

## Loving 1441

### Chapter 1441. Another Year has Passed 2

The Lunar New Year was just around the corner, and it was time for all the people who were working in the cities and far away from their hometowns to travel back home. It was early in the morning of the Lunar New Year Eve, and the whole city was almost empty, so it was a lot more spacious compared to a normal day.

In Maple Residence, after grabbing their breakfast, the husband and wife, Mu Yuchen and Xi Xiaye went to the cemetery to offer their prayers to their grandma, Wang Hui. After the worshipping session, they departed to the Shen residence and planned to have their lunch there before heading back to the Mu's.

Shen Wenna had been preparing the ingredients since early morning while Xi Mushan was also there lending a hand. Meanwhile, Shen Yue was in a good mood and was writing couplets with his great-grandson, Mu Zirui, just beside him, practicing his calligraphy with a tiny brush.

When the couple carried Xiao Cheng back to the Shen residence, Shen Yue had already finished writing a few couplets. Upon seeing Mu Yuchen arriving, he passed his brush to him and asked him to showcase some of his skills.

Not wanting to ruin the aesthetic atmosphere, Xi Xiaye left Xiao Cheng who was fast asleep on the sofa just beside the two men. She covered him with a blanket and ordered the duo to keep an eye on him, and she went straight into the kitchen.

In the kitchen, Shen Wenna and Xi Mushan were preparing the fish. He was plating up while she was making the seasoning. All their actions showed that they were operating with tacit understanding.

Xi Xiaye wanted to walk straight in, but after a moment of dilemma, she decided to abort her plan.

"What happened?" As she took a few steps backward, Mu Yuchen just arrived in the kitchen for a glass of warm water.

"Nah, it's nothing. Let's just leave them to their chores," Xi Xiaye chimed.

She extended her arm to grab the glass from him and drank a few mouthfuls. Then, she continued, “I heard from Mrs. Wu that they have been getting along really well. The news was quite a relief to me. Also, Grandpa isn’t as gloomy as he was in the past. Look at where he is now. It’s not an easy achievement.”

She took a glance into the kitchen as she was speaking. After studying those silhouettes that were occupied by chores, she then turned to Mu Yuchen and gazed at him without uttering another word.

Mu Yuchen looked at her casually while taking his glass back, then asked, “Do you want more?”

“Nah, it’s almost time. Let’s put on the couplets. I see that Xiao Rui’s calligraphy is looking neat and clean.” She moved towards Shen Yue’s direction while saying so. At the exact moment, Mu Zirui laid his brush aside and pulled Shen Yue’s shirt to ask his opinion about his handwriting. With that light yank, Shen Yue looked at him with a smile.

“He has been learning from his grandpa for quite some time already. I see that he has been able to come up with a few words here and there. Calligraphy does depend on one’s mentality. It’s a practice that promotes self-cultivation, and it’ll uplift his mind and spirit,” Mu Yuchen commented in his bold voice.

Having heard that, Xi Xiaye burst into laughter. “Is there anything that has nothing to do with mentality when it comes to you? You just can’t change your habit of looking into the minds of others, huh? I’m not like you, and we’ve discussed this already. We won’t force the kids into things that they don’t like. I don’t care much about the self-motivation rubbish. I just want them to have a happy and relaxed childhood, and we parents play a big role when it comes to that. In fact, we’ll only need to be a good example for them, and we shouldn’t impose too many concepts and ideas on them.”

“A wise choice, Missus! But since when have you picked up such deep and profound feelings about this matter? I thought you were still worried about this a while ago.” He stared at her in astonishment, and the corners of his lips raised into a slight curve.

However, she returned his smile with her signature roll of the eyes and said, “You’re the only one whom I’ll allow to have such thoughts! I have always believed that a mediocre life isn’t a bad one to live in. Ordinary people achieving ordinary goals isn’t bad either. Of course, self-motivation is a good thing to nurture in our kids. However, I have been thinking that I will be content as long as they are healthy, safe, and are capable of leading a happy life. You should know me. I am a woman of no will.”

“What fighting spirit do you need? Leave that to the men,” he agreed with her, “If not, you’ll be exhausted. Do you think all those competent women truly love sitting on the top of the food chain?”

He seemed to understand the feelings of such women too.

“They surely don’t like it, but they’re forced into acceptance. Who wouldn’t want to be a smart, elegant, and gorgeous-looking woman? I was once a tough woman with a proud spine, but I have lost everything ever since I started dating you.”

“A tough woman with an arrogant spine? Back then? Oh please, you’ve always been a soft lady. Tough women carry pails single-handedly. They wear shorts and flip-flops on the streets during summer. Do you have the guts to do so? You should know that the phrase ‘tough woman’ is a compliment.”

“Are you implying that the phrase and I don’t go well together?” Xi Xiaye frowned as soon as she heard his comment and she gave him the cold shoulder.

Upon seeing that, Mu Yuchen raised his eyebrows, smirked faintly, and continued, “Your IQ and EQ have improved extensively recently, huh? A woman of your standard can only match mine.”

Xi Xiaye was left speechless...

When they were done hanging the couplets and washing their hands, it was already a few minutes past four in the evening. Around the same time, Shen Wenna and Xi Mushan came out from the kitchen with dinner, so the whole family sat down in a circle and had an early reunion dinner.

Shen Yue was in a great mood, and he had a few drinks more than he should with Xi Mushan and Mu Yuchen. After all, his spirits were high up in the sky.

Shen Wenna and Xi Mushan were very delighted too. It seemed that it had been a long time since the last time everybody sat down in such a relaxed atmosphere and had dinner together. Getting together was rare nowadays.

After dinner, the mother and daughter were in the kitchen, doing the dishes. "Xiaye, do remember to express my gratitude to Ah Chen. After all these years, I've been truly blessed and satisfied. Your dad and I were talking about you two last night. It's not easy for you both, especially having to take care of us and everything else in the Xi family."

Speaking of this, Shen Wenna paused in the middle of rinsing the dishes, and after a short while, she turned to Xi Xiaye, who was quietly doing the dishes. She stared at her and said, "Frankly speaking, if it wasn't because of you, your father and I might not have started all over again. Ever since that incident, I have been reflecting on myself..."

"You have been a great mother. At least, to me, you're up there on the scoreboard. I may not have always been able to understand the reason why you were so cold and distant to me, but after that, I discovered that you were also...In short, I'm grateful to have you as my mother. You haven't raised me to be an extremist. Mother, you have a kind heart, and based on that alone, I admire and respect you with all my heart."

"In most cases, human beings will only achieve an epiphany after experiencing all the ups and downs. However, the price that I had to pay was so hefty that I sincerely hope that you won't encounter a similar experience. In your case, it's best if you and Ah Chen can stay in love and accompany each other for the rest of your lives. Xiao Rui and Xiao Cheng will eventually grow up and leave you both just like the day you left me."

"Accompany each other till the end of days? Mother, does that mean that you are in love with Father all over again?" After listening to what Shen Wenna had to say, Xi Xiaye stopped her actions, smiled, and with those hopeful eyes, she shot her mother that question.

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When Xi Xiaye asked that question, Shen Wenna fell silent.

After a while, she replied, "When you reach our age, you'll understand that we don't talk about love anymore. We just stay on and live our lives together. You know, I've told you since you were young that like me, some women aren't made to just live their whole lives with their me. If I had cried and fought with your father, things may not have ended like this now."

"Xiaye, no matter what happens, as women, we have to stay calm. Our mentality is also equally important. I hope you'll try your best to be an intellectual and intelligent woman."

Although Shen Wenna had spoken about these thoughts to her before, she had never really instilled them in Xi Xiaye.

“Especially when you get older, as a woman, you should have your own space and a life of your own. Women can’t care as much as what you’re doing now. Although I know that Ah Chen treats you well.. .”

“He’s not the same as Father and the other guys. I’m not you either, so I do believe in him. He’s a good man,” Xi Xiaye defended her man before Shen Wenna could finish speaking.

Shen Wenna smiled as she merely listened. She watched her daughter frown in dissatisfaction and said calmly, “I didn’t say anything about him. Look at you being so protective!”

“I just can’t stand it when people say that he’s not a good man,” Xi Xiaye murmured.

As they said, beauty was in the eye of the beholder. “I remember you telling me about the qualities of an ideal husband before. In fact, he fits the bill perfectly. He’s a gentleman who is also like a close friend, a father, and a brother to me. He can give me a sense of security that no one else ever has. Sometimes, I wish I can just keep him by my side at all times.”

Shen Wenna laughed out loud when she heard that, and she gently said, “Your father and I were like this in our early years. You love him deeply, Xiaye, and he loves you just as much. You can tell whether a man loves you or not from the way he looks at you. Relationships that grow gradually are actually the strongest. I wouldn’t have wanted both of you to have a wild, passionate relationship right from the start, or else, after going through long periods of learning and maturing, many of your initial perceptions of each other will change.”

“Actually, it’s also because I’m lucky. If it was another man, it may not have been like this.”

“Your temperament has changed a lot after marriage. For instance, your stubbornness.”

“Well, that’s also because I’m older now...”

“True, we’re all mothers now.”

Xi Xiaye could finally talk to Shen Wenna about topics like these naturally, and the relationship between mother and daughter became much more harmonious.

After spending time together for a while, there was a call from the Mu family, asking if they were on their way back, so they finally got up and left.

“What did you and your mother talk about in the kitchen just now? I didn’t know that washing a few dishes and chopsticks could take half an hour,” Mu Yuchen asked the woman beside him while playing with his son, who was sitting on his lap, as they were in the car back to the Mu family’s old residence.

Xi Xiaye gently held her elder son, Mu Zirui, with her slender arms while fixing his cufflinks with one hand. When she heard the question, she tilted her head and glanced at him. “It’s a secret between us women.”

He looked at her with a smirk and said, “You don’t even need to tell me because you and your mom always talk about Father, me, or Grandfather. When your mother came out just now, she had this look on her face, so I guess you must have been talking about me.”

Master Mu’s jet black eyes looked like they were full of wisdom, and sometimes his attentiveness could be quite admirable.

“It’s scary that I can never hide what’s on my mind. Zirui, you’d better not show too much emotion in front of your father in the future. He’ll figure out everything that’s in your heart, and there will be no secrets and privacy,” Xi Xiaye said.

“Father doesn’t have X-ray vision, so how can he see what you’re thinking about, Mother?” Little Mu Zirui curiously turned to look at Mu Yuchen and Xi Xiaye as he raised his head. His gaze wandered between them.

“Because Father and Mother can read each other’s minds.” Mu Yuchen grinned while stretching his big hand out and touching Mu Zirui’s head.

“Read each other’s minds?” Mu Zirui asked after thinking for a while.

As the night crept in quietly, the empty streets of City Z were immersed in bright lights.

City Z was no longer caught up in the hustle and bustle of the New Year. It had become quiet now. Since it was New Year's Eve, every household was probably having their reunion dinner at home.

It was evident that everyone had gone back to celebrate the New Year as most of the shops on both sides of the streets were closed. It was certainly difficult to find a place just to have dinner.

Qi Lei drove the car aimlessly, not knowing where he could go. It was supposed to be very lively during the New Year though he had nothing to do with all the festivities.

He drove down the street for a long time, but when he saw the intersection ahead, he immediately turned left out of habit. The library was not too far ahead, so he thought about going in and maybe reading some books to kill time. However, when he got closer to the library, he suddenly remembered that today was New Year's Eve, thus the library was obviously closed as well.

He raised his head and looked inside. It was dark as he expected with only some shadows and light reflected from the surrounding cars and streetlights.

He sighed in annoyance and sat quietly in the car for a long time. In the end, he could only continue driving forward and turn around at the front intersection.

Traffic was quite pleasant at this time, and it was relatively quiet. There was a park behind the library where people in City Z often went to rest and relax, so the environment was nice and quiet though the traffic on weekdays could be quite busy. If it was not for New Year's Eve today, there might still be a traffic jam at this hour, but it was now smooth.

After driving for a while, Qi Lei turned the car around skillfully. However, when the car had just passed the pedestrian crossing, a red figure on the stairs in front of a building next to the road immediately caught his eye!

He froze for a moment, then pulled up at the side of the road. He parked under a tree as he wanted to see the figure clearly under the street lights.

Sure enough, with the dim street lamp, he could clearly see the woman coming down the stairs.

She casually wore her long hair up as she was dressed in a red coat, a black bodycon dress, and a pair of black knee-high boots while holding a black briefcase in her hand...

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Who else could that graceful figure be but Dongfang Liuyun? It seemed like she had just finished work too!

Despite already being New Year's Eve, this woman was still busy working at the research lab. Did she have to work so hard?

Her steps were extremely resounding and settled as she soon walked down the flight of stairs.

From what Qi Lei remembered, Dongfang Liuyun seemed to have always been like this. She would always exude that frank aura on her, even from the way she walked. However, behind this frankness, there was an air of mystery that she carried.

His gaze slowly followed her movements, and when she turned at the corner and was about to walk across the pedestrian crossing, he suddenly honked.

The sudden sound surprised Dongfang Liuyun, so she subconsciously turned around and looked behind her. Under the dim streetlights, she could see Qi Lei who sat in the car while he had lowered his window to wave at her.

Dongfang Liuyun quietly watched him for a moment, then walked up to him.

She walked over to the car in a few steps, then steadily stopped. She lifted a hand to knock on the car window. Qi Lei quickly wound down his entire window to turn to look at her as his handsome face widened with a rare smile.

"Why are you here?" Dongfang Liuyun asked calmly.



Qi Lei raised his handsome brows and smiled. "Miss Dongfang, it seems like every time we meet, this is the dialogue we start with. Can we come up with something new?"

Dongfang Liuyun had her hands on her hips as she looked at him indifferently. She thought about it for a moment then continued, "It's New Year's Eve, so obviously, I'm a little surprised."

"You realize it's New Year's Eve too?" he immediately asked her, "Why are you still here so late at night? I'm sure your research center wouldn't be so mean as to force you to work overtime on a holiday, would it?"

"I came here to get some documents. Since we're going to be on break, I wanted to bring them home to look into them."

Qi Lei paused before asking finally, "You...aren't you going to go home for New Year's Eve family dinner with your parents?"

Dongfang Liuyun's gaze paused for a moment, her expression remained calm and indifferent, yet she did not answer Qi Lei's question either.

"If you aren't rushing to get home, let's hang out then. Going into the New Year like this is quite lonely," said Qi Lei as he watched her silently.

Dongfang Liuyun thought about it, then pulled open the car door to get in. Qi Lei took her briefcase to put on the seat behind. He then pointed at the safety belt, indicating for her to buckle up.

Dongfang Liuyun quietly fastened the safety belt while Qi Lei then started the car and drove ahead.

As she leisurely played music on the radio, she leaned back against the car seat.

The radio played a very low and raspy alluring voice.

'In the wind, the cold winds of the heart, dreams were lost; before it could pass, it was lost...'

As she listened, Dongfang Liuyun closed her eye. Although her pale face seemed tired, her slender fingers intertwined as they laid on her lap, and she looked quite relaxed. The car window beside her was still wound down. With the cool breeze, Qi Lei could clearly get a whiff of her faint fragrance.

He did not drive quickly either and they just sat in silence.

When she sensed that they had driven for quite a while, Dongfang Liuyun finally asked softly to break the silence, "Where are we going?"

"Where do you want to go?" Qi Lei asked softly in return while his gaze remained focused ahead.

Dongfang Liuyun then lifted a hand to the space between her brows and calmed herself down before responding, "It's quite hard to find a place to eat right now. Since there's nowhere we can go, I'll bring you somewhere."

"Where?" Qi Lei turned to look at her, puzzled.

Dongfang Liuyun slowly opened her eyes. "Park aside and let me drive."

Upon hearing that, Qi Lei was stunned for a moment, but he snapped back to his senses quite quickly and silently parked the car aside.

The two of them swiftly switched places. Dongfang Liuyun drove while Qi Lei sat in the front passenger seat.

She swiftly made a turn with the car, and they started driving towards the north of the city.

They did not get stuck in any traffic jam since the roads were smooth, and after about half an hour, the car finally stopped at the entrance of a hot spring bath center.

The center looked like it was decorated quite lavishly, but it did not lose its elegance. From the looks of it alone, you could tell it was one of those higher-end recreational centers.

Qi Lei used to frequent this place, but in the past two years, he rarely stepped foot into it. Furthermore, he was a VIP diamond guest at this place!

What a coincidence!

Did Dongfang Liuyun frequent this place too?

She seemed quite familiar with it!

It was a one-stop service inside, and it was quite surprising that it was not closed on New Year's Eve.

The car stopped steadily in front of the entrance, and the valet attendant immediately went up to open the car door respectfully. When he saw who it was inside, he was stunned for a moment. Then, he greeted courteously, "Master Qi! Miss Dongfang! You're both here!"

When the valet attendant greeted them as such, Dongfang Liuyun was surprised. She looked at Qi Lei in astonishment. Was he a regular here as well?

Qi Lei only responded to her with a smile before getting down from the car.

Dongfang Liuyun swiftly got down and tossed the car keys to the attendant before she walked after him.

There were not many people at the center. The fact that Qi Lei and Dongfang Liuyun had turned up at this time surprised the attendants, and even the manager felt the same, but they dared not say much. They only quickly smiled and went up to them.

"Master Qi! Miss Dongfang! Long time no see!"

Before the manager could finish, Qi Lei had already spoken up while Dongfang Liuyun stood aside quietly with an exceptionally indifferent expression, "Enough nonsense. One-stop service as always, and I hope I don't see any news that shouldn't be showing up."

The manager who stood beside them could vaguely feel the chill that Dongfang Liuyun emitted.

"Yes, yes, yes! I understand. I got it! Master Qi, Miss Dongfang, this way please!" The manager brought the two of them to the suite that Qi Lei had previously booked for the whole year.

It was a relaxing and elegant room meant to replicate the antiquities.

They ordered some drinks and dishes, which were delivered efficiently. Soon, the table was covered with delicious-looking dishes. Qi Lei and Dongfang Liuyun sat on opposite sides.

"Master Qi, we've recently got a few new Japanese female singers who are pretty good. They're skilled in all sorts of musical instruments too. Would you like them to come play some songs for you to add to the fun?"

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"Get them to come over," Qi Lei spoke casually while he picked up the slightly warmed jug from the stove and poured a glass for Dongfang Liuyun before getting some for himself too.

Qi Lei raised his glass and stared silently at the glass which was full of wine as he spoke in his bold voice, "This is the most desolate year that I've ever had. Without any thoughts or expectations, I'm just sitting down here in peace and drinking this wine." As soon as he was done speaking, he lifted his head and emptied the glass within two gulps. At the same time, it was not hard to capture the hint of melancholy on his attractive face.

Dongfang Liuyun gazed at him without uttering a word. After she watched him place the empty glass aside, she reached for the jug and refilled his glass.

"While your circumstances might still be the same year after year, your companion has changed. Let your obsessions go. God didn't grant you life just for you to waste it wallowing in self-pity. You have to actualize the value of your existence. As for the intangible that's beyond our control, we can only take it

as it comes.” Her delicate voice was like a cool breeze brushing through a bamboo forest, and listening to her brought one into a trance.

Dongfang Liuyun’s eyes lost its shine in an instant as she lectured Qi Lei, and he seemed to have failed to capture a glimpse of any emotions that were lingering in her dark pupils.

She also picked up her wine and made a gesture of proposing a toast. Then, she gulped the whole glass in one go. As soon as the warm wine entered her stomach, a gush of warmth swept through her body, making the chill wrapping her body gradually dissipate, and her whole body started to feel flushed.

Just as Dongfang Liuyun finished talking, Qi Lei paused for a moment. He then turned his head and glanced at her. Before he could say something, there was already the sound of doors opening from outside. Then, rhythmic footsteps produced by clogs knocking against the floor rang out through the shivering cold air and reached the duo.

From outside the bead curtain in front of them, the footsteps continued as the soft and gentle voices of a few women in Japanese were heard. “Hello there, our distinguished guests!”

“Just play us a few songs on the other side of the curtain. You don’t have to come all the way in.” Those women had not even finished what they were saying when Qi Lei’s calm and detached voice was projected from behind the curtain. The three gorgeous ladies in kimonos stopped walking towards the next room, exchanged glances, then found themselves a spot to sit down.

“Wow, I didn’t know you speak Japanese.” Dongfang Liuyun stared at Qi Lei in awe.

Qi Lei chuckled while extending his arm to pour Dongfang Liuyun some wine. “This is nothing. I’m pretty good at picking up new languages. I’ve dabbled in Japanese, German, French, and also Spanish, so I have no problem holding a simple conversation in them.”

“So, you love languages, huh? If not, you wouldn’t have the determination to learn them,” she said with a wide smile.

“I thought you’re also an expert in languages.” Qi Lei had not forgotten about the information regarding Dongfang Liuyun that Yang Sheng had extracted through his investigation.

“I learned all those languages because of my love for archeology and my passion for the history of the world’s civilization because the studies require me to pick a native language or two. If you were to ask me to study those languages just by themselves, I wouldn’t be able to do it,” Dongfang Liuyun responded softly.

So, that was why he felt that she always radiated an aura full of elegance and mystery. At that moment, he thought that it might have something to do with her job.

“I’ve heard about your legend, Dongfang Liuyun.” He lowered his eyes while his tone was calm, but there was a smile on his face.

“What about me is so legendary? Is it me being a genius in archeology? Or the scholar during my years in school?” Dongfang Liuyun listened and smirked. The smile on her face contained a hint of disdain.

“When I was studying abroad, my lecturers didn’t let me pass several courses during my freshman and sophomore years, so I had to give up a few treasures just to win them over. My late grandfather was a well-known archaeologist expert in the world, and even my father was in the antique business. I’ve just been exposed to and intrigued by these things since I was a child as a newbie whose predecessors were stepping stones. That’s all.”

Listening to her, Qi Lei was a little perplexed and he paused for a second. It turned out that these days, there were still people who exposed their own shortcomings in front of others, huh?

“From my point of view, that isn’t something worth parading. Some people are just inherently unsuitable for wearing big names, for example, someone like me.”

“Why? Aren’t you belittling yourself?” he asked in surprise.

Dongfang Liuyun smiled cheerfully and finished the glass of wine while listening to the sweet and tuneful melody from the other side of the curtain. “It’s because I wish to lead a simple life, and live freely.”

Having heard that statement, Qi Lei burst into laughter and raised his glass. "So, you're saying that what limits ourselves is this!" At the same time, he pointed his finger at his chest.

Dongfang Liuyun did not reply to that while she refilled the glasses.

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Unlike Qi Lei and Dongfang Liuyun who were lonesome at that moment, the Mu residence was very lively.

Large, red lanterns were hung at the gates, and there was also a row of lanterns strung up neatly along the corridor in the courtyard. The Mus were sitting together in the boisterous atmosphere, having their New Year's Eve dinner.

After the dinner, the whole family, including the youngsters and the elderly, cuddled together on the sofas, watching the Lunar New Year festival gala on television.

The floor in the living room was covered with a thick, soft non-slip carpet, and the space was so warm that walking barefoot in the living room would not send chills up one's feet. Xiao Cheng was holding onto the sofa and walking from one side to the other on his bare feet. His tiny body did not seem to feel tired at all although he had not stopped ever since waking up from his nap. He had been busy playing with his toys too.

Mu Yinan liked it a lot naturally. He hugged the little kid from time to time, and let him sit on his thighs, then teased him merrily. Soon, the living room was filled with Xiao Cheng's loud, innocent laughter.

Boom!

Boom! Boom!

Loud noises were heard coming from outside, and they were followed by colorful and dramatic light streams in the sky. The whole family looked out of the French windows subconsciously.

Beautiful fireworks burst and bloomed one after another in the distant sky while the cheers of the people in the neighborhood could also be heard faintly.

“Father, Mother, I want to go outside and play firecrackers too. Didn’t the butler buy quite a lot of fireworks? Can I play, please?” Mu Xiaorui was excited as he begged.

Xi Xiaye, who was walking into the living room with a freshly prepared platter of fruit, paused for a while and reminded him in an uneasy tone, “Go but be careful and alert. Those things are dangerous, so you have to be cautious, alright?”

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Xi Xiaye then turned to look at the man who was drinking a cup of tea beside her and pursed her lips. “Let the butler go with him. It’s too dangerous,” she said.

Mu Yuchen lowered his head and had a sip of tea. He raised his gaze and looked at both of them before beckoning to the housekeeper who immediately stepped forward.

“Yes, Master!”

“Take Xiao Rui to play with the fireworks. Be careful. It’s really dangerous,” Mu Yuchen instructed in a hoarse voice.

The butler quickly nodded and replied, “Yes, Master, don’t worry.”

He turned to look at Mu Zirui after speaking and he could see that the kid was really excited. “Master Xiao Rui, let’s go. The servants have already set up the fireworks outside.”

“Okay, thank you, Father, Mother. Thank you, Uncle Butler!” Mu Zirui said excitedly as he rushed outside like a flying swallow.

As Xi Xiaye looked at the little figure that disappeared through the doorway, her beautiful face became a little gentler. She quietly took a deep breath, and just when she was about to look away, she suddenly felt something tugging on her skirt lightly. When she looked down, she realised it was Xiao Cheng pulling



the corner of her skirt. He was hugging her leg with his little hands while raising his head to look at her with his bright eyes. He had a sweet smile on his adorable face.

His eyes welled up when he noticed Xi Xiaye looking at him. Then, he suddenly reached out to her for a hug.

“Mama...hug...Mama...hug...” Mu Zicheng’s pronunciation was quite clear, and she remembered that it was actually his birthday today, but because it was also New Year’s Eve, she had intentionally arranged his birthday celebration to be the next day instead.

Xi Xiaye’s heart softened and she quickly bent over to pick him up. The little guy meekly hugged her neck, wriggled into her arms, and turned his head to see Mu Yuchen smiling at him and Xi Xiaye. His bright eyes flickered and he immediately reached out to Mu Yuchen.

“Dada...hug...”

Xi Xiaye smiled when she heard him calling out for Mu Yuchen. She grabbed his little hand and kissed him. “Hey, little guy, how can you change your mind so quickly?”

However, Mu Zicheng completely ignored her. He kept looking at Mu Yuchen and reached out his hands towards him, insisting that his father hold him.

Everyone could not help laughing when they saw the situation.

Mu Yuchen finally reached out and hugged him. He lowered his head and kissed his little cheek lovingly. “Let Father hear you say that again. Come on, say ‘Dada’...” he said softly in his low voice.

“Dada...” Mu Zicheng said immediately after he heard Mu Yuchen.

Mu Yuchen could feel his heart melt. He quickly took him into his arms and said with a faint smile, “You can listen and understand me now. When you grow older and can actually start walking, your mother and I will worry less then.”

“This little kid changes every day and he’s growing up so fast, aren’t you, Xiao Cheng? Come here. Let Grandma hold you...” Zhuang Shurong also pampered Mu Zicheng a lot, especially since she had more time now that the court did not have that many matters. She always helped take care of Mu Zicheng when she had the time, so she also had a rather close relationship with him.

Mu Yuchen handed Mu Zicheng over, and it only took a while before Mu Zicheng started playing with Mu Tangchuan and Zhuang Shurong.

Xi Xiaye quietly watched them with a smile on her face, but she suddenly turned her head and looked out of the window when she heard a bang!

Against the silent, dark night sky, there were bright and colorful flowers in full bloom.

She was quiet for a while, then she turned to look at Mu Zicheng who was playing and smiling happily. After that, she stood up silently and left the living room.

It was a little chilly at night and the wind was cold.

As soon as Xi Xiaye walked down the stairs, she could feel the chill in the air and it made her tremble a little, but she could hear Mu Zirui’s cheerful voice at the same time. She looked over and watched him setting off fireworks with the butler not too far away.

While she stood on the staircase and saw the smiles on their faces, she smiled. She sat down on the stairs and quietly watched them.

“Mother! Mother, look over here! Look at my fireworks, Mother! Look!” Mu Zirui’s cheers could be heard in the distance, and the colorful glitter in the night sky illuminated Xi Xiaye’s beautiful face.

The cool breeze picked up slowly and lifted the strands of her silky hair. When she stretched out her hand to brush her hair, she suddenly noticed a familiar scent. Before she could turn around, she could already feel his weight on her shoulders and his warmth on her back.

When she turned to look, there was already a dark jacket on her shoulders. The jacket was still warm from his body heat. She quickly raised her gaze and saw the man standing behind her.

"It's cold at night. Don't sit on the ground." His low voice sounded emotional, but his intentions came from a place of concern although he was somewhat scolding her. He reached out towards her while talking.

In a daze, she took a breath before slowly putting her hand into his.

As it started getting colder, Mu Yuchen slowly pulled his hand away. "Didn't Sis Wang make you tonic soup every night? Why are you still so cold?"

It appeared that after giving birth to Mu Zicheng, her body had not recovered very well. He had still been thinking about having a daughter a few days ago, and until now, he was still that she might be disappointed.

"I've always been like this, but it doesn't feel that cold anyway," she said as she pulled the coat over her shoulders, but her eyes were fixed on Mu Zirui, who was still playing happily.

After a pause, she called out to him gently, "Mr. Mu?"

"Yes?" he responded softly.

"I kind of wish that the children could grow up faster, but at the same time, I'm afraid that I'll grow old just as fast. I just feel like my life and my youth have just begun..." Xi Xiaye looked up at the fireworks in the sky and muttered.

He chuckled when he heard her say that. He wrapped his long arms around her shoulders and embraced her. "Who cares if you grow old? You are married to me anyway, and you're a mother of two. Do you still want to be one of those young girls? Who stays young forever? Your Mr. Mu will grow old too."

Xi Xiaye sighed and nodded. "That makes sense. After this New Year's, I'll be 29, and soon I'll be 30!"

“So, do you think you’re still young?” he asked.

“Time sure flies. It still feels like we just got married not too long ago.”

“This time last year, you changed my life.”

Chapter 1446. Opening Ceremony 1

Credit that could not be erased?

When Xi Xiaye heard that, she immediately raised her brows and looked at him. Her beautiful eyes were as dazzling as the stars when they met with his gaze that contained a smile. His eyes then turned and fell onto the window. Through it, he saw Mu Yinan and the little one having fun.

Their son, Mu Zicheng...

Her lips curved up slightly as her eyes were filled with a faint tenderness. She subconsciously held tightly onto his hand as she smiled and said, “Then, let’s continue on this way and have another one or two more!”

There she went again!

She really liked children. There was no doubt about that. With the orphanage, even when she was busy, she would insist that Xiao Mei visit them every month. Every Chinese New Year or on other festivities, she would send gifts and financial aid over. Sometimes, she would even personally pick gifts for the children.

“Aren’t you worried about going out of shape?” He shot her a side look helplessly. Naturally, he did not want to bring that up with her.

“I used to be worried, but not anymore.” She smiled at him mysteriously.

“Mmm? Why? Why do I seem to remember that a few nights ago, a certain someone was acting like a spoiled child and asking me if I would turn my back on her? I wonder who this foolishly cute person was?” His lips contained a faint smile, and his flickering gaze looked meaningful.

Upon hearing this, Xi Xiaye immediately rolled her eyes at him as she said uncourteously, “Definitely not me. I’m not worried. I’ll have a few more children. If you run off, I’ll still have our sons. When the time comes, our sons will be on my side. Then, we’ll see who’ll take care of you in old age. Also, our sons will definitely stand up for me.”

“Our sons are still young, but you’re counting on them already? They’re also half of me since I’m their father,” he said.

“Also, Missus, the person by your side in the future is definitely going to be me. Our children are going to have their own partners when they grow up, and they will have their own lives. Instead of relying on them, you might as well rely on your Mr. Mu,” Mu Yuchen said with a frown as his hand that held hers suddenly tightened and squeezed.

“Celebrate Xiao Cheng’s birthday earlier tomorrow. We’ll leave the morning after tomorrow. Since we’re having a quiet New Year, Ah Mo and Lingshi called home this morning too. If it weren’t for the fact that it isn’t too convenient for Lingshi, they would’ve gone over with us.”

“She’s getting heavier now, it’s better to be careful, earlier mother was missing her too. She’ll be going into labor after the New Year. When the child’s here, we must go visit them.”

“Alright,” he responded.

The fireworks blossomed in the night sky looked even more dazzling now. It was such a beautiful night, so one should be feeling happy, but...

“Father, you called for me?”

At the Qi residence, in Qi Qiming’s study, Qi Feng stood behind Qi Qiming while holding his walking stick.

Qi Qiming was standing before the window with his hands behind his back at the moment as he watched the fireworks silently. There seemed to be a red invitation in his hand.

This sudden voice made Qi Qiming snap back. He turned to look at Qi Feng, then pointed at the sofa beside him. His voice was low, and you could hear that he was not in a great mood. Earlier at dinner, he only had a few bites before he set aside the chopsticks and went upstairs.

The New Year's Eve dinner had been personally prepared by Gu Lingsha, but the way Qi Qiming acted annoyed Qi Feng and Gu Lingsha.

"Have a seat," Qi Qiming said and walked over to the sofa before slowly sitting down.

Qi Feng paused, then went after him. "Father, is something on your mind?"

As Qi Qiming let out a long sigh, he looked up and silently stared at Qi Feng. "Didn't you call Xiao Lei? What New Year is this? There's barely any of us!"

Upon hearing that, Qi Feng's gaze flickered, then he said, "I called him over 20 times, but not one of the calls went through. If he truly wanted to come home, we wouldn't have to invite him home personally."

"I'm old, Ah Feng! I know that things between you and Xiao Lei are tense. There are some things I know about too. Ah Feng, I've always thought highly of you, and I'm proud of you, but I hope that you can act carefully. I definitely hope that you won't be pointing your gun at your own brother. Qi Lei has got my blood in him too, and he's your younger brother. I hope that your heart can fit him too." Qi Qiming's tone was exceptionally solemn, and Qi Feng's gaze turned sharp at this point.

Qi Feng's eyes darkened, and he fell silent for a moment before he responded calmly, "Father, do you think I'm the one who doesn't want him around?"

"If not, what then?" Qi Qiming asked in return as the light in his eyes turned sharper. "Do you dare guarantee me that you have been frank about Xiao Lei? Ah Feng, you're a smart boy. You should know what I mean."

“No, father, I don’t know what you mean. I have always respected you and Qi Lei, of course, only you would know yourself if you have been the same to me,” Qi Feng replied.

Qi Qiming’s eyes instantly darkened and he squinted at Qi Feng. “Alright, since you’re going to put it that way, I’ll let Wang Chun inform all the shareholders that the shareholders’ meeting will be postponed, and even delayed till after August. I’m sure you’ll have no opinions on that. After the New Year, Xiao Lei’s new company, Tai Yu Corporation, will be opening, I want him to continue being the CEO of Tai Yu Corporation with the title of Qi Kai’s VP, and be in charge of all of Qi Kai’s projects in City B. Meanwhile, I’m afraid, you’ll have to continue with your current position and steel yourself for a year. I’m sure you won’t have any objections, hmm?”

When Qi Qiming said this, that sharp gaze of his fixated on Qi Feng’s face, so he did not miss any changes on the latter’s expression.

As Qi Feng listened, his hand that held the walking stick suddenly tightened. His lowered gaze hid the hostility that flashed in his eyes, but he held back the storm that surged in his heart and kept quiet.

“Initially, I was set on having you be Qi Kai’s heir. I wanted you to take over Qi Kai from me as soon as possible, but with the recent incidents, I can’t help but hold back for now. I think it might not be a good idea to hand Qi Kai over to you right now. Just with Hui Gu alone, you have both...The old fellow, Gu Qiwu, has reduced the initially agreed capital investment by half, and he plans to phase out of all City Z projects. I’m sure you’re very clear why.” Qi Qiming was obviously upset and having mixed feelings about this.

He did not expect Gu Qiwu to really make Mu Lingshi the heir of Hui Gu. It seemed like he was not interested in having anything to do with the Qi family anymore...

When Qi Qiming said that, Qi Feng’s expression subconsciously darkened!

Chapter 1447. Opening Ceremony 2

He should have realized it long ago!

He should have realized it! As a matter of fact, he knew about all the uneasiness he felt in his heart. He did not understand it. Although he had already tried his best to achieve his wishes, no matter what he did, everything just backfired!

Why was his luck so bad?

Qi Feng seemed a little mentally fatigued at the moment. His eyes were dull and vacant, but his tensed face did not change much. He kept his eyes looking downward in silence as he just let Qi Qiming peer at him while he did not seem to have much reaction.

After quite some time, Qi Feng still had not spoken. The atmosphere in the study seemed quite depressed to the point that it left everybody in it almost breathless.

“Why don’t you speak up? What are you thinking deep down now?” Qi Qiming asked in his bold voice. His piercing gaze had never shifted away from Qi Feng’s good-looking face. However, it seemed that he had failed to capture anything of value.

A moment later, Qi Feng raised his eyes quietly, and they seemed composed. “Since you’ve made up your mind, what I think doesn’t seem to matter much anyway. Just go with your idea.”

His tone was calm, and there were no surges in his tone at all.

“Ah Feng, I know you’ll feel dissatisfied, but I also hope that you’ll understand my intentions. Your mum and I have been fighting each other for our whole life. I understand this feeling all too well. No matter what, you shouldn’t be pointing guns at your own people,” Qi Qiming sighed while he advised his son.

While listening to that, Qi Feng raised the corners of his lips and sneered. He leaned back onto the sofa as he lifted his eyes and stared into the ceiling.

“Father, what do your so-called ‘own people’ mean? When your own people are helping your competitor to plot against you, and when your own people cut off your wings step by step just like your opponent, are those who you mean by my ‘own people’?”

If Qi Lei considered him as his so-called ‘own people’, he would have appeared. Then, Qi Qiming would not have had to come and talk to him about this.



Qi Feng's cold tone pierced through the air, and a smirk of disdain appeared on his face. There was also a hint of self-mockery in his tone. "I guess my relationship with him is somewhat crystal clear to you. Frankly speaking, I'm only an outsider in this family. What I wish to pursue always seems to be so far out of reach. I'm sure that I'm nowhere near comparable to him. After all, he's more official and proper than I'm in every way."

Qi Feng's words put a frown on Qi Qiming's face in an instant. "But you should know that the Qi family and I have never treated you shabbily. We're a lot harsher on Xiao Lei."

"Plus, don't you have any explanation for me about the incident with Qi Lei from before? Why would Doris go for Xiao Lei? They've never had any grudges. Ah Feng, I hope that you can come clear about some of the matters."

Qi Qiming's flickering eyes were studying Qi Feng's posture. However, his son chuckled nonchalantly. "What is there to explain? What do you expect me to say, Father?"

"Since you have doubts deep down, just do what you should do. I admit that the conflicts between Qi Lei and I are abysmal. While he won't take me as his elder brother, I might not call him my younger brother willingly either. Isn't he planning to checkmate me during the opening of Tai Yu Corporation?"

While Qi Feng was halfway through his sentence, he smiled scornfully all of a sudden. "I don't think I have the brains to think to that extent, Father. You can do whatever you want. I don't have much to say about it. I may not even have the ability to worry about those matters. As you can see, I'm still a cripple now."

Having heard that, Qi Qiming's expression changed drastically, but as he was about to say something, Qi Feng had already struggled to get onto his feet. "It's late, and I'm tired. I'll take my leave now. Rest earlier, Father."

Qi Feng did not seem to want to talk much. With those few words, he staggered out of the room on his crutches.

Qi Qiming turned his head and glanced at Qi Feng's somewhat lean and lonely figure, then he shouted with a frown, "Ah Feng!" However, Qi Feng did not slow his pace down, and his silhouette disappeared out of the doorway.

Qi Qiming's creased his eyebrows even more...

...

The night had gotten later, but it was getting more and more boisterous outside. The sound of fireworks exploding could be heard non-stop as florid and magnificent light streams could be seen from a distance in the dark sky. Such a night was destined to be a sleepless night, and anybody would be able to feel the celebratory mood in the air just by standing under the sky and enjoying the view with their heads held high.

On a gorgeous and hopeful night like this, those who usually went to bed early would usually be filled with anticipation, and sleep would normally be difficult to come by. For example, Wei Wei, who was used to sleeping early, slept very late tonight.

Gu Lingsha watched the fireworks with her for a long while until she got a little sleepy. After tucking her to bed, she felt a little exhausted at that moment given that she had been busy all day, so she hurried back to her room.

After taking a warm shower and going back to her bedroom, she saw Qi Feng leaning against the bedhead with his eyes closed while resting.

He did not look well, and his eyebrows were wrinkled as his hand supported his forehead. His appearance looked a little pale. It seemed that he was enduring some pain.

Gu Lingsha's expression changed slightly, and she rushed towards him, then asked anxiously, "Ah Feng, is everything alright? Are you ill, huh? Is there anything that hurts? Why is your face so pasty?"

Concerned, she extended her hand to test his body temperature, and all she felt was a cool touch on her fingertips.

Qi Feng pushed her hand away and took a deep breath. His hoarse voice sounded a little frail as he requested, "It's no big deal. Bring me my medicine. It's the one on the grid of the bookshelf to the right of my study."

“Another headache?” Gu Lingsha suggested in a worried tone, “Have you been under too much pressure recently? You’re always getting headaches lately. Professor Terl said that you should get more rest. Can’t those difficult matters be tackled at a future date?”

As she spoke, she went out searching for his medicine. She also poured him a glass of water when she was back.

Qi Feng consumed the medicine. Then, he inhaled sharply, slowly closed his eyes, and continued resting.

“Was it something Father said? Otherwise, why would you be like this all of a sudden? I already noticed that something was off with your father during the dinner. What happened?” she could not help but ask.

“DO you think he was a little moody tonight?” Qi Feng asked faintly.

Gu Lingsha paused and thought about it for a second, then stared at him in silence. “Is it because of Qi Lei?” She was cautious with her words while looking at his gloomy expression.

Immediately, Qi Feng sneered while opening his eyes. Then, he took a glimpse at her. “Did you just guess that too?”

Gu Lingsha’s expression stiffened.

Chapter 1448. Opening Ceremony 3

Qi Feng reached out for the blanket and sighed faintly as he grabbed the pack of cigarettes from the bedside table next to him before lighting a stick up.

He took a deep breath, and amidst the smoke, there was a hint of melancholy in his hoarse voice as he asked, “Shasha, will you ever regret being with me if I lost everything?”

His gaze met her beautiful face as he said that.

However, Gu Lingsha was in a daze. She suddenly raised her head to look at him and for a while, she did not know what to say.

“How many years have we known each other, Feng?” she asked after pondering for a long time instead of answering his question.

Qi Feng exhaled and took a moment to think about it before replying, “It’s been more than 20 years.”

“Indeed, it’s been more than 20 years. Since years ago, I’ve already known your intentions, and now we’ve been together for almost ten years. After such a long time, we’ve gradually become part of each other’s lives, and you already know all my strengths and weaknesses. We had our fair share of arguments as well, so you’ve probably lost patience at some point, right?”

As Gu Lingsha said that, her beautiful eyes seemed a little sad. “Even after all that, I’ve never thought about leaving you, and I’ve never questioned or regretted my choice even though I was indeed very angry and disappointed. This is because I think you’re the only one I can be with in this life, and we still have Weiwei...”

Qi Feng’s sullen face eased a little. He suddenly chuckled when he looked at her beautiful face, and she was obviously confused. “Why are you laughing?”

Qi Feng then held the cigarette between his fingers closer to the ashtray next to him and flicked the ashes away. He smiled and said, “You know, since I was a child, my dream was to be a hero, and it seems to me that you’re the perfect woman for a hero.”

Gu Lingsha was taken aback by what Qi Feng said, and it took her a while to realize what he just said. Her face suddenly became warm as she looked at Qi Feng bashfully.

What Qi Feng did not tell her was that it was all in the past...

However, he realized that there was no need for him to say anything more since she was happy. “As long as you have no regrets. I also wish to give you and Weiwei a better life.”

“I know how hard you’re working, Ah Feng! I know it’s been difficult for you especially because of my father’s matters. Don’t worry. I’ll try my best to convince Father to support you in the upcoming shareholders’ meeting . As for Father himself...”

“There may be no shareholders’ meetings in the near future,” Qi Feng already cut her off before Gu Lingsha could even finish.

“Why not?” Gu Lingsha’s eyes widened in shock.

Qi Feng exhaled his cigarette smoke and sneered as he put out the cigarette between his fingers in the ashtray beside him. He pulled the blanket off and slowly got out of the bed without giving her any explanation.

“Ah Feng!”

Seeing Qi Feng’s figure gradually disappearing outside the door, Gu Lingsha frowned and followed behind him.

Ding!

Bang!

Amidst the vivid bursts of fireworks, a cold night breeze crept in from the half-open window and the bead curtains gently swayed. There was the faint scent of wine lingering in the air while the beautiful melody from the piano was still playing.

Qi Lei had lost track of how many drinks he had, but he knew that Dongfang Liuyun had drunk just as much as him...

He was in a trance and his dark eyes were struggling to focus. He tried his best to stay awake and look at the woman who was elegantly pouring his drink opposite him, but his effort was in vain. He could feel himself losing consciousness. Soon, he blacked out...

Bang!

The glass in his hand fell over and half a glass of wine spilled as though it was declaring that Qi Lei had enough...

Dongfang Liuyun turned to look at him as she was still pouring herself some wine. Seeing him asleep on the table made her smile. Her eyes were still as bright as the stars, and she did not seem to be tipsy at all.

She raised his head and drank another glass before telling the Japanese women who were playing instruments outside in fluent Japanese, "All of you may leave now."

The women responded and quickly left. The room was immediately quiet again.

Dongfang Liuyun gently leaned over to look at Qi Lei who was sound asleep.

She could not help but sigh. They were probably the only people here to pass time at this hour. When she saw this man fighting his silent battles alone, it reminded her of herself back then.

If loneliness could become something she enjoyed, maybe she would not have felt so sad. After all these years, she had gotten used to it.

"Loneliness is also simplicity. After all that you've been through, you should feel that there's nothing wrong with being lonely because you live simply and that's good enough," Dongfang Liuyun said calmly after a long pause. She had another glass of wine before reaching out to her pocket and took out her phone which had been vibrating for a while. When she saw the name on the screen, she put her phone back and ignored the call.

She got up abruptly after putting her glass aside and took her black briefcase in one hand. Suddenly, she could hear the sound of bead curtains swaying. She turned over to look at Qi Lei who was still sleeping and thought for a while before she covered him in her red coat just as she was about to leave.

As soon as Dongfang Liuyun walked out of the room, the lobby manager who had been waiting outside greeted her, "Miss Dongfang!"

"Put it on my tab. Also, no one should know that I was here today, understand?" Dongfang Liuyun ordered him without slowing down her pace at all.

"Yes, I understand!" the lobby manager responded.

Her thin figure then disappeared in the corner ahead.

The manager finally pushed the door open and entered the room after much hesitation.

"Master Qi? Master Qi?"

Qi Lei felt someone shaking him violently just when he was in the middle of a deep slumber. He raised his head restlessly and saw Yang Sheng in front of him. He thought he was seeing things, so he tried to shut his eyes and shake his head before opening his eyes again. However, he still saw Yang Sheng in front of him and he immediately looked around.

"How come you're here?"

He could not find Dongfang Liuyun!

"The lobby manager called. Why are you here on New Year's Eve?" Yang Sheng asked worriedly. He had been watching the Spring Festival Gala with his family earlier when the lobby manager called and told him that Master Qi was drunk. Worried, he quickly rushed over.

Chapter 1449. Opening Ceremony 4

Qi Lei sighed while he rubbed his heavy head, and he was about to get up when he sensed something fell from him. He subconsciously turned to look.

A flash of red greeted his sight!

Was that her garment?

He hesitated before picking it up and then staggered to the entrance.

From behind, Yang Sheng was stunned for a while before he reacted and followed after him.

...

The car was engulfed in the cool breeze as it drove underneath the dazzling fireworks amidst the rumbles and the cheers. He watched the large clock on the screen at the plaza count down, and then with a roar, a new year crept in...

Qi Lei watched this scene through the car window, and he sighed to himself. He shut his eyes silently, then quietly made a wish for the New Year. He wished for things to look up in the New Year!

At this moment, Yang Sheng who was driving beside suddenly smiled and wished him, "Master Qi, Happy Chinese New Year! May you have a prosperous one!"

Qi Lei paused, then turned to look at Yang Sheng with a smile and said, "Happy New Year, have a prosperous one!"

"Mmm, I believe that it will be a year of great returns, Master Qi. The dawn of a new victory is right in front of us, and I trust that it will get better." Yang Sheng's voice was filled with joy.

"Work well. I won't treat you all poorly." Qi Lei smiled back at him.

"Master Qi, you've always been generous. Everyone's really looking forward to this new era that belongs to us. As the days grow nearer, we're all beginning to feel a little nervous. Quite a few managers have already bought their tickets to be back on the third day of New Year to prepare for the opening ceremony. Everyone's working very hard, Master Qi. I'm confident that our Tai Yu Corporation will soar high!" Yang Sheng could not help but say passionately as his eyes were filled with hope and anticipation.



“Yeah, work steadily, and you will all achieve your aspirations at Tai Yu Corporation.” Qi Lei’s tone was much calmer now as he continued, “Many things still require careful handling of things, so get everyone to be on high alert and keep their spirits up. If all of this goes smoothly, then we’ll have a much easier path from here on.”

“Don’t worry, Master, we understand. Right, Master Mu and Miss Xiaye are going off to Malta for a holiday tomorrow, so they won’t be back in time for our opening ceremony. Also, Master Mu has invited you to Little Master Mu’s birthday banquet. Do you want to go? I’ve already prepared the gift for you.” Yang Sheng had always been very dedicated to his work.

“Since it’s just their son’s birthday family banquet, I won’t go over. Please just send the gift over on my behalf in the morning.”

Yang Sheng thought about it and could not help but say, “Master Qi, Master Mu was hoping you could show up. Actually, you don’t have to feel like an outsider with them, Master Qi. You should know what it means given the fact that he is personally inviting you to a family dinner. Su Chen and Zhou Zimo will be going too. While Master Mu only invited these few people, it means that he sees you as a good buddy. These relationships need to be cultivated through interactions.”

Qi Lei sighed. With one hand propped on the car window to support his heavy head, he looked out quietly at the streets and fell silent for a bit, then he responded, “Being friends with them is something very much worth being happy about. Since that’s the case, I’ll go then.”

It was only then that Yang Sheng nodded happily. “Master Qi, earlier, CEO Qi called me. He was asking about where you were...”

By the looks of it, while he knew that Qi Lei did not go back to the Qi residence, he did not know whose red windbreaker that was in his boss’s hand. From the looks of that style, there was no doubt that it belonged to a woman.

Despite having questions, Yang Sheng dared not bring them up, so he continued to drive quietly.

...

The first day of Chinese New Year was the Mu family's Little Master, Mu Xiao Cheng's birthday.

Early in the morning, the old Mu residence was already lively.

Mu Yuchen and Xi Xiaye did not plan to have a grand birthday celebration, so it was just a simple family banquet, and they did not invite many people. There were just a few buddies and some people they were close to.

Su Chen and Ji Zitong, as well as Zhou Zimo, went over quite early, and they were very generous. Soon, Mu Zirui and Mu Zicheng's pockets were filled with red packets.

When Qi Lei rushed over, Mu Yuchen, Su Chen, and Zhou Zimo were drinking tea while sunbathing in the pavilion in the backyard, appearing contented.

As they saw Qi Lei walk over, the buddies immediately waved him over to sit. Zhou Zimo poured him some tea too.

"You live so close by. Why are you so late instead?" Zhou Zimo asked.

Qi Lei reached out to touch his slightly heavy head as he responded, "Don't mention it. Last night, I drank quite a bit and my head was still heavy when I woke up this morning."

"How's the company opening ceremony coming along? I was just asking Ah Chen about it. You're quite swift. I think I should quit and just trade with you. I'll have to be back on the work shift the day after tomorrow, so I won't be having a full-blown celebration of the New Year."

The nature of Su Chen's work was as such. It was always when everyone was the most idle that his work would be the busiest. Even though his position was the Deputy Chief of the Traffic Control Bureau, it was the same, and Ji Zitong could not help but grumble a little about it.

"Alright now, don't complain. You can't be suffering as much as I am."

When Su Chen finished, Zhou Zimo rolled his eyes at him.

Upon hearing that, Qi Lei smiled and sipped his tea. He glanced at Zhou Zimo and said seriously, "What are you suffering from? Is your family rushing to set you up for blind dates during the New Year?"

When Qi Lei said that, Zhou Zimo immediately raised his brows and squinted at him. "You can always read my mind. How did you guess that!? Chen, I'm telling you, I want to go over tomorrow too, so please arrange for that."

"What? No! Does Mother Zhou really want to...?" Su Chen raised his brows and looked amusedly at Zhou Zimo. His face brimmed with a smile that showed how delighted he was over his misfortune, and Zhou Zimo wanted to slap that face of his!

Mu Yuchen, who had been keeping quiet all along, squinted at him. "Do you really want to take refuge with me now? It's happening sooner or later anyway, so I might as well be frank about it."

"That's easier said than done!" Zhou Zimo glared unhappily at the two of them, then he turned to Qi Lei. "What do you think?"

Qi Lei smiled and then shrugged. "I don't have the same pressure as you. I'm on a solitary path and I do as I please. You're not the same as me."

"What's different? Aren't we both men!? You're not that much younger than I am," Zhou Zimo said.

"We told you to put more thought into this. There's no need to be so repelled. Ah Chen's children can call their Father and Mother now."

Su Chen looked helplessly at Zhou Zimo. Unexpectedly though, this fellow only rolled his eyes at him!

Chapter 1450. Opening Ceremony 5

While the brothers were chit-chatting, Xi Xiaye had not been idle. She was busy entertaining the guests. It was a shame that Su Nan and Ruan Heng could not come over since they had already returned to their hometown.

After Ruan Heng's incident, Su Nan had changed a lot. She seemed to know how to manage a family better and was more thoughtful than before. Moreover, since she had been more considerate with Ruan Heng, the husband and wife had been living in harmony.

During this new year, the couple went back to their grandma's house back in their hometown. However, they left Xiao Cheng a birthday present before they went off, and they called during the ceremony too.

Naturally, Xi Xiaye did not have the time to answer the call. She hung up only after a few simple words, then moved on to tend to the guests.

"Hey, guys, let's take a huge family photo for memory's sake!" Zhuang Shurong waved at everybody from a lawn not far away.

"Butler, go and get Ah Chen and the other young masters here from the backyard. It's such a rare occasion, so let's grab a photo. Maybe we can save it as a memento of the day. Go on!" Zhuang Shurong glanced at the direction of Mu Tangchuan, who was carrying Xiao Cheng, and signaled them to go over to the lawn.

"Photo time!" Mu Yinan led Mu Zirui to the photo spot while Xi Xiaye stopped what she was doing and followed the crowd over.

After a while, Mu Yuchen, Su Chen, Qi Lei, and Zhou Zimo also rushed over.

Xi Xiaye stood right behind Mu Yinan and Shen Yue, who were sitting in the front row. The man standing beside her was naturally Mu Yuchen whereas Shen Yue carried Xiao Cheng on his thighs while Mu Zirui stood right in front of Mu Yinan.

Xi Xiaye stood in her spot quietly, but suddenly she felt a weight pressing down on her shoulders. She turned her head subconsciously just to find out that the man beside her had stretched out his arm and placed it on her shoulders to envelope her in his chest. It seemed that he was able to sense that she was glancing at him, but he did not turn to her. A bold voice was then heard, "What are you looking at? Look at the camera!"

Xi Xiaye beamed from ear to ear as she extended her arms into his pockets, then stared lovingly at the camera in front of them.