,000, and the third 100,000. The prize money will be transferred by staff from the Gu Group.”

He concluded, “This is just the semifinals. Those not advancing, don’t lose heart. Life is long; there are more opportunities. Don’t be discouraged. Those advancing, prepare for tomorrow’s final round!”

“Understood!”

Song Ling, watching from a distance, lowered his eyes, “Zhao Xuan, do I really not know Gu Dai well enough? I had no idea she was skilled in Suzhou embroidery.”

Memories of Gu Dai’s exquisite embroidery filled Song Ling’s mind, casting a shadow over his mood..

## Chapter 338: Song Ling Following Gu Dai Around

Zhao Xuan faced President Song Ling’s inquiry with a troubled heart. How could he admit President Song Ling’s indifference towards Miss Gu Dai?

Fearing for his salary, he dared not risk the truth.

He cleared his throat, deliberating before speaking, "President Song, with the multitude of company matters and your significant workload, it's natural to overlook personal affairs..."

Before he could finish, Song Ling cut him off coldly, "Shut up."

Each word from Zhao Xuan was a reminder of his neglect towards Gu Dai.

Not wanting to speak more, Zhao Xuan immediately closed his mouth upon hearing Song Ling's command.

Song Ling, unblinkingly, watched Gu Dai engaged in conversation with someone else.

Wei Jia, usually emotionally stable, approached Gu Dai nervously, "Hel-Hello, I'm Wei Jia."

Gu Dai nodded with a smile, "Hello."

Gathering her courage, Wei Jia expressed her gratitude, "Beautiful sister, thank you for helping me."

Gu Dai gently ruffled Wei Jia's hair, softly inquiring, "You're welcome. Can you tell me about the inspiration for your competition piece?"

Wei Jia's entry depicted a joyful gathering in a small wooden cabin.

Her thoughts drifted back, her eyes glazing over as she reminisced, "The scene in my Suzhou Embroidery is from my childhood. During Chinese New Year, all my relatives gathered, filling my heart with warmth, inspiring me to capture that moment."

Gu Dai's gaze lowered, envisioning scenes of her parents smiling as they guided her in Suzhou Embroidery, a smile unconsciously graced her lips.

She called out softly, "Wei Jia."



Wei Jia looked up, bewildered, “Hmm?”

Gu Dai complimented, “I really like your style and your embroidery technique is excellent. Good luck in the finals.”

Wei Jia nodded eagerly, “Okay!”

As Gu Dai noticed someone approaching, her smile faded, her brows furrowing, “What are you doing here?”

Song Ling had intended only to observe Gu Dai and leave without disturbance. Yet, upon seeing her smile, he couldn’t resist approaching.

Facing her, his heart trembled, suppressing the pain, he replied indifferently, “I just happened to pass by and heard about the competition.”

Zhao Xuan thought, President Song’s excuses were transparent. He clearly came for Miss Gu Dai.

Gu Dai, uninterested in his reasons, dismissed him, “The competition is over. You can leave now.”

After speaking, she turned to Zhen Chan, “Auntie Zhen, let’s go have lunch.”

Auntie Zhen nodded, “Okay.”

As Song Ling followed them, Gu Dai’s expression grew colder, attempting to ignore his presence. Confronting him in the private room, she asked coldly, “What do you want?”

Song Ling suggested casually, “I just happened to be here. Let’s have lunch together.”

Gu Dai's gaze remained icy towards Song Ling.

Unfazed, Song Ling approached Auntie Zhen, "Hello, Auntie Zhen. I am President Song An's grandson."

Auntie Zhen's brows furrowed slightly, then relaxed with a smile, "So, you're his grandson."

Gu Dai, seeing this, reluctantly allowed Song Ling to stay.

Auntie Zhen inquired, "How has your grandfather been these years?"

Song Ling replied with a smile, "Thanks to Gu Dai's care, he's been well."

As he said this, he picked up some shredded potatoes with the public chopsticks and placed them in Gu Dai's plate, softly noting, "This dish is quite tasty and suits your taste."

Gu Dai looked down, aware of Song Ling's familiarity with her preferences. She responded nonchalantly, leaving the potatoes untouched.

Song Ling's expression dimmed slightly at this.

Though close in proximity, Song Ling felt as if an insurmountable wall separated them, as if they were living in different worlds.

Auntie Zhen glanced between Song Ling and Gu Dai, guessing the situation. Remembering the handsome young man who had visited Xiuyang Village with Gu Dai, she shook her head in resignation.

With so many outstanding people around Gu Dai, and her apparent resistance towards him, Song Ling's chances seemed slim..

Chapter 339: Powerlessness

After finishing her meal, Gu Dai first dropped Auntie Zhen off at the hotel.

Before Gu Dai could drive away, Song Ling hurried out of his car and grabbed her, speaking in a serious tone, "Let's talk."

Gu Dai pulled her hand back, replying indifferently, "I don't think there's anything to discuss between us."

Ignoring her response, Song Ling continued, "I saw your Suzhou Embroidery work."

Gu Dai, unimpressed by his praise, simply responded with a casual "Oh" and proceeded to get into her car.

Blocking her way, Song Ling stood in front of her, not letting her open the car door, "I was injured saving you that day, sustaining many cuts on my arm."

He added, "It hurts quite a bit."

Gu Dai looked at him, and after a moment, said gently, "I'm thankful you saved me, but as I recall, your injuries weren't serious. It's been two days; they should be healing."

She continued, "Once I get home, I'll have my assistant send you compensation. If your wound still hurts, you can visit the hospital for treatment, and I'll reimburse the medical expenses."

After saying this, Gu Dai pushed Song Ling aside and drove home.

Su Ting's injuries were more severe than Song Ling's, and he had helped others while still wounded, undoubtedly worsening his pain.

Eager to return home, Gu Dai wanted to check on Su Ting's condition.

Song Ling watched her car disappear in the distance, his face pale. Recalling the recent encounter, a sense of powerlessness welled up within him.

Li Ying returned home with a dark expression. Remembering her embarrassing moment earlier that day, her face burned with humiliation, and in a fit of anger, she threw everything on the table to the ground.

The images of Gu Dai and Wei Jia flashed in her mind. Red-eyed and gritting her teeth, she vowed, "I won't let you get away with this!"

At that moment, there was a knock at the door.

Li Ying glared fiercely and opened the door forcefully, only to be taken aback by the unfamiliar man standing there. Frowning, she asked, "Who are you?"

Gu Ming smiled, "I can help you deal with them."

Caught off guard, Li Ying inquired, "What do you mean?"

Gu Ming explained, "I can help you win first place and enter the Gu Group."

Leaning against the doorframe, Li Ying asked coldly, "What do you want in return?"

Remembering how Gu Dai had exposed his wrongdoings, leading to a harsh reprimand from the shareholders, Gu Ming's eyes flashed with hatred.

He dreamt of getting back at Gu Dai.

Through gritted teeth, Gu Ming demanded, "Once you enter the Gu Group, you must follow my instructions!"

The next day, the Suzhou Embroidery finals began.

With increased difficulty compared to the preliminaries, the contestants were given more time. After the competition, everyone locked their works in a designated cabinet.

Gu Dai announced, "The final results will be determined not only by the judges but also through online voting, allowing netizens to vote for their favorite pieces."

Her announcement caused a stir among the contestants. A few minutes later, they voiced their concerns.

"Beautiful sister, won't there be vote manipulation online? It doesn't seem fair to us."

While others worried, Li Ying smiled upon hearing "vote manipulation," planning to arrange for it later.

Gu Dai glanced at Li Ying and assured everyone, "We're using a professional voting system to ensure fairness and prevent any vote manipulation."

As the crowd cheered, Li Ying's face darkened, a flicker of resentment in her eyes. Returning home, she contacted the person Gu Ming had arranged for her.

Li Ying ordered, "Manipulate the votes for me!"

A few minutes later, Liu San called her back, "The Gu Group's system is too secure. I can't manipulate the votes."

Taking a deep breath, a sinister gleam appeared in Li Ying's eyes. If she couldn't manipulate votes, she had to resort to other measures.

That night.

A man moved swiftly, evading the cameras before sneaking into the room holding the embroidery works. His gaze scanned each name until it rested on “Wei Jia.”

He quickly broke the lock and, following Li Ying’s instructions, took out Wei Jia’s embroidery and destroyed it.

As Liu San was about to leave, the room’s lights suddenly turned on..

#### Chapter 340: Suzhou Embroidery Finals

Li Ying paced anxiously in her home, her mind swirling with thoughts.

Finally, her phone rang.

Her eyes lit up as she swiftly grabbed it. Hearing from Liu San that the task was completed, a wave of relief washed over her. Coupled with the hacked votes that she purchased through a professional hacker pushing her to first place, a smile spread across her face.

In her mind, she visualized the scene where she would be announced as the new member of the Gu Group, with everyone looking on enviously.

The technical staff at Gu Group, upon seeing the voting system manipulated, expressed their confusion to Gu Dai, “Chairwoman Gu, why did you allow this?”

Gu Dai, her gaze lowered and a smile curling at her lips, replied softly, “Turning hope into disappointment can be quite interesting.”

At the competition venue, the host announced the online voting results, “First place, Li Ying; second place, Wei Jia; third place, Mao Ni!”

Li Ying lifted her head in triumph.

However, murmurs spread among the crowd.

“A difference of 50 million votes between first and second place? That’s insane.”

“The works of Li Ying and Wei Jia are quite similar, and Wei Jia’s could even be considered a bit better. How can there be such a huge gap?”

“I suspect vote manipulation. Last night, Li Ying’s votes suddenly increased by 50 million.”

Hearing these whispers, Li Ying’s face stiffened slightly, but she calmed down, thinking of the top hacker she had employed. “The system was supposed to be secure, how could I manipulate votes? Stop spreading rumors, or I’ll sue you for defamation!”

The audience remained skeptical but were silenced by her threat.

The host, following Gu Dai’s instructions, announced, “Now, let’s proceed to our judges’ votes!”

A staff member rushed in, “There’s a problem – one of the contestants’ works has been sabotaged!”

The host quickly adapted, “No worries, we’ll judge based on the works published online.”

Soon, all works were displayed on the big screen. The judges’ votes mainly favored Wei Jia and Li Ying, with Wei Jia securing four votes and Li Ying only one.

Li Ying's face turned slightly gloomy. She glared at the judges who didn't vote for her, but she wasn't overly concerned. After all, the judges vote each counted for one million, while her online votes were 50 million higher than Wei Jia's!

She urged the host, "Announce the final result, quickly!"

The host began, "The final results of the first Suzhou Embroidery Competition!"

"Third place, Wang Wu!"

This announcement left everyone, including Wang Wu, in shock, "I'm third? I thought I'd be fourth!"

Applause erupted.

"Second place, Mao Ni!"

Li Ying was indifferent to the third and second places; she was only waiting for her name to be announced as the winner.

Gu Dai watched Li Ying's expectant face, secretly anticipating her reaction to the final result.

The contestants sensed something amiss.

"Third place Wang Wu, second place Mao Ni. What about Wei Jia and Li Ying? Are they tied for first?"

"It's possible, their vote counts were close."

Mao Ni, worriedly holding Wei Jia's hand, whispered, "Jiajia..."

Wei Jia responded softly, "It's okay. I've given my best. Let's just wait for the final result."



Mao Ni nodded in agreement.

Wei Jia's expression was calm, but inwardly, she was also confused and anxious about the outcome.

The host, under everyone's gaze, announced loudly, "The champion of our Suzhou Embroidery Competition is... Wei Jia! Congratulations!"

Instant applause and fireworks erupted, filling the venue with joy and celebration.

Wei Jia, in disbelief, looked towards Gu Dai.

Gu Dai met Wei Jia's gaze, nodding and clapping for her.

The host continued, "Now, let's invite our champion to the stage to receive her award from our special guest, and congratulations on her future entry into Gu Group...."