

## **I Regained 431**

### Chapter 431: Don't take Down the Trending Search

Confusion etched on Gu Dai's face as she asked, "trending online?"

Lowering her gaze to the tablet, she saw a series of photos featuring herself and Su Ci. However, due to the angle of the shot, only their profiles were captured.

The person who posted the photos wrote: I happened to pass by an advertising shoot today and saw the recently popular Fu Nan. I wanted to sneak a couple of photos, but I was drawn to a staff member nearby and couldn't resist capturing the moment.

Upon seeing the photos, netizens buzzed with comments.

"My goodness, even the staff are this attractive now?"

"I want them to be together."

"Even though it's just their profiles, I can imagine how good-looking they must be, especially the way the man looks at the woman so tenderly, and she looks back just as softly. I can almost feel the harmonious atmosphere between them."

Amidst the fervent discussions of the netizens, the photo swiftly climbed the trending searches, even breaking into the top three.

Gu Dai shook her head in resignation, unable to comprehend the whims of modern netizens. At that moment, she was merely fixing her hair, let alone exchanging tender glances.

Zheng Ming inquired, "Chairwoman Gu, do you want me to take down this trending search?"

After looking at the tablet for a while, Gu Dai shook her head. "Let it be. The netizens think Su Ci and I are just staff. If we take it down, they will start speculating wildly, leading to other implications. Besides, this trending search seems to be benefiting Fu Nan."

Zheng Ming, puzzled, asked, "Beneficial for Fu Nan?"

Gu Dai nodded. "Many people learned about Fu Nan through this photo and are now watching the variety show, which has expanded his influence."

Zheng Ming picked up the tablet and realized she was right.

He couldn't help but inwardly admire Gu Dai's strong insight, no wonder she was able to rapidly develop the Gu Group.

The impact of a trending search was significant, leading to automatic system pushes even to those who weren't actively looking for it.

When Zhao Xuan saw the photo, he jolted in shock.

He could already imagine President Song radiating a cold aura upon seeing the trending search. He hurriedly strode into the hospital room, intending to prevent Song Ling from seeing the photo on his phone or tablet.

However, to his surprise, he found Song Ling already holding his phone, with the photo of Gu Dai and another man clearly on the screen.

Zhao Xuan froze, his voice trembling as he said, "President Song, don't be angry. There might be some misunderstanding here, Miss Gu Dai she..."

Song Ling interrupted him coldly, "I'm not angry."

Zhao Xuan felt the unceasing chill around him and internally screamed in disbelief.

Song Ling's gaze was fixed on the man in the photo, gritting her teeth, "Investigate. Find out everything about this man immediately!"

Zhao Xuan hurriedly complied, "Yes."

Song Ling's gaze drifted into the void. The moment he saw the man, he had an intuition; he was this man's replacement.

Even though only half of the man's face was visible, he instantly realized their striking resemblance.

Song Ling let out a cold laugh, never imagining that he would one day find himself in such a situation.

Upon entering the hospital room, Zhou Ci joked, "What's with this look, President Song? Did the photo hit your confidence that hard?"

Song Ling looked at Zhou Ci and replied coldly, "What are you doing here?"

Zhou Ci sat down on the adjacent bed. "I heard you were injured, so I came to see you."

Song Ling questioned, "To see me, or to mock me?"

Zhou Ci pondered for a moment before answering seriously, "Both."

After dropping that statement, he added with a laugh, "Never mind, I won't tease you. But I am curious, you weren't this despondent when I said I liked Gu Dai. Why the loss of confidence now?"

Song Ling lowered his eyes, replying gruffly, "Because Gu Dai would never like you, so I don't need to worry."

Zhou Ci felt a sting at that, but he was more curious about another matter. "So, the man in the photo has shaken you this much because you think he could win over Gu Dai? How can you be so sure?"

Song Ling ignored Zhou Ci.

After all, he couldn't reveal that he had been considered a replacement for years, while this man might be the one Gu Dai truly liked.

Seeing that Song Ling wouldn't speak, Zhou Ci gave up trying to probe further. He consoled, "They're not together yet, right? You still have a chance. Heal quickly and try to pursue Gu Dai.. Maybe she'll end up with you in the future?"

Chapter 432: Attend the charity banquet

Song Ling paused, puzzled, "Find a way to pursue Gu Dai?"

Zhou Ci nodded affirmatively, "In a couple of days, there will be a charity banquet, and Gu Dai is likely to attend. I think it's a great opportunity for you to get close to her."

Song Ling furrowed his brows, his gaze on Zhou Ci filled with inquiry.

"I remember you also liked Gu Dai. Why are you so eager to help me now?" Song Ling questioned.

Zhou Ci sighed lightly and said indifferently, "Because I've accepted the truth that Gu Dai will never like me. And seeing you, my brother, in such emotional pain, I can't stand idly by. So, I thought of helping you."

Song Ling hesitated internally, "You're doing this out of the goodness of your heart?"

Zhou Ci laughed, slightly exasperated, and patted Song Ling's shoulder, "I have things to attend to in my company, so I'll be leaving now. The final decision is up to you."

As he sat in his car, Zhou Ci couldn't help but regret his decision, thinking if he knew Song Ling would be so skeptical, he wouldn't have bothered. His good intentions seemed wasted.

The charity banquet began in the Capital City, a grand event that drew many elites.

Donating to charity was one aspect, but the main goal was to expand networks for future business developments.

Su Ci turned away from the window and smiled at Gu Dai, "Daidai, there are many reporters outside taking pictures. Are you nervous?"

Gu Dai chuckled softly, "Not at all."

Su Ci nodded, complimenting, "Daidai, you look so beautiful. You'll definitely dazzle everyone tonight."

Feeling a bit shy, Gu Dai glanced at Su Ci, dressed in a white suit, "You look very gentle in your outfit today, it suits you well."

Su Ci's eyes curved in a smile, "As long as Daidai likes it. If you see any jewelry you like at the gala, just bid for it. I'll buy it for you."

As they chatted, their car stopped at the venue.

Su Ci got out first, then opened the door for Gu Dai, escorting her out.

The reporters were already busy taking photos, their flashlights blinking continuously while they whispered among themselves.

“Do you know who that couple is?”

“No idea. Haven’t seen them at past banquets, but they look stunning together. Can’t take my eyes off them!”

“Look, there’s some information about them. The man is Su Ci from Dai Ci Studio, and the woman is Gu Dai from Gu Group.”

“Gu Dai from Gu Group? Isn’t she the same Miss Gu that’s been all over the internet? I heard she’s incredibly beautiful but thought it was an exaggeration. Turns out it’s true.”

“It’s like seeing a fairy from a fairy tale.”

After entering the venue, Gu Dai asked, puzzled, “The reporters didn’t interview me. Did I do something wrong?”

Although not nervous, it was her first public appearance as the heiress of the Gu family, so she was concerned about the reception.

Su Ci shook his head, “You did great. No issues.”

Still perplexed, Gu Dai wondered, “Then why didn’t they...”

Su Ci joked, “Maybe they were too stunned by your beauty.”

As the reporters snapped back to reality, they hurried to interview Gu Dai and Su Ci but found they had already walked the red carpet and entered the banquet. They felt regretful for missing the chance.

Flattered by Su Ci’s compliments, Gu Dai lowered her eyes shyly, “Stop teasing me.”

Meng Chuan spoke, "Daidai."

Gu Dai looked up and, remembering they were in a public setting, controlled her emotions and spoke softly, "Second Brother, you're here early."

Meng Chuan replied, "I arrived just a bit before you."

Gu Dai nodded and quickly introduced Su Ci, "Second Brother, this is Su Ci. I don't know if you remember him."

Meng Chuan looked helplessly at Gu Dai, "Of course, I remember."

He had already heard about Su Ci from Meng Zhi and felt a bit dazed seeing him now.

Stepping forward, he shook Su Ci's hand, feeling reassured by the touch, and smiled, "Su Ci, long time no see."

Although Meng Chuan wasn't as close to Su Ci as Meng Zhi was, he still held him in high regard, especially after knowing about his relationship with Gu Dai. He had wholeheartedly supported them.

Meng Chuan had been saddened to hear about Su Ci's ordeal, and seeing him alive and well before him now filled him with a mix of emotions..

Chapter 433: Love rivals meet

Su Ci politely shook Meng Chuan's hand, smiling as he spoke, "Indeed, it's been a long time. However, I often saw your movies abroad. Every time I watched, I couldn't help but marvel at your acting skills."

Meng Chuan's eyes lit up, but he humbly responded, "You flatter me too much."

The charity banquet was set to start only once everyone had arrived, so Gu Dai and the others engaged in casual conversation.

Just then, a commotion arose outside, followed by photographers shouting, "Song Ling from Song Corporation is here, everyone get ready to take pictures!"

Flashes flickered anew.

Meng Chuan chuckled, "When Daidai and Su Ci arrived earlier, the photographers were just as frenzied. It's really crazy."

Gu Dai, who had been focused on moving forward earlier, hadn't noticed the flurry of flashing lights. Now seeing it, she nodded in agreement with Meng Chuan's remark, "It really is madness."

Song Ling, clad in a black suit, walked up the red carpet surrounded by people. Many female guests gazed at him, smitten, "He's so handsome."

But the next moment, they couldn't help but express their confusion, "Isn't President Song always without a female companion? What changed this time? Could he be in a relationship?"

As this question arose, people noticed that Song Ling was not alone; a woman in a pale blue gown followed him.

Meng Chuan, puzzled, inquired, "Who is this woman? Do you know her?"

Having only recently returned to the country, Su Ci shook his head, "I don't know her."

Gu Dai took a moment to recognize her and then said, "That's Sheng Xin."

Second Brother, do you remember her from the restaurant before?"



Meng Chuan thought back, uncertain, "Is she the one who wanted to sign a contract with me?"

Gu Dai nodded, "Yes."

Meng Chuan understood, nodding, "Oh, it's her."

Sheng Xin, trailing behind Song Ling, almost ground her teeth in irritation.

She wanted to call out to him to wait for her, but with so many reporters around, she had to maintain her smile and hurriedly follow.

She reached out to hook her arm through Song Ling's.

However, Song Ling anticipated this and, pretending not to care, turned slightly to answer the reporters' questions.

Sheng Xin, struggling to keep her smile, had an idea when she saw Gu Dai in the venue. She leaned close to Song Ling, "Hooking your arm with mine is helping you. If you don't believe me, look inside the venue."

Following her gaze, Song Ling's eyes brightened upon seeing Gu Dai, but dimmed instantly when he noticed the man by her side.

According to Zhao Xuan's investigation, this man was Su Ci, recently returned to the country, and likely the brother of Su Ting, confirming that he was the man in Gu Dai's heart. To Song Ling, he was nothing but... a replacement.

Seeing Song Ling's darkened eyes, Sheng Xin's face lit up with a smile, whispering, "Acting close with me might make her jealous, realizing her feelings for you."

Song Ling wavered internally, looked down for a moment, then extended his arm for Sheng Xin to hook.

Sheng Xin, arm in arm with Song Ling, beamed even brighter, feeling the envious glances of other women, her chin lifted slightly in disdain.

Song Ling looked towards Gu Dai, a flicker of joy in his heart when their eyes met. He suddenly felt that Gu Dai might care about him after all; otherwise, why would she look at him?

Gu Dai unconsciously furrowed her brows and looked away.

Pondering, she voiced her confusion, "Song Ling previously showed no interest in Sheng Xin. Why are they together now? I don't understand, it's really baffling."

Meng Chuan looked at Gu Dai with concern, "Daidai..."

Gu Dai reassured, "I'm fine, just a bit curious. Let's not dwell on it, after all, it's none of my business."

Su Ci's gaze fell on Song Ling after hearing Gu Dai's words.

Song Ling, noticing Su Ci, instantly felt that Su Ci's gentle appearance belied a turbulent undercurrent in his calm eyes.

Meng Chuan, observing the silent clash between the two men, didn't intend to interrupt. He was curious to see what would happen next.

It was at this moment Zhou Ci appeared, surprised to see Song Ling, "I thought you wouldn't attend the banquet. I didn't expect you to come."

Song Ling withdrew his gaze, "Yeah, my health is much better. Thought I'd get some fresh air.."

Chapter 434: You will never be able to compare to Gu Dai

Zhou Ci couldn't help but purse his lips, believing more that Song Ling came to the banquet not just for fresh air, but to see Gu Dai.

However, meeting Song Ling's threatening gaze, Zhou Ci swallowed the words he was about to say.

Flicking his hair, Zhou Ci then walked over to Gu Dai with a smile, "Miss Gu Dai, it's been a while since I've seen you, but you're still as beautiful as ever."

Gu Dai, silent for a moment, politely smiled and replied, "Thank you."

Zhou Ci quickly waved his hand, saying "Don't mention it," and then approached Meng Chuan, extending his hand for a handshake, "the award-winning Meng, I adore your movies, never missed a single one. Meeting you in person today is an honor!"

Meng Chuan, not a fan of Zhou Ci's slick demeanor but appreciative of the compliment, still shook his hand.

Zhou Ci then approached Su Ci, seeing him for the first time in Gu Dai's presence and having never heard of him in the country before.

Su Ci said warmly, "Hello, my name is Su Ci."

Zhou Ci hurriedly responded, "Su Ci, hello, hello, I'm Zhou Ci."

He suddenly felt that Song Ling's competition was strong, as he couldn't believe that Gu Dai would prefer the icy Song Ling over a gentle person like Su Ci.

Song Ling, his face as dark as coal with anger, found it increasingly unbearable to look at Su Ci's face, realizing their side profiles were almost identical.

This constant reminder that he was just a replacement infuriated him.

This prompted Song Ling to turn and stride away briskly.

Sheng Xin, still clinging to Song Ling's arm, stumbled as she was caught off guard by his sudden movement.

Regaining her balance, she hurriedly followed, again latching onto his arm, "Wait for me."

Song Ling's pace quickened instead of slowing down.

Sheng Xin, clutching her fists, had no choice but to quicken her steps. Even though she could barely keep up with Song Ling, she still maintained an air of disregard for anyone else.

Zhou Ci, witnessing Song Ling's behavior, felt frustrated and eventually gave up on helping him, exhaling deeply. He then joined Gu Dai and the others for a chat.

Su Ci watched as Song Ling's figure disappeared, his gaze darkening momentarily.

In a corner away from the crowd, Song Ling violently shook off Sheng Xin's arm, taking out a handkerchief to disdainfully wipe the spot she had touched.

Stung by Song Ling's action, Sheng Xin crossed her arms and angrily said, "President Song, you're quite heartless, using me and then discarding me like this."

Song Ling looked at her coldly, "It was your choice to be used."

Sheng Xin paused, then smoothed her hair and smiled, "It seems Gu Dai might not care about you. After all, she didn't stop you when you walked away. Why waste your efforts on her? Why not choose someone else?"

“Like you?” Song Ling asked.

Sheng Xin was startled, then replied, “Exactly. I remember you were reluctant to marry Gu Dai. It doesn’t matter if you don’t want to marry me now. Maybe you’ll like me in the future.”

Song Ling, eyes cold, replied disdainfully, “Forget it. I will never marry you or like someone like you.”

With that, he turned and walked away, but after a few steps, he stopped and added, “You will never be able to compare to Gu Dai.”

Sheng Xin, trembling with anger, retorted, “And you’ll never compare to Su Ci, the man beside Gu Dai. They must be close to attend the banquet together, and weren’t they the ones in the trending search a few days ago?”

Song Ling paused at her words.

Sheng Xin continued, “Don’t you want to verify Gu Dai’s feelings for you?”

The banquet was about to start.

Su Ci turned to Gu Dai and softly said, “Daidai, let’s go.”

Gu Dai nodded in agreement, “Okay.”

Zhou Ci instinctively followed Gu Dai but was blocked by Meng Chuan.

Meng Chuan apologetically said, “Sorry, but this box is reserved, so we won’t be inviting Mr. Zhou.”

Although his tone was apologetic, his determined gaze and blocking gesture showed no sign of regret.

In that moment, Zhou Ci bitterly regretted his past frivolous lifestyle, which now made Meng Chuan guard him like guarding against a wolf..

#### Chapter 435: Banquet Auction

Zhou Ci gave a light cough, lifting his hand to rub his nose. With a nonchalant wave of his hand, he said, "It's nothing, I'll be going first."

Turning his head, he coincidentally saw the figure of Song Ling and hurriedly followed him into the box. His eyes fell on the opposite room, and he exclaimed in surprise, "Song Ling, your choice of room is excellent. We can actually see Gu Dai and the others from here."

Zhou Ci couldn't help but complain, "Miss Gu Dai's older brother is really cold. I talked with them for so long, yet they wouldn't let me into their box."

Song Ling let out a cold laugh, "They're right to guard against you."

Zhou Ci averted his gaze, defensively saying, "I entered just to help you get closer."

Song Ling remained skeptical, "I think it's more about you wanting to get closer to Gu Dai."

Zhou Ci had to concede, "Feelings aren't something you can just give up on. I want to fight for myself, especially when you're not making an effort."

Song Ling looked at Zhou Ci with a slightly cold gaze and warned, "Stay away from Gu Dai."

Zhou Ci didn't reply, but internally he countered Song Ling, thinking he should take care of himself first.

He then noticed the woman beside Song Ling and asked in confusion, "Who is this? She looks unfamiliar; I've never heard you mention her before."

Song Ling was momentarily at a loss for words, not knowing how to describe his relationship with Sheng Xin.

Sheng Xin smiled slyly, "I'm a tool Song Ling uses to provoke others."

Zhou Ci realized the situation, but his gaze towards Song Ling was like looking at a fool. He certainly wouldn't use such a tactic; wouldn't this approach only push people further away?

The charity banquet host for the evening was ready.

The host announced, "I now declare the charity banquet has officially started! All the auction items have been donated by our generous patrons, and the proceeds from the auction will be fully donated to impoverished areas to help with their development."

With everyone's intention to expand their network, the items up for auction were various cherished collectibles, making the bidding intense and continuous.

The item now on stage was a pair of earrings designed by the world's leading designer.

Gu Dai bid, "One million."

The crowd fell silent at Gu Dai's bid, not expecting the starting price to be so high.

Sheng Xin looked at Song Ling and reminded him, "Now is the time."

Song Ling bid, "Two million."

The crowd gasped again, surprised by the high price for the earrings, despite being designed by a top designer.

Sheng Xin provocatively looked towards Gu Dai's booth.

Gu Dai didn't notice, but Su Ci and Meng Chuan did. They said together, "Keep bidding, we have the money."

Gu Dai also didn't plan to stop, bidding again, "Five million."

Sheng Xin's provocative look froze, disbelievingly widening her eyes. She instinctively looked at Song Ling, "We can't lose, keep bidding."

Song Ling frowned, recalling a previous situation where Gu Dai had tricked him, and chose not to continue bidding.

During the subsequent auctioned jewelry items, Gu Dai repeatedly raised her bids, eventually winning them at a high price.

Song Ling's frown deepened, not understanding what Gu Dai was doing.

Sheng Xin initially remained provocative, but now fell silent, seemingly feeling the mocking stares of those around her. Thankfully, her donated item was up for auction soon.

Compared to the somber mood in Song Ling's booth, Gu Dai's was filled with laughter and cheer.

Meng Chuan excitedly said, "That's right, buy everything Song Ling wants, leaving him with nothing!"

Su Ci didn't speak, but the corners of his mouth lifted in agreement, clearly sharing the same sentiment.

Gu Dai shook her head helplessly but hummed in agreement.



The host then came onto the stage, “Next up is a calligraphy piece, ‘He’s Preface,’ by He Zhi, and it’s provided by Miss Sheng Xin!”

At the host’s words, the crowd in the booths gasped in surprise.

“I can’t believe it, a masterpiece by Master He Zhi.”

“I’d heard of this piece but never expected to see it at the auction today.”

“Who is this Sheng Xin, to possess a piece by Master He Zhi and willing to auction it? If it were me, I’d keep it hidden away, not letting others see it. This person must have a strong background; I must speak with her later..”

#### Chapter 436: Fake Piece

Meng Chuan looked at Gu Dai with confusion, “Daidai, how did this calligraphy piece end up here? Wasn’t it in...”

Gu Dai did not elaborate much, only nodding slightly, her gaze fixed on the auction scene.

Su Ci sensed something was amiss but, seeing Gu Dai chose not to speak, he didn’t press further.

Master He Zhi’s calligraphy was famous, hence many people fought for it.

“Bidding 10 million.”

“I’ll bid 20 million.”

“I won’t let you take it, 50 million.”

“100 million!”

Zhou Ci was astonished and turned to Sheng Xin in surprise, “You actually have a piece by Master He Zhi.”

Song Ling was also surprised but didn’t show it as blatantly as Zhou Ci.

Sheng Xin humbly said, “I just happened to come by it.”

She watched as the price continued to climb, even reaching the highest bid of the evening, her smile growing wider.

The host announced, “I now declare that Mr. Zhang has successfully bid 800 million for ‘He’s Preface’!”

The crowd gasped, followed by a round of enthusiastic applause.

The host then asked, “We’re delighted that Miss Sheng Xin is willing to donate such an expensive item. Would you like to come up and say a few words?”

Sheng Xin, not wanting to miss this opportunity for attention, stepped up to the stage with a warm and gentle smile that endeared her to the audience. “How did you convince yourself to donate Master He Zhi’s work?” the host inquired.

Sheng Xin answered with a smile, “When I heard it was for charity, I just thought about using my own power to help the children in impoverished areas. When I saw Master He Zhi’s work, I donated it without a second thought.”

The host couldn’t help but admire, “Miss Sheng Xin is so kind-hearted, caring more for the children than her own loss. It seems you must often help others in your daily life.”

Sheng Xin nodded without hesitation, her signature smile aimed at the booths, wanting everyone to see her kindness. But when her eyes met Gu Dai's, an idea suddenly sprang to her mind.

Sheng Xin said, "There's a particularly popular variety show online recently. One of the artists is under my company. More importantly, I want to mention that I have a collaboration with Miss Gu Dai of Gu's Group for this show."

The host was confused but nodded along.

Sheng Xin continued, "Miss Gu Dai cares even more about charity. Why not have her come up and share what she's contributed to this cause?"

As soon as Sheng Xin spoke, Meng Chuan's face changed, angrily standing up, "It's almost the end of the auction, and she knows you didn't bring anything to auction. She's just trying to embarrass you."

Su Ci's gentle smile vanished, his eyes coldly fixed on Sheng Xin.

Gu Dai remained composed, standing up slowly, "I'll go down and say a few words."

She reassured Su Ci and Meng Chuan, who looked worried, "Don't worry, I can handle it."

Sheng Xin, not expecting Gu Dai to actually take the stage, seized the moment. She grabbed Gu Dai's hand, asking with a smile, "Daidai, what did you donate?"

Gu Dai withdrew her hand, her smile not reaching her eyes, "I don't think our relationship is that close."

Sheng Xin's smile froze, her head lowered in feigned hurt, "Sorry, I thought we were close, but I didn't realize this is how you see me."

Her words swayed the crowd's emotions, especially Mr. Zhang, who had just bought Sheng Xin's donated calligraphy.

Zhang Sheng spoke up, "Gu Dai, even as the Chairwoman of Gu Group, you shouldn't embarrass a girl in public like this. And I remember you didn't donate anything at this charity event. Are you just showing temper to cover your own embarrassment?"

Gu Dai couldn't help but laugh, then spoke calmly, "Although I didn't bring anything to auction, it's still better than someone selling fakes, isn't it?"

Zhang Sheng was taken aback, not immediately grasping the meaning of Gu Dai's words.

Sheng Xin, however, turned pale upon hearing Gu Dai's comment.

Zhang Sheng suddenly reacted, turning to Gu Dai excitedly, "Do you have proof? How dare you say the item I auctioned is fake!"

Chapter 437: Deserve to be Single

Gu Dai shook her head and looked at Zhang Sheng, saying, "I'm not accusing you of selling fakes; rather, I'm suggesting you've bought a fake."

Sheng Xin, in a tone of urgency, retorted, "Gu Dai, do you detest me so much? To falsely accuse me of donating a counterfeit calligraphy work!"

Zhang Sheng added, "Yes, it seems you two don't have a good relationship. I think you're just slandering Miss Sheng Xin."

Gu Dai, with a smile curling at the corner of her mouth, looked unflinchingly at Zhang Sheng and spoke, "I remember you bought quite a few items at this auction. When I mentioned the possibility of fake goods, Sheng Xin reacted so vehemently. Don't you find that odd?"

Zhang Sheng paused, taken aback, and then defended Sheng Xin, “Well, it’s normal for her to misunderstand, since you were talking to Miss Sheng Xin just now.”

Sheng Xin breathed a sigh of relief internally and agreed, “Yes, it’s normal for misunderstandings to arise after hearing your words.”

Sheng Xin thought, now that Zhang Sheng believed her, she could firmly insist that the work was genuine, preventing any exposure of the truth.

Gu Dai, observing Sheng Xin’s relieved expression, approached the host and inquired, “Could I use your big screen for a moment?”

The host, still reeling from the sudden turn of events, nodded subconsciously, “Yes, you can.”

Gu Dai quickly projected several artworks onto the screen, “These are publicly acknowledged works of He Zhi. As you can see, she always signs in the lower right corner.”

Sheng Xin, believing she had anticipated Gu Dai’s tactics, smiled upon hearing her words, “That doesn’t prove anything. The piece I donated also has a signature in the lower right corner.”

Zhang Sheng timely displayed the artwork on the big screen for everyone to see.

Upon seeing this, the crowd nodded and looked at Gu Dai with disdain, unable to resist voicing their condemnation.

“The famed Miss Gu of the Gu family is nothing special after all. I was considering a partnership with the Gu Group, but she seems to be just a pretty face with no brains, easily jealous of others. Not the best choice for collaboration.”

“Yes, indeed, not very impressive.”

“Glad we discovered her true nature early. Otherwise, we’d be in trouble if we were duped by the Gu Group in the future.”

Zhou Ci didn’t believe Gu Dai was one to make baseless accusations. Hearing the crowd’s condemnation, he became anxious and turned to Song Ling, “Think of something, quick!”

Song Ling, calm and collected, replied, “No rush. Let’s wait until she can’t handle it and comes to me for help.”

Zhou Ci thought Song Ling was foolish for missing such an opportunity to support Gu Dai. When would she develop feelings for him if not now?

Moreover, there were other men around Gu Dai. If she needed help, why would she turn to him? And those men might already be offering their assistance.

Zhou Ci, contemplating this, felt his urgent mood gradually settle.

He glanced at Song Ling and couldn’t help but mutter under his breath, “Missing such an opportunity, you deserve to be single.”

Gu Dai, unfazed by the mockery, focused on the screen and spoke with a smile, “Master He Zhi always had a flair in her signatures, making ink splatters a common occurrence.”

Sheng Xin looked at the splattered ink on the signature and laughed, “The work I donated has it too. So, what’s the issue?”

Zhang Sheng also looked and added, “This piece has splattered ink as well, so your point is useless.”

Gu Dai shook her head, “No, the splattered ink reveals a significant issue. It matches exactly with the location of ink splatters in Master He Zhi’s previous works, which is not something that can be controlled manually.”

As she spoke, Gu Dai enlarged and overlaid the images of the ink splatters for a detailed comparison.

Zhang Sheng, incredulous, stepped forward and after a close look, exclaimed in shock, "They match perfectly!"

Gu Dai confirmed, "Exactly. This indicates the signature was copied and pasted, proving the artwork is a counterfeit."

Upon learning the truth, Zhang Sheng's eyes reddened with anger, glaring furiously at Sheng Xin.

Sheng Xin, in a panic, waved her hands, "No, it's not like that, let me explain!"

Chapter 438: Confirmed Fake

Zhang Sheng nodded, "Alright, explain then."

Sheng Xin was taken aback and after a long pause, she finally spoke, "Gu Dai is just slandering me. Maybe she tampered with the screen, causing the images to look identical."

Hearing this, the host quickly debunked the claim, "Our big screen has no issues. We ensure fairness and integrity in all our events."

Sheng Xin, almost reflexively, accused the host, "Are you bribed by Gu Dai?" The host's expression soured instantly, his gaze towards Sheng Xin was no longer friendly.

Gu Dai spoke calmly, "There's no need to wrongfully accuse others when you're out of options. As for your claim that I'm framing you, it's completely baseless." Sheng Xin scoffed, "Just because you say it's baseless, does it make it so?"

Gu Dai responded, “Master He Zhi’s works are available online. If you doubt me, you can search for yourself and see if they match exactly.”

Sheng Xin, her retort halted, opened her mouth but found herself at a loss for words.

Zhang Sheng, after repeatedly comparing on his phone and confirming the match, angrily demanded, “Refund my money, now! I spent a whole 800 million, and it turns out to be a fake!”

With that, he set out to confront the organizers.

The organizers approached Sheng Xin, “What is going on here?”

Sheng Xin, feeling extremely embarrassed, especially aware of the shift from admiration to disdain in people’s eyes, foresaw the impact her actions would have on her company.

Sheng Xin explained, “This piece was sourced by my assistant. I don’t know much about calligraphy, so I was unaware it was a counterfeit. I’m sorry for the negative impact this has caused.”

Upon her admission, the organizers refunded the 800 million to Zhang Sheng. The crowd erupted into discussion again, but this time, the condemnation shifted from Gu Dai to Sheng Xin.

“Does this mean the piece Sheng Xin auctioned was indeed a fake?”

“Obviously, why else would the organizers refund Zhang Sheng?”

“I don’t think it’s Sheng Xin’s fault. After all, it was her assistant’s mistake, and she was unaware.”

“Brother, you’re too naive to believe Sheng Xin. She’s clearly making her assistant take the fall. In reality, she must have known it was fake, just relying on our ignorance.”



“Exactly, we need to be cautious in future dealings with Sheng Xin’s company. I’m getting angrier the more I think about it. Just now, I condemned the Gu Group because I believed her. What if they refuse to work with me now?” “It’s all because Sheng Xin misled us!”

Sheng Xin, her face unsightly, couldn’t resist taking a jab at Gu Dai, “I auctioned a fake unknowingly, but you don’t even have the heart to help the impoverished.”

Gu Dai met Sheng Xin’s gaze, “Actually, I intended to auction something, but seeing you had already presented a piece by Master He Zhi, I refrained. Since you mentioned it, I might as well bring it out now.”

The crowd pondered the possibility upon hearing Gu Dai’s words.

Song Ling sat up, instinctively murmuring, “Could Gu Dai possess a genuine piece by Master He Zhi?”

As the charity banquet staff brought something onstage, Gu Dai lifted the cloth, “This is the piece with a signature identical to your auctioned work, but mine is authentic.”

Sheng Xin felt as if the word “authentic” had slapped her across the face.

Zhang Sheng, upon seeing the piece, exclaimed, “No wonder Miss Gu Dai knew the ‘He’s Preface’ was fake. She’s well-versed in Master He Zhi’s works.”

After saying this, he quickly apologized and bowed, “I’m sorry for my rashness earlier, for judging you without knowing the facts. I hope you won’t hold it against me.”

Gu Dai was unbothered, “It’s fine.”

Zhang Sheng sighed in relief.

As the auction of Master He Zhi's calligraphy began, the pieces, each a masterpiece, instantly ignited fierce bidding.

Sheng Xin, her face even more unsightly, seized the moment when the attention was diverted from her, hastily gathered her things, and left the charity banquet. She then dialed her assistant to vent her frustration..

#### Chapter 439: Didn't Spend Your Money

Sheng Xin angrily declared on the phone, "I'm telling you, you're fired!"

The assistant, bewildered by the scolding and sudden dismissal, suppressed his anger and asked, "Why?"

Sheng Xin sneered, "I asked you to get a fake, but who told you to directly copy the signature from the internet? Do you realize how much face I've lost? Do you understand the impact your actions have had on the company?"

Now that he was fired, the assistant held back no longer, "It was you who didn't want to give to the impoverished areas and insisted on finding a fake. Now we're in this mess! Besides, this doomed company has no future anyway. I'm telling you, I don't want to work here anymore."

Sheng Xin, fuming, threw her phone to the ground after the call ended.

Sheng Xin vowed, "How dare a mere employee lecture me? I swear you won't find a job anywhere in the country!"

The recent drama also made people realize how precious Master He Zhi's calligraphy works were, resulting in the final auction price doubling.

Su Ci looked at Gu Dai in amazement, "Daidai, you actually know about this, and you could tell the real from the fake at a glance. That's incredible."

After all, such discernment was not something ordinary people possessed.

Gu Dai chuckled lightly, "I'm not that amazing. I just happen to be familiar with this calligrapher."

Su Ci shook his head, "Even with understanding, most people can't do it. The fake was very convincing. I looked closely and didn't find anything amiss."

Meng Chuan laughed, explaining, "Master He Zhi and Daidai's father were old friends. He gave her quite a few of his works. The piece Sheng Xin brought out had been given to Daidai when she turned 18 and is still kept at home."

Su Ci nodded in realization, "I see!"

After the auction, the trio headed out of the box to settle the payment for the items they bought.

Gu Dai stopped Meng Chuan and Su Ci's attempt to pay for her, smiling, "I brought money today, let me pay. When I can't afford it in the future, you guys can pay then."

Despite Gu Dai's words, Meng Chuan and Su Ci insisted.

Meng Chuan said, "I brought money too."

Su Ci followed, "When we can't pay in the future, you can pay then."

As Song Ling emerged from the box, he saw this scene, his expression turning sour, "Gu Dai."

Gu Dai, recognizing Song Ling's voice, frowned irritably, not wanting to engage with him.

Song Ling, noticing Gu Dai's changing expression, clenched his fists and said irritably, "The things you bought exceed their actual value. Even if you dislike Sheng Xin and want to outdo her, you shouldn't spend so much in a fit of emotion."

Gu Dai looked at Song Ling, retorting, "You and I have no relationship, barely acquaintances, so what right do you have to lecture me?"

Song Ling stiffened, finally managing to say, "We are business partners."

Gu Dai replied, "As a business partner, you're overstepping. How much I spend is my choice. I'm not using your money, and if I'm not mistaken, this is a charity banquet. Spending more is my way of helping the impoverished."

Song Ling watched Gu Dai walk away, unable to find a response.

Meng Chuan looked at Song Ling, calmly stating, "Even if it wasn't a charity banquet, I, as her older brother, would support Daidai's spending. I wouldn't blame her. So, you, an outsider, should mind your own business and not interfere in others' affairs."

Su Ci remained silent, only giving Song Ling a few seconds of her gaze before leaving.

Zhou Ci, observing Song Ling's stunned expression, shook his head disdainfully, once again feeling that Gu Dai had been blind to have ever seen something in him.

Meng Chuan caught up with Gu Dai, seeing her silent and seemingly heartbroken, quickly comforted her, "Daidai, don't let such people affect your mood."

Gu Dai, lost in thought, let out a soft "Ah" and quickly clarified, "I'm just a bit hungry, thinking about what to eat later."

As she finished speaking, her stomach growled on cue.

Su Ci and Meng Chuan both breathed a sigh of relief.

After checking his phone, Meng Chuan suggested, "There's a new restaurant nearby that looks good."

Gu Dai agreed, "Then let's go there."

Upon arriving, Gu Dai had just gotten out of the car when she suddenly heard Su Ting's voice and saw him quickly approaching her..

Chapter 440:1 Can Manage

Gu Dai looked at Su Ting, surprised, and asked, "What brings you here?"

Su Ting replied with a smile, "I ran into Fu Nan after my event. He had just finished the variety show and has been eating vegetarian to maintain his physique, so I thought I'd take him out for a better meal."

After answering, he glanced at Gu Dai and then at Su Ci and Meng Chuan behind her, asking in confusion, "Sis, what's this about?"

Gu Dai explained, "We just left the charity banquet. I felt hungry afterwards, so since we bumped into each other, let's get a private room and eat together."

Su Ting quickly agreed, "Okay."

The guests from the variety show, recognizing Gu Dai as an investor, stood by respectfully, saying, "Hello, I..."

Gu Dai reassured them with a smile, "It's alright, I don't bite. No need to be nervous."

After her words, everyone relaxed and began to eat heartily, having restrained themselves for a long time.

Fu Nan approached Gu Dai with a glass of wine, his face flushed, and whispered, "Miss Gu Dai, thank you for giving me the opportunity to return to the screen and reminding everyone of me."

Gu Dai raised her glass too, smiling, "It's fine. The main thing is you were willing to work hard, and that's why you have today's success."

Su Ting, seeing Gu Dai's wine glass, came over and said, "Sis, drinking too much isn't good for you. Don't drink too much."

Gu Dai nodded, "Don't worry, I know my limits."

Su Ting was still concerned, but seeing Gu Dai's bright smile, he didn't want to dampen her spirits, so he held back his caution.

Everyone chatted excitedly, drinking until the early morning.

Su Ci, looking at the tipsy Su Ting, asked, "Where are you staying now? I'll take you home."

Su Ting, shaking his head and seeing Gu Dai's figure, staggered towards her and hugged her, slurring, "I'll... I'll go back with my Sis!"

Gu Dai smiled helplessly and told Su Ci, "Su Ting is staying at my place now. I'll take him home."

Su Ci acknowledged, "Alright."

Su Ting leaned on Gu Dai's shoulder in the car, rubbing his shoulder uncomfortably, probably feeling unwell from too many drinks.

Gu Dai, feeling the night breeze, said with resignation, "It seems I need to keep an eye on you and make sure you drink less in the future."

After Gu Dai and her group left, two paparazzi hidden in nearby bushes started talking.

Paparazzo 1 said, "We're so lucky to have found out who the Gu family's young miss is and then immediately snapped photos of her dining with a man."

Paparazzo 2 replied, "Yeah, I can already imagine the buzz on the internet when we post these photos. I can't think about it too much, or I'll get too carried away."

After the car stopped, Gu Dai gently called out, "Su Ting, wake up, we're home."

Su Ting's eyes cleared up a bit, and he nodded groggily, "Mhmm."

Gu Dai asked with concern, "Can you make it to your room on your own?"

Su Ting looked at Gu Dai blankly, nodding, "I can."

Looking around, he asked confusedly, "Which one is my room?"

Gu Dai sighed, "I'll take you to your room."

After escorting Su Ting to his bedroom, Gu Dai asked, "Can you manage to shower by yourself?"

Su Ting paused, then blushed, looking down and mumbling, "I... I can. Sis, you can go rest in your room. I'm a bit more sober now."

Gu Dai watched as a flustered Su Ting entered the bathroom. Ten minutes later, she heard the door open.

She turned her head and blurted out in surprise, “Why aren’t you dressed?”

Su Ting, equally startled, tightened the towel around his waist, then quickly grabbed pajamas from the wardrobe and returned to the bathroom to change. Coming back out with a flushed face, he apologized, “Sorry, I thought you had left, so I just came out with the towel. I...”

Gu Dai cleared her throat, banishing the mental image of Su Ting’s abs, and said with feigned calm, “I was worried you might have an accident since you’re drunk. Since you’re okay, I’ll leave now.”

She hurried out of Su Ting’s room, nearly tripping in her agitated state.

Su Ting, concerned, offered, “Sis, let me walk you.”

Gu Dai, now associating Su Ting with the memory of his abs, quickly refused, “No need, I can manage!”