

I Want a Lifetime with You

Chapter 226

Fu Chengyan grabbed tightly onto the steering wheel, frowning deeply after hearing what Song Jingyu had shouted. His whole body tensed in anger.

Beside him, Shi Nuan took Fu Chengyan's hand and gave it a gentle pat. This tiny action miraculously calmed him down, and all his aggression dissipated. He was just like a ferocious lion who was on the verge of going on the rampage but was pulled back at the last second.

Fu Chengyan turned to look at Shi Nuan and saw that she was looking at him worriedly. He asked in resignation, "Aren't you angry?"

"Why should I be angry?" Shi Nuan could hear from Fu Chengyan's voice that he had calmed down. She breathed a sigh of relief and laughed, "And how about you? You don't need to be angry either."

"I thought you would be bothered by the things she said!" He was worried that Shi Nuan would lose trust in him after hearing all that.

Shi Nuan raised an eyebrow. "Who do you think I am? Why would I be bothered? You're mine now, wholly and completely mine. She should be the one who's bothered."

Shi Nuan laughed, "Actually, I should be thanking Song Jingyu. I didn't realize you cared about me so much."

"What? I've done so much for you before, and you can't tell?"

Fu Chengyan finally relaxed. As long as Shi Nuan didn't care, then he was good too. These things hadn't bothered him before because back then, he didn't have her. But now that she's in his life, he couldn't and wouldn't let these things progress any further. "Give me a bit of time, and I promise I'll take care of this. I'll make sure you'll be happy with the resolution."

"I'm not in a hurry. The one who's in a hurry is you." Shi Nuan looked at Fu Chengyan and suddenly felt a little sorry for him. She had never come face-to-face with Song Jingyu before, but from the few times she met her from afar, she could tell that Song Jingyu was a nuisance.

Song Jingyu's identity was a little awkward, and she was under the protection of the Song family and Song Zhenyan, so it was no wonder she was a little spoiled. Besides, she appeared to be quite obsessed with Fu Chengyan. It was an obsession that transcended normal understanding. Even when Fu Chengyan made himself very clear, she still seemed to ignore it. This ability of hers surprised Shi Nuan again and again.

Song Zhenyan was Fu Chengyan's mother. So as ruthless as he wanted to be, he couldn't really do anything overboard to Song Zhenyan.

Shi Nuan understood all these and could empathize with Fu Chengyan. Just like her own relationship with the Shi family. Even though she knew Shi Jingzheng and Jiang Yu were biased against her, and even though she knew Shi Wei was hostile towards her, she still had to keep up appearances.

"You don't need to worry about my feelings. Just follow your own plan. I know this is something that has to be taken care of eventually, but don't make things too difficult for yourself."

"Okay," nodded Fu Chengyan while grinning. "May."

"Yes?" Shi Nuan looked over to him. "What's wrong?"

"I'm so lucky to have you."

The two had agreed to have dinner outside, but they didn't go to any well-known restaurants. Instead, they chose a homely-looking one next to Jing University.

Fu Chengyan was the one who chose the place, so when Shi Nuan saw it, she looked surprised. When Fu Chengyan saw her expression, he gave her hand a light squeeze and asked, "Why? You don't like this place?"

Shi Nuan quickly shook her head. "No, I just didn't think you'd come to places like these. Song Rongrong, Su Yian, and I often came here when we were still studying. But I've rarely come back after I graduated." Shi Nuan held Fu Chengyan's hand and walked in. "This place still looks the same. It hasn't changed one bit!"

Shi Nuan took Fu Chengyan to a more secluded area and sat themselves down. Because it was after class, there were quite a lot of people eating there. Mostly in twos or threes, male and female, all brimming with youth.

Shi Nuan suddenly started envying those students and reminisced about her own university days, days which she could never return to.

The restaurant looked pretty busy. Even though there were waiters around, it was difficult for them to get to everyone in a prompt manner. Shi Nuan and Fu Chengyan had to wait for a while before they could place their orders.

Because the patrons there were usually teachers or students, the portions were quite large. Shi Nuan recalled the first time they went there. They had ordered quite a lot of dishes. And even after they were completely stuffed, there were still leftovers, which they had to bring back in a doggy bag.

This time, Shi Nuan ordered two simple-looking dishes and a soup. She then looked up and asked Fu Chengyan, "Will this be enough? Do you want to order more?"

With that, she handed the menu to Fu Chengyan who shook his head, "It's enough." He didn't usually eat much either. "That'll be all."

The waiter went to place their orders while the crowd continued to pour in. Soon, the restaurant was nearly full, and quite a few students couldn't find seats. Some girls immediately noticed Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan the moment they walked in.

Everyone was a little curious about the two, most likely because they didn't look like they belonged at that place, and Fu Chengyan's appearance really was too striking.

"Is that guy from our university?"

"Impossible! Do you think our university would have anyone who looks as sophisticated as him? Plus, he looks older than an average student."

"Who said he's a student? He could be a professor! Or someone in management!"

"The girl next to him looks really pretty too. Don't tell me they're a couple!"

Though the girls weren't talking too loudly, Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan still heard every word they said. Fu Chengyan raised an eyebrow, "They said you look good."

"They were talking about you!" chuckled Shi Nuan. "That's strange. I thought universities are on a semester break around this time."

"Soon, probably," said Fu Chengyan. "You've left university for so long you forgot the semester schedules?"

Shi Nuan scratched her head out of awkwardness. "I guess you're right. I can only remember my working hours now and not school hours."

While they were talking, their food arrived. And as Shi Nuan expected, the portions were quite large. They probably weren't even going to be able to finish what they had ordered.

Fu Chengyan used some hot water to clean the cutlery before handing them to Shi Nuan. "Go ahead and eat. Later we can go for a walk. I asked Zhou Zheng to buy some movie tickets for us. It's nearby."

Shi Nuan's eyes shone brightly. "We're really going on a date?"

"When have I lied to you? C'mon, eat!" Fu Chengyan placed some food in Shi Nuan's bowl. "Try this."

"Okay!"

Frankly speaking, there wasn't anything special about the restaurant. Those who were used to fine dining would even find the food here tasteless. But when Shi Nuan was still in university, she and her friends were quite fond of the place because it was at least tastier than the cafeteria on campus.

Soon after, the two soon finished their dinner, then headed out after Fu Chengyan paid the bill.

There was a river near Jing University. It was quite a nice place to be especially with the night breeze gently blowing. Shi Nuan had often been there before, but she never would've guessed that Fu Chengyan's date course would involve walking along the river.

There were many people lazing on the riverbank, both old and young. Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan walked hand-in-hand, with Shi Nuan walking following behind. Fu Chengyan took both her hands and placed them in his pockets.

Shi Nuan could only toddle behind him, and she probably looked silly, but Shi Nuan felt very content. "Yan."

"Hmm?" Fu Chengyan answered, but he didn't turn around. "What's wrong?"

"Nothing, I just like calling you." She just really liked how things were right then. Quiet and tranquil. The two of them had only known each other for half a year,

but it felt as if they had known each other for much longer, like an old married couple. “Oh! What movie tickets did you have Zhou Zheng buy?”

“I don’t know, I just asked Zhou Zheng to pick a suitable one.” Fu Chengyan turned around to look at Shi Nuan, “You don’t feel like watching a movie?”

Shi Nuan pursed her lips in thought. “I don’t think there are any interesting movies being aired right now.”

“How about we just ditch the plan then?” decided Fu Chengyan. “Where else would you like to go?”

“I can’t think of any places.” Shi Nuan shook her head. “On second thought, let’s just head to the cinema. I wouldn’t want to waste the tickets; that’ll be a shame!”

“It’s okay. Let’s just walk around if you don’t feel like watching a movie.” Fu Chengyan squeezed Shi Nuan’s hand. “Why are they still cold?”

He had held onto her hands for so long, and yet, they were still cold and clammy.

“It’s always been this way ever since I was young. Once winter comes, my hands get cold. It’s fine.” Shi Nuan wriggled her hands against Fu Chengyan’s. “See, they’re warming up now.”

“You should put on more clothes next time when you’re out.” He looked at the coat Shi Nuan was wearing and frowned. “This is too thin.”

“Is not! Besides, I have plenty of layers on.” Shi Nuan wriggled herself loose from Fu Chengyan’s grasp and pointed to her coat and the sweater inside. “See, I’m already wearing lots for this kind of weather. And how about you? You’re the one who chucked your coat earlier. Aren’t you cold?”

“It was dirty.” Fu Chengyan insisted. “And with you by my side, I’m not cold.”

Shi Nuan couldn't help but blush. "You're talking nonsense again. I'm not a heater!" How could he feel warm just by having her next to him!

But hearing Fu Chengyan say that still made Shi Nuan giddy.

"In my eyes, you're warmer than a heater."

"Yan, has anyone told you that your sweet words are irresistible?" Why haven't I realize that Fu Chengyan has this side to him?

Fu Chengyan grinned, "No. No one." That was only because he had never said those kinds of words to anyone else before, so naturally, no one could have told him that. "My romance is only reserved for you. Past, present, and future."

Shi Nuan's heart burst in joy, and she reached her hand out to touch Fu Chengyan's face. Then she jokingly squeezed and pinched his cheeks. "Oh, dear. I really like hearing you say these sweet nothings." She was a helpless romantic and naturally liked hearing these sweet words.

Fu Chengyan took hold of Shi Nuan's hands that were still smushing his face and nestled against them. "If that's the case, I'll say them to you every day."

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Shi Nuan couldn't help but chuckle and swatted Fu Chengyan's hands away. "You and your cheeky mouth. Alright, it's getting late. Since we're not going to watch a movie, let's head home instead."

It was already pretty late. The two of them had been walking by the riverside for over an hour without even realizing it. The whole area was quite pretty especially in this early winter period, with people walking about and dim streetlights reflecting off the river surface.

It had been a while since Shi Nuan had experienced such peace and quiet. She had been running back and forth a lot before, being tossed around in many different places. And though she had Fu Xicheng and his support, she still felt helpless when it came to dealing with her family. But ever since she got together with Fu Chengyan, he was so powerful that she no longer felt helpless or at a loss. As long as he was with her, it was as if she would never be lost ever again.

"What are you thinking about?"

Fu Chengyan gripped Shi Nuan's hands, having noticed that her mind had gone somewhere else.

Shi Nuan snapped out of it and noticed a young couple was walking across the bridge. The girl's head was tilted, and she was grabbing onto the boy's coat with one hand while staggering along. Shi Nuan giggled.

"Why're you laughing?"

“I just think that the world is really beautiful!” said Shi Nuan. She then saw the boy squat down and put his hands behind him, getting into position. The girl’s face beamed with contentment. She backed away a few steps, raised her bulky skirt, and took a running jump onto the boy’s back.

However, the girl likely jumped too hard and nearly took the boy down with her.

Shi Nuan could hear the boy inhale sharply, but he grabbed onto the girl in time and steadied himself. She then heard the boy nagging, “You’re too rash. It’s a good thing I caught you. What would have happened if I didn’t!”

Yet, the girl just giggled and wrapped her arms around the boy’s neck, then patted him on the shoulder. “Get up! You promised to give me a piggyback!” The boy could only sigh and got back into position. “What would have happened if I hadn’t caught you?”

“I would’ve fallen. And I would’ve grabbed on to you while I fell.”

“Hey!”

“Together for better or worse, remember?”

With that, the boy piggybacking the girl walked further and further away. Shi Nuan couldn’t help but start laughing.

Fu Chengyan was standing next to Shi Nuan. When he saw Shi Nuan’s face beaming with laughter, his gaze became more intense. “Do you want to try?”

“What?” Shi Nuan looked confused. “Try? Try what?”

“Piggyback! I’ll give you a piggyback!” Fu Chengyan looked at the couple who had disappeared into the night and turned to look at Shi Nuan again. “Do you want to?”

Shi Nuan shook her head. “They’ve already done it. If you do it, you’ll be a copycat. I don’t want that.”

Shi Nuan then strutted off with her head held high. Fu Chengyan raised an eyebrow and caught up easily with his long legs. Before she realized what was going on, he had bent down and picked her up in his arms.

Shi Nuan shrieked in surprise, thinking that she was about to fall. She quickly grabbed onto Fu Chengyan and leaned into him. “What are you doing?” accused Shi Nuan.

“Well, you didn’t want a piggyback, so I’ll carry you instead!”

“Fu Chengyan, stop playing around. People are watching!” Shi Nuan took a peek around then decided it would be less embarrassing for her if she just buried herself in his arms and stayed out of sight. “It’s embarrassing!”

It was nearly ten o’clock by the time the two of them reached Wutong Residence. At that time, Fu Heng and Ning Xin were watching television in the living room. They heard the door opening and saw Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan walking in while holding hands.

Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan clearly didn’t expect the older couple to still be awake at that hour. “Uncle, Aunt, you’re still awake?”

Fu Heng smiled and looked at Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan. “Seeing as how the two of you came home so late, you must’ve gone on a date.”

Hearing that, Shi Nuan laughed sheepishly and quickly grabbed some slippers for Fu Chengyan, then bent down to slip out of her own shoes.

Fu Chengyan took a look at Shi Nuan, then answered, “It was to give the two of you some alone time. I’m guessing you two had no peace and quiet while staying at the Fu family home.”

“Why you little... as if it was just for my benefit alone.” Fu Heng laughed but was also impressed with how tactful Fu Chengyan was. “Did Nuan have a good time?”

“Yes, I did!” Shi Nuan walked over after changing her shoes. “Yan said it’s your wedding anniversary today. I’m sure the two of you had a good time together.” Shi Nuan then looked down and rummaged through her bag before fishing out a small box. “We got this as an anniversary present for Aunt and Uncle. It’s not anything expensive, but I hope you’ll like it.”

“What is it? Let me have a look!” Ning Xin quickly reached for the present once she heard that it was handpicked by Shi Nuan and Fu Chengyan. She opened the box and found a blessed talisman. “This...”

“There’s a temple behind Jing University. Yan and I had some time on our hands, so we went to get it for you. Keep it on you, and it’ll keep you safe.” Shi Nuan sat down next to Ning Xin. “Even though it’s probably more of a placebo effect, there’s no harm in trying, right, Aunt?”

“Nuan sure is thoughtful.” Ning Xin was very pleased with Shi Nuan’s present, and it had more to do with Shi Nuan’s heart than the present itself. “I really like it.”

Just then, Fu Chengyan came to sit next to Fu Heng. The uncle and the nephew had things to discuss. Shi Nuan got up and went to the kitchen to make some tea when she overheard Fu Heng talking about Shengyuan’s annual meeting.

“You’ve always hosted these, so please go ahead and continue to do so this year. I won’t go and crash the party.”

Fu Heng saw Shi Nuan handing him a cup of tea. He smiled, “That’s very thoughtful of you, Nuan.”

After that, Shi Nuan handed a cup to Ning Xin, then another to Fu Chengyan. “Uncle won’t be going? But aren’t you a shareholder? Even though you don’t deal with the business side anymore, you are still a part of Shengyuan.”

Fu Heng fell silent for a second before answering, "I won't go. Your aunt's health isn't too great, and I'm worried being in such a big crowd won't do her any good."

"Heng," Ning Xin had something to say. "Nuan is right. You are Shengyuan's shareholder. It doesn't seem right if you keep missing the annual meetings. I'll be fine. Or you can go alone, and I'll stay at home. We have maids to look after me anyway."

"No!" rejected Fu Heng right away. "Yan has always done a great job hosting them. And I'm getting old. Who knows, maybe the youngsters aren't even interested in seeing me, so I'd rather stay home with you."

"Heng, you're making me feel like I'm a burden to you," sighed Ning Xin. She knew everything that Fu Heng did was in her best interest, but sometimes it would make her feel a little guilty.

Fu Heng was born to be a businessman. If it hadn't been for her, Fu Heng would've done amazing things at Yunsheng. And yet, he willingly resigned and was content being a silent shareholder, all because of her. For years, this had always weighed heavily on Ning Xin.

"Stop it. You're never a burden. There's nothing more important than you." Fu Heng patted Ning Xin's hand to assure her. "If you really think it's for the best, then I'll go. But I'll bring you with me, and we'll just make a quick appearance."

"Okay!"

Ning Xin nodded in satisfaction, then turned to Fu Chengyan. "Yan, how's the planning for the annual meeting going?"

"Everything's nearly done. It's in five days, so Uncle and Aunt do make an appearance then!"

"Your parents..."

“They’ll most likely attend.”

Fu Chengyan wasn’t too bothered because whether he invited Song Zhenyan or not, she would still go.

He knew Song Zhenyan too well.

When she left all those years ago, it wasn’t just because of that one reason she had stated, but more importantly, it was because she was embarrassed to see the Fu family. Coming back to Jiang Cheng after so many years and returning to the Fu family, there was definitely more than meets the eye. So Song Zhenyan would definitely attend this annual meeting of Shengyuan’s.

...

Mai Qi had been running around Shengyuan’s office building since early in the morning, going to each department to confirm the list of personnel while also giving each person their own number tags.

When Mai Qi went past the project management department, she was stopped by Yuan Jia. Yuan Jia was someone who liked to be friendly with everyone. Especially since Mai Qi was a valued member from the twenty-seventh floor, everyone wanted to get close to her.

“Mai Qi, why are you giving us number tags?” Yuan Jia looked at the tag in her hand and frowned slightly. “Is there a special event for this year’s annual meeting?”

Mai Qi smiled and discreetly pointed to the tag in Yuan Jia’s hand. “Keep it safe, since there’s only one for each person. All the ladies get one with a red strap, whereas the men have a blue strap. Make sure you don’t lose it, or you might just miss out on something exciting.”

“Exciting? Are the prizes for this year better than ever? Mai Qi, can’t you just give me a little hint? I remember the grand prize from last year was a car. Will it be something even better than a car?”

“You guessed right. It’s a reward. A great reward.” Mai Qi grinned. Whoever got picked would be able to dance the opening dance with Shengyuan Group’s boss. Wouldn’t that reward be better than a car?

After that, Mai Qi patted Yuan Jia’s hand and said, “Good luck!”

“Hehe. I have my eyes set on that grand prize! Hey? Where’s Shi Nuan’s number?” Yuan Jia didn’t see a tag for Shi Nuan. “Oh, and what about Director Lin?”

“Don’t worry. Everyone gets one.”

“Gets one what?”

Lin Yu and Shi Nuan appeared right then and saw Mai Qi and Yuan Jia talking. “Ms. Mai, why are you here in our department? Is there something Mr. Fu needs?”

“It’s not Mr. Fu, it’s me.” Mai Qi handed two number tags to Lin Yu and Shi Nuan respectively. “The blue one is Director Lin’s, and the red one is for Shi Nuan.”

“What’s this?” Shi Nuan was confused by the tag. “Is this for the annual meeting?”

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“Yes, please keep it safe. Everyone only gets one number tag.” Mai Qi smiled and put away her personnel list. “I still need to go to other departments.”

“See you later, Ms. Mai!”

After Mai Qi left, Yuan Jia could no longer contain her excitement and wanted to gossip with Shi Nuan. But before she could say anything, Director Lin shot her a look and chided, “No discussing of personal matters during work hours.” Ling Yu handed a folder to Shi Nuan, “Go ahead with this first. Ask me if there’s anything you’re not sure about.”

“Yes, sir.” Shi Nuan took the folder and waited until Lin Yu left before going back to her seat. She placed the number tag in her bag and prepared to review some documents.

Yuan Jia rushed to Shi Nuan’s side and whispered to her, “Shi Nuan, aren’t you even a little bit curious about what the numbers are for? I asked Mai Qi, and she would only say it’s some kind of a reward.”

“Oh!” Shi Nuan nodded. “Okay!”

Yuan Jia noticed that Shi Nuan wasn’t too interested in this so-called reward. “Aren’t you curious at all?”

“I am. But you said it’s some kind of a reward, and we’ll find out soon enough at the annual meeting. I still have work that I need to finish.” Shi Nuan pointed to the papers and the datasheets in front of her.

Yuan Jia sighed, "What am I going to do with you?"

Previously, Yuan Jia had plenty of misunderstandings towards Shi Nuan. She thought that she was someone who had gotten the job by pulling strings and had no skills other than just looking pretty. But after working together for a while, Yuan Jia realized how wrong she was. Shi Nuan was a complete workaholic, just like Lin Yu. "Get going then."

After Yuan Jia left, Shi Nuan spaced out for a bit before she took the number tag out to have a look again. She grabbed her phone and sent Fu Chengyan a message via WeChat. "You had Mai Qi give out number tags?"

A reply quickly arrived. "Yes."

"It's a kind of reward?" Shi Nuan didn't want to gossip, but she had a hunch that there was something suspicious about it. Why on earth was he giving out number tags?

"Guess!"

Fu Chengyan looked at his phone and grinned.

Zhou Zheng was standing stiffly in front of Fu Chengyan's desk, holding papers with one hand and pinching his leg with the other.

Fu Chengyan looked up and reverted back to his stern expression. "What were we talking about?"

"Oh. We were discussing the guests and partnerships for the annual meeting. Mr. Fu, are we still inviting those we invited previously?"

"Yup," nodded Fu Chengyan. "You can go ahead and make these decisions yourself. Anything else?"

“Oh, Mr. George told me yesterday that he might have to make a trip back to France soon.”

Fu Chengyan paused before looking up. “Why?”

“Mr. George’s mother is sick, so...” Zhou Zheng continued, “There won’t be anyone working during the New Year anyway, and he promises there won’t be any delays when he goes back.”

“Okay.” Fu Chengyan raised his hand, but before he was able to say anything else, Shi Nuan’s reply came in. “I don’t want to guess. I’ll find out at the annual meeting anyway.”

Fu Chengyan grinned, “Okay, then don’t.”

Fu Chengyan continued to text with Shi Nuan when he realized Zhou Zheng was peeking at him from across the table. Fu Chengyan glared, “Anything else?”

Zhou Zheng rubbed his palms together and laughed sheepishly, “Mr. Fu also uses WeChat?”

Fu Chengyan glanced at his phone screen then at Zhou Zheng. “And?”

“No-nothing.” No wonder Zhou Zheng thought the image on Fu Chengyan’s screen looked familiar. Who knew the usually disinterested Mr. Fu would one day use WeChat too. But he also noticed that his WeChat page looked rather blank. “Mr. Fu, don’t tell me you only have your wife as your only contact?”

Fu Chengyan put his phone away. “Do you have a problem with that?”

“No, no problem at all! Why would I have a problem?” Zhou Zheng hurriedly denied it. “But WeChat is used to connect people with each other. Don’t you want to add a few more contacts?”

“Like whom?”

“For example Mr. Li, Mr. Su, and me!” Zhou Zheng pointed at himself. “Don’t you think the apps nowadays are great? And it’s so easy to get in touch with someone. If Mr. Fu sent me a message on WeChat, I promise I’ll reply to it right away.”

“What Mr. Zhou is saying is... you can reply to me instantly even when it’s during working hours?” Fu Chengyan propped one hand under his chin and tapped the table with the other, while slyly observing Zhou Zheng.

Zhou Zheng hadn’t yet caught on to what Fu Chengyan was implying, so he nodded and guaranteed, “Yes! As long as Mr. Fu texted me, I will always reply to you instantly, regardless of where I was or what I was doing.”

“Oh really,” Fu Chengyan smirked. “What you’re saying is, you’re always on your phone even when you’re working?”

Zhou Zheng could feel the room temperature suddenly drop a few degrees. Only then did he realize that Fu Chengyan had tricked him. He fervently shook his head. “Mr. Fu, you misunderstood. That’s not what I meant. That’s absolutely not what I meant.”

Fu Chengyan snorted, “You’re dismissed.”

“Yes, I still have plenty of things I need to do. I’m leaving. Right away.”

In the meantime, Song Jingyu had also gotten a number tag. She knew about the reward, so she sought out Mai Qi to get a number for herself and even personally chose number 13, a number she found to be lucky. Song Jingyu had heard from Mai Qi that Fu Chengyan’s number was fourteen. Hence, the two numbers together would be 1314, which in Chinese, sounded similar to ‘forever and always’. Song Jingyu felt really good about her number.

Not long after, all staff members in Shengyuan Group had gotten their number tags. Everyone was feeling very excited about this upcoming annual meeting. Everyone had heard about the special 'reward' and that there would be a special event. They were all making guesses as to what the reward could be. They were also excited they would get a chance to see the rarely seen boss that night.

The day before the annual meeting, Shi Nuan was fretting over what she was going to wear.

Usually, she would just pick something simple. However, Fu Chengyan had asked her to wear something nice, and it would also have to keep her warm.

Shi Nuan thought his request was rather contradictory, and she was getting a headache just thinking about it. She stood in front of her wardrobe for a long while, but she just couldn't find something that would match Fu Chengyan's expectations.

At the same time, Fu Chengyan was in the study discussing work matters with Fu Heng. And when he went to find Shi Nuan, the first thing he saw was her pouting in front of the wardrobe.

He took a gown from Shi Nuan, looked at it, and placed it back. "What's wrong?"

Shi Nuan glared at Fu Chengyan and whined, "It's all your fault! You wanted me to dress nicely, and you also wanted it to keep me warm! Think about it, where would I find such a dress like that? I'm completely lost!"

"Look at you, losing your marbles over a dress." Fu Chengyan chuckled. "How about this? It looks nice."

Fu Chengyan took out a basic buttoned-up shirt then picked another white knitwear.

Shi Nuan looked on as Fu Chengyan took piece after piece of clothing from her wardrobe and couldn't help but facepalm. "These aren't gowns, they're..."

“Hmm?” Fu Chengyan raised an eyebrow, “They’re what?”

“Nothing.” Actually, those really would keep her warm. In fact, they’re no different from what she usually wears.

The difference was how Fu Chengyan had matched the different pieces. Together, the black and white styling looked chic and sophisticated. With a black coat, it would definitely be warm and would also be appropriate for a formal setting.

Most of the clothing in Shi Nuan’s wardrobe could be mixed and matched easily, so she didn’t have to worry about wearing clothes that didn’t match.

“So when you said you wanted me to dress nicely, you meant for me to just wear my usual clothes?”

“Your usual clothes are nice!” Fu Chengyan continued, “It’s just an annual meeting. You don’t need to dress too flashily like the others. You’re different from them.”

“Yes, yes, yes. Alright, I’ll wear this.” She was too lazy to think about it further anyway. “Where is the annual meeting at?”

“Prosperous Dynasty.” Fu Chengyan placed the clothes against Shi Nuan’s body to check how they looked. “It was supposed to be at Shengyuan, but Shengyuan has a rather hectic schedule lately, so we didn’t want to add to that by having the annual meeting there.”

“That’s true.” Shi Nuan smiled. “Oh, and the number tag? You have one too? Yuan Jia from our department is a little tattletale. She’s been asking me what the secret behind it is.”

Shi Nuan put the clothes back into her wardrobe, then went to Fu Chengyan to massage his temples.

Fu Chengyan leaned against the sofa and chuckled when he heard Shi Nuan's question. "Are you sure it's your colleague asking and not yourself?"

Shi Nuan wasn't bothered that Fu Chengyan had seen through her little ploy. "Okay, I want to know. Are you going to tell me?"

"It's a secret. You won't be surprised if you find out now." He took hold of Shi Nuan's hands and pulled her towards him, seating her in his lap. "Either way, I'll make sure Mrs. Fu will be very pleased."

"Please don't," rejected Shi Nuan quickly. "Don't forget, hardly anyone knows we're married. If people see us at Shengyuan's annual meeting, then that won't be good." Knowing the truth was one thing, but having them misunderstand and make wrong assumptions would be troublesome.

And there was a Song Jingyu too. Just thinking about her gave Shi Nuan a headache.

"Don't worry. I know what to do." Fu Chengyan placed Shi Nuan's hands to his lips and kissed them. "Tomorrow, you'll go with the rest of your colleagues from the project management department. Lin Yu will look after you."

"I know," laughed Shi Nuan. "I'm a grown-up, and I can take care of myself. You'll surely be busy tomorrow, so I promise I won't cause you any trouble."

Shi Nuan reached to fix Fu Chengyan's collar then patted him on the shoulder. "I have this feeling that you're hiding something from me. You're not planning something for tomorrow, are you?"

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Since it was the company's annual meeting tonight, everyone at Shengyuan was in no mood to work. All they could think about was getting there early after work. As the organizers of the meeting, Mai Qi and Song Jingyu arrived early at the venue.

However, Song Jingyu was a spoiled brat, so she didn't even bother to help. Her real purpose there was to make sure that the number tags were assigned according to her plan.

Song Jingyu found out that the person who would have the honor of the first dance would be picked via a lottery system. That was why she was interested in the number tags, despite the fact that Mai Qi didn't tell her about them.

Earlier on, she had confirmed with the staff backstage what the number in the box was. Only then did she come out front to greet Mai Qi.

Mai Qi was so busy that she didn't have any time to entertain Song Jingyu, who left a while later.

Song Jingyu placed a lot of importance on tonight's meeting. She even paid for a famous makeup artist to help her prepare, the kind that would usually work with superstars. After Song Jingyu left, Mai Qi finally had some time to talk to the staff backstage after running around non-stop for half a day. She learned from them that Song Jingyu had switched the number in the lottery box.

At six in the evening, everyone left for home to dress up. Only Shi Nuan and Lin Yu were left in the office discussing the details of their project. By the time they finished, half an hour had passed.

Luckily, Lin Yu kept time and realized that they were going to be late. He smiled and said, "Everyone has already left, so why are you still here?"

"Oh, I'm not in a hurry." Shi Nuan took a look at the time too. "The meeting starts at eight. It's only six-thirty now. The Prosperous Dynasty is close by, so there's no rush." As she spoke, she started to pack up the blueprints. "Mr. Lin, do you want to get prepared?"

"I'll just need to change my clothes since I have them in the office already." Lin Yu smiled as he looked at Shi Nuan's outfit. "What about you? Don't you ladies usually need to spend some time doing your makeup and all that? Even Yuan Jia has already left!"

"Me? Nah. My clothes are in the car, just like yours. I only need a short while to get dressed." Shi Nuan added, "So Mr. Lin, is that all for today?"

Lin Yu nodded and was very satisfied with Shi Nuan's work ethic. Compared to others, he had started to appreciate her more. He began to understand what Fu Chengyan saw in Shi Nuan. It wasn't hard for anyone to fancy her. "You should get changed too. I'll meet you downstairs in a while. Let's go together."

"Sure!"

Shi Nuan packed up the blueprints and locked them in the safe before going downstairs.

Ten minutes later, Lin Yu came down with a suit in hand. He seemed to be in a hurry. When he saw that Shi Nuan had already changed and was waiting by the car, he rushed over and apologized. "Sorry for the wait."

"No worries, it's only been ten minutes." Shi Nuan checked out Lin Yu with a glance and realized that she found him more handsome as the days went by. "Mr. Lin, you certainly look dashing today!"

“Is that so? Same to you!” Lin Yu realized that Shi Nuan didn’t change at all. All she did was put on a black jacket, which made her look even more business-like. “Let’s go! I’ve sent my car for repairs, so I’ll have to trouble you to give me a ride.”

“I’m happy to be of service, get in!”

Shi Nuan drove the red Ferrari, which was given to her by Fu Chengyan after they got married. It was very glamorous and was at the extreme end of how she was dressed for the annual meeting.

Right after he got in, Lin Yu kept playing with his phone as if he was chatting with someone. Shi Nuan, who was sitting in the driver’s seat, drove on as she turned to look at him. “Mr. Lin, you seem busy even after work.”

“Oh, it’s nothing. It’s just a friend that I haven’t seen in a long time. We were just chatting!” Lin Yu then put his phone away and started chatting with Shi Nuan. “I realized that you really are different. The rest are really excited about the dinner, but you look so calm.”

Shi Nuan laughed. “Do you think I should be excited too?”

“Speaking of this, I’ve been dying to ask. Are you and Mr. Fu...” Lin Yu raised an eyebrow. “It’s not about work, it’s just a personal question. You don’t have to answer if you don’t want to.”

“It’s fine. I’m sure you already know, and there’s no point in hiding it. We’ve just been married for a short while but didn’t tell anyone about it. However, Yan was the one that helped me get in.” Shi Nuan turned to look at Lin Yu. “I remember that you didn’t seem to like me in the beginning.”

Lin Yu retorted, “Are you trying to settle old scores?”

“Of course not!”

As they were chatting, they arrived at the entrance of Prosperous Dynasty.

The whole place had been reserved for Shengyuan Group's annual meeting. Hence, only Shengyuan employees or Xinhuang's stable of artistes would be there, and no outsiders were allowed.

When Shi Nuan and Lin Yu got out of the car, a valet approached them. Shi Nuan then passed him the keys and thanked him before entering the hall with Lin Yu.

Everyone was early today. When the two of them walked in, they realized that all the staff had arrived except for the senior management and Fu Chengyan.

Because they were all usually busy with work and seldom had the opportunity to get together, they started drinking and were already chatting away. When they saw Shi Nuan and Lin Yu entering together, they began to discuss their relationship.

"Look, guys. Isn't that Mr. Lin and Shi Nuan from the project management department?"

"Yeah. Why did they arrive together?"

"Maybe they are a couple!"

"That's right! Since both of them are single, something must be going on between them."

Yuan Jia was among the crowd. She had a glass of wine in one hand and a piece of cake in the other. When she heard what the crowd was murmuring about, she was so shocked that she almost spit out her wine.

She made her way through the crowd quickly and approached both of them. "Mr. Lin," Yuan Jia greeted before looking at Shi Nuan. "Come over here. I have something to ask you!"

Yuan Jia pulled Shi Nuan to a corner and took a good look at what she was wearing. She immediately furrowed her eyebrows. "It's bad enough that you were late, but why are you dressed this way?" Yuan Jia looked at Shi Nuan and then back at herself. The disappointment she felt just now about her own outfit disappeared after seeing what Shi Nuan was wearing.

At the very least, she was still in a gown. Shi Nuan was dressed in her casual clothes. Although she still looked good, it was inappropriate for that occasion. "Don't you have a gown?"

"I'm fine this way." Shi Nuan understood what Yuan Jia meant. "Why did you pull me here?"

"Didn't you hear what they were talking about? They said you and Mr. Lin are a couple. That's why I saved you!" Just as she finished, she glanced towards Lin Yu again. "By the way, are both of you..."

"Whatever relationship you have with him, it's the same for me." Shi Nuan laughed and didn't really mind what the others were saying.

Yuan Jia believed Shi Nuan. So when Shi Nuan said that nothing was going on, she knew she really meant it. "I can rest easy now. Don't you know that Mr. Lin himself is a very eligible bachelor too! A lot of the ladies are interested in him. I was just worried that they would hate you because of it!"

"Don't worry!" Shi Nuan patted Yuan Jia on her shoulder. "It's not as bad as you're making it out to be. I think Mr. Lin is a great guy and will definitely get someone wonderful as his wife. I don't think you need to worry on his behalf."

The rumors about Shi Nuan and Lin Yu quickly died down after a while. Especially since both of them didn't say anything about it, everyone just lost interest eventually.

Not far away, when Song Jingyu saw Shi Nuan, she was dumbfounded. She stared at Shi Nuan's face without blinking and was worried that she had made a

mistake. She found it to be very familiar. It was the same face she drew in her mind all these years, the same one which she hated to the bone. How could she not recognize her?

Shen Qianan, why are you here?

Didn't you leave Jiang City a few years ago? Why are you attending the Shengyuan annual meeting? No, it's impossible.

"Jingyu? Jingyu?"

"Ah! Aunt Song!" Song Jingyu was trembling all over as she was still in shock. She recovered her senses only when she saw Song Zhenyan. "Aunt Song, I saw her, I saw her!"

"Her? Who did you see?" Song Zhenyan finally felt something was up with Song Jingyu. "Who did you see? Why are you trembling?" Song Zhenyan looked around but didn't see anyone or anything suspicious.

"Jingyu?"

"Aunt Song, I really saw her." Song Jingyu grabbed Song Zhenyan's hand. "She, Shen Qianan, it's Shen Qianan. But didn't she leave Jiang City? She..."

"Who did you see? Shen Qianan?" Song Zhenyan was startled too as she looked around. "I don't see her around. Jingyu, are you so exhausted from all the dinner preparations that you are hallucinating?"

Song Jingyu shook her head. "No, Aunt Song, I really saw her. She's there..." Song Jingyu pointed in the direction where she saw Shi Nuan just now, but the woman was nowhere to be seen. She blinked her eyes again. "That's not possible. She was right there just now."

Song Jingyu pushed Song Zhenyan aside and ran to where Shi Nuan was standing but couldn't see her anymore. Yet, Song Jingyu was certain that she

saw Qianan, so she started muttering to herself. “How is that possible? I won’t make such a mistake. It really was Shen Qianan. Aunt Song, Shen Qianan is back. She’s here to take Yan away from me. You must make sure she doesn’t succeed. You have to help me.”

“Jingyu, Jingyu, you have to calm down!” Song Zhenyan grabbed Song Jingyu’s shaking body and gave her a big pinch. “Calm down and look at me. Even if she is back, I will never let her be with Yan. You have to trust me. How can someone like her deserve to be with Yan? Have you forgotten, she has been soiled.”

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That's right, she has been soiled.

Song Jingyu recovered her senses and calmly drank some water as she continued to look around. "Aunt Song, I don't think anyone saw me just now!" She almost forgot that she was at the annual meeting and that everyone was there.

When Song Zhenyan saw that Song Jingyu had calmed down, she heaved a sigh of relief. "Don't worry. I'm sure they didn't notice." Although Song Zhenyan told her that, many of the guests actually witnessed everything. However, because of their status, the crowd turned a blind eye to what happened earlier.

"Now that you are feeling better, were you responsible for decorating the place for tonight?" Song Zhenyan was impressed by what she saw. "Not bad, you are growing increasingly capable. Once Yan knows about it, he would be very proud."

"Really?"

"Of course it is. I'd never lie to you! Alright now, you're the master of ceremonies for tonight. It's time you get prepared so that you can put on your best performance for Yan to see." Song Zhenyan encouraged Song Jingyu. Out of the corner of her eyes, she saw Fu Heng supporting Ning Xin walking towards her. She knitted her eyebrows a little and took a deep breath. "Jingyu, go!"

"Alright, Aunt Song. I'll have to leave you now. I'll be back in a while!"

Song Jingyu ran happily backstage to freshen up her makeup, while Song Zhenyan walked toward Fu Heng's direction. "Fu Heng, Ning Xin, it's been a while."

"Zhenyan, you must be joking. We just saw each other a few days ago!" Fu Heng said as he helped Ning Xin around Song Zhenyan to find her a seat. "Ning, do you want something to drink?"

"Water's fine!" Ning Xin smiled as she saw Song Zhenyan approach her. "Zhenyan, do you want to sit together? Heng is going to get me some water. Would you want some?"

Song Zhenyan pursed her lips with a dark expression on her face. Nevertheless, she still nodded. "If it's not too much trouble." She immediately added, "Don't worry, I'll take care of Ning Xin."

Fu Heng squinted his eyes as if he was flashing her a warning. He said to Ning Xin, "I'll be right back."

"Alright!" Ning Xin smiled.

After Fu Heng had left, Song Zhenyan dropped her act. "Ning Xin, you seem delighted?"

Ning Xin knitted her brows. "I don't understand what you're trying to say. What am I delighted about?"

"You know what I mean. We both know what kind of method you used to pressure Heng to marry you last time. Don't think for a second that Heng treats you well because he loves you. I'm telling you that he just pities you because of your health condition. Do you really think you're all that?"

"It looks like even though you left the Fu clan for so long, your character hasn't changed a single bit. I'm the same as always. I don't understand what you are

talking about. I think it's better you save your energy by not talking to me instead."

"You..." Song Zhenyan was outraged.

When faced with Ning Xin's feigned ignorance, Song Zhenyan felt like she was punching at thin air. There was no impact no matter how hard she punched.

Ning Xin was just the same as she had always been. No words could hurt her.

"Ning Xin, that's why people hate you. I hated you the first time I lay my eyes on you."

"I'm no saint, so it won't be possible for everyone to like me. Since you hate me, there's nothing much I can do about it."

"Ning Xin, you just can't leave him alone, can you? I know you're delighted that you got to Heng first and caused me to suffer my whole life. And now you have taken my son too. What right do you have to do that? Tell me, what right do you have? I carried Yan in my belly for ten months. How could you take him as your own?"

"You have got it all wrong. Yan is your son and always will be. No one can take him away from you. Even I can't take him away from you. He is his own man and can think for himself. In fact, he has done very well." Ning Xin shook her head when she realized that Song Zhenyan's words were getting increasingly ridiculous. "Zhenyan, your broken relationship with Yan was not caused by me. It's the same when you chose to marry Fu Sheng but still wanted to get your hands on someone else who doesn't belong to you. And yet, you accuse me of stealing from you, is that really true?"

Ning Xin glared at Song Zhenyan, who was inexplicably frightened by her gaze. To be precise, Song Zhenyan became over-sensitive for some reason when Ning Xin looked at her.

Before she could say anymore, Fu Heng came back with a glass of water in his hand as he shot an indifferent glance at Song Zhenyan. He passed the water to Ning Xin and said, “Ning, see if the water is warm enough for you. I’ve asked someone to prepare it.”

When Song Zhenyan saw how attentive Fu Heng was to Ning Xin, she couldn’t help but feel jealousy well up inside her. “Heng, you...”

“Zhenyan, only Ning gets to call me ‘Heng’. Please respect that!” Fu Heng’s voice was frosty and had never cared about Song Zhenyan’s feelings whenever he dealt with her.

Song Zhenyan bit her own lips as her eyes started to turn red.

“Seems like everyone is here.” Fu Sheng approached them as he glanced around. His face turned dark but kept his thoughts to himself. “Heng and Ning, good to see you here.”

“Brother!” Fu Heng and Ning Xin nodded. “Yan said that tonight’s annual meeting will be very special, so he invited us to come.”

“He really is full of funny ideas.” Fu Sheng shook his head. “Where is he, by the way?”

Just as they spoke, there was a commotion on the second floor of Prosperous Dynasty. They saw Fu Chengyan entering with a jacket in his hand, followed closely by Zhou Zheng and Jiang Hu. It was a spectacular entrance indeed.

All the employees shouted for his attention as he walked past. However, all he did was glance around and continued walking ahead.

“Yan, you’re here!”

Song Jingyu walked out from backstage with her makeup done. She then saw Fu Chengyan making his way through the crowd to the middle of the ballroom.

Hence, she approached him without any hesitation. Before she could get any closer, she was stopped by the Zhou Zheng's bodyguards, who were dressed in black.

Song Jingyu wanted to get closer, but the bodyguards didn't allow her to do so.

She bit her lip in frustration and stomped her legs. "Yan, look what they are doing..."

Fu Chengyan shot her a frosty glance as if to warn her not to do anything rash.

"Yan is here!" Song Zhenyan had recovered her prim and proper composure and happily went to hold Song Jingyu's hand. "Yan, Jingyu is your sister. You should at least show her some respect during an occasion like this."

"Respect has to be earned and not given." Fu Chengyan then ignored while passing by her Song Zhenyan and head towards Fu Sheng and Fu Heng. "Father, Uncle, Aunt Ning, I'm glad you could make it."

"Of course." Fu Sheng smiled and reached out his hand to pat Fu Chengyan on the shoulder. "You did a good job here."

Fu Chengyan gave a slight nod. "Zhou Zheng, bring them to their seats, please."

"Yes, Mr. Fu!" Zhou Zheng then called for two of his bodyguards and instructed them to usher Fu Sheng, Fu Heng, and Ning Xin to their respective allocated seats.

However, Fu Chengyan's instructions didn't include Song Zhenyan. The differential treatment made Song Zhenyan upset, but she didn't make a fuss due to the occasion. She followed them and found a seat beside Fu Sheng. However, her eyes kept looking past him and were trained on Fu Heng instead.

Fu Sheng squinted his eyes as he placed his hands on the armrest. He snorted. “Song Zhenyan, at the very least, you’re a lady from a prominent family. Please mind your surroundings and behave like one!”

“You...Fu Sheng, you have no right to criticize me. For someone as despicable as you, you do not deserve to even speak in front of me!”

Fu Sheng smiled. “I wonder who’s the more despicable among the two of us? I’m in no mood to talk about the past again. A lot of time has passed since then, so you can stop wishing for things that don’t belong to you.”

...

“Mr. Fu, I’ve seated your father and your uncle, however...” Zhou Zheng leaned into Fu Chengyan’s ear and whispered something. Fu Chengyan squinted his eyes and nodded. “I understand. Where’s Mrs. Fu?”

“She’s over there.” Zhou Zheng pointed to Shi Nuan, who was chatting with Yuan Jia and Lin Yu. “She has been spending time with her colleagues from the project management department!”

Fu Chengyan nodded in acknowledgment. He looked through the crowd and focused his attention on Shi Nuan. She intuitively felt that he was looking at her and turned her head in his direction. Their eyes met at that moment. Right then, Shi Nuan curled her lips into a gentle smile. Fu Chengyan returned the smile and gestured at her.

When Shi Nuan saw what Fu Chengyan did, she raised her hand and drew a sign in the air. After that, she continued chatting with her colleagues.

Fu Chengyan smiled to himself and returned his attention to Zhou Zheng. “What’s the progress on the artistes from Xinhuang?”

“I just got off a call with Qin Hong. They’re already on their way and will arrive anytime.” Zhou Zheng then made another call. “Mr. Fu, they’re at the entrance now.”

Before they knew it, a commotion started at the entrance. Among the crowd was Xinhuang’s top female star, Bai Qing. Because of her status in Xinhuang, she had the privilege to be the first to enter, followed by Hai Na and Qin Mingzhu. The last to enter was Shi Wei.

All of them had heavy makeup on and looked glamorous. The moment they entered, they became the center of attention in the whole ballroom. Soon after, everyone started talking about them.

All the employees of Shengyuan were just ordinary white-collar workers. They seldom had the chance to meet any stars under normal circumstances, let alone seeing them all up close.

But because Xinhuang was huge, it was one of the flagship companies in the entertainment industry. However, it was still just one of the many subsidiaries under Shengyuan. It was a strange relationship indeed. But, it allowed the employees of Shengyuan to see all of Xinhuang’s stars at their annual meeting. It was some kind of an employee benefit to them.

Shi Wei looked gorgeous today in her makeup, and her gown was also one of her best. It was designed by a famous designer, Allen, and was the most highly sought-after gown during last year’s fashion week. That gown was, truly, one of a kind.

Shi Wei walked confidently despite her being the last. It was common among the female stars to constantly be comparing themselves against each other. Given that she was last in line, it was simply representative of her status in Xinhuang.

Shi Wei smiled, and her eyes sparkled when she saw Fu Chengyan nearby. She walked up to him and said “Uncle, it’s been a while!”