

## Multi skilled 371

### Chapter 371: Face Slap

Dou Xiangling soon returned to her easel as well.

When she picked up her brush, Meng He, who was observing an antique piece on the other side, suddenly looked up at her. A dim glint flashed through his eyes and it then disappeared instantly. Shortly afterwards, he also made his way back to his easel.

Half an hour later, all the contestants had returned to their easels.

Those who could reach the finals were not easy opponents. Regardless of whether they had understood those antiques or not, the moment their brushes touched the canvas, the various antiques came to life one after another.

The camera had captured every detail as they painted.

All the spectators were carefully looking at their paintings. The majority of the contestants had fans of their own and the respective fans had shifted the broadcast to the painter they were rooting for.

Zi Yi was a newcomer in the circle and even though she had revealed her skills in M.Uni's New Year event, there were not many people who knew of her.

Instead of her skills, everyone was looking at that beautiful face of hers and had ignored what she was painting.

Two hours later, Zi Yi suddenly stood up and announced, "I'm done."

Everyone was stunned.

After a moment of silence, everyone's gaze shifted to her canvas.

The painting was so lifelike as if the real antique had been placed on top of the canvas. It had stunned everyone.

The group of panel judges had gathered around her easel.

"This is the one and only painting I've ever seen that feels like it's the real antique!"

"It's so life-like. I feel like I have witnessed the culture and prosperity of that era."

"It's so similar that it's simply exactly the same!"

...

The higher the judge's evaluation of Zi Yi, the greater the pressure that the contestants felt.

Not to mention everyone was only basically half completed with their paintings.

Some of them started to get restless.

Meng He who was seated on one side had glanced in that direction and a fierce glint appeared in his eyes. He then shifted his gaze back to his easel and continued to paint.

He did not believe that with the preparations he had made in advance for the competition, he would not get first place.

The second one to complete the painting was Meng He.

When he stood up, he even checked out Dou Xiangling. When he saw that she was currently painting with full concentration, without being affected at all, the corner of his lips curved up indiscernibly.

Dou Xiangling, you're sure to lose.

The third to finish the painting was Dou Xiangling.

At the end of the four hours, the judges started to give scores.

Without any surprise, Zi Yi got the highest score, while Dou Xiangling was the second and Meng He was the third.

During this round, ten contestants were eliminated.

Meng He could not accept such a result and started to question the judges loudly after they released the scores. "Impossible! How could I be the third?!"

Country X's Chairman of the Painting and Calligraphy Association understood the contestants' emotions and tried to calm him down. "Mr. Meng, the scores were unanimously decided by the judges and through online voting. If you haven't done well this round, you can continue to work hard the following round."

"Impossible!" Meng He repeated his words. He had obtained the content of the first round from Feiya and checked the historical background of the antiques in advance, which was why he could draw out the souls of the antiques.

Originally he was confident that his painting would be the best. Yet, he had been surpassed by the woman he always wanted to win against. This made him feel irritable to the extent that a type of explosive emotion surged forth in his chest.

Dou Xiangling looked at Meng He and said in a calm voice, "This is the result of all the judges' selection. Meng He, I didn't expect you to be so arrogant, to the extent that you're unwilling to accept the reality."

Meng He's heart suddenly shook when he heard what she said.

He then looked at Dou Xiangling with those aggressive eyes of his, before he finally said, "Then we'll see who can win the next round."

Having said that, he shifted his gaze to Zi Yi. That gaze of his seemed as though he could pierce through her.

Zi Yi coldly looked in his direction and coldly said, "You can never win against me."

Meng He's hands clenched into fists and he sneered. "Then we'll wait and see."

He turned around and looked at the group of judges as he said, "I request for the audience voting to be revealed in the next round."

The contestants were unable to see the audience voting and Meng He felt that the judges were being biased.

He then looked towards Dou Xiangling and thought about the Dou Family behind her. He felt that the Dou Family must have built a good relationship with the Painting and Calligraphy Association in advance.

Meng He's request was not overboard and soon, his request was quickly agreed upon by the other contestants.

They were still immersed in the shock of being surpassed by Zi Yi.

She was clearly an unknown person so how could she possibly be more skilled than them, who were famous painters?"

The two Chairmen met gazes and discussed with the group of judges.

In the end, the Country X's Association Chairman said, "Ok, during the competition, we will reveal the audience voting on the screen."

When Meng He got the answer he wanted, he turned around and headed to the entrance.

When the group of reporters outside the museum saw that he was the first one to come out, they immediately surrounded him.

"Mr. Meng, you've obtained third place during the first round of the competition. Do you feel that this is not your true skill level?"

"Mr. Meng, what do you think of Zi Yi who won first place?"

"Mr. Meng, you and Miss Dou have been vying for first place ever since university. Now that you've lost to her in the first round, do you have anything you would like to say?"

...

With every question the reporters asked, Meng He's expression sank slightly.

He tightened his fists and with a fierce glint in his eyes, he stared at those who were asking him questions.

The reporters were shocked by Meng He's current expression, but soon they became even more excited.

Based on his reaction, it should be because he could not afford to lose.

"Mr. Meng, why are you looking at us like that? Could it be that you're feeling upset after losing to two ladies?"

That question had directly detonated the violent fuse within Meng He. "You motherfuck-..."

"Meng He!"

A harsh voice sounded by his ears and shortly after, he saw Feiya coming over to his side swiftly with a group of bodyguards.

Feiya arrived beside him and pulled his hand to leave.

The group of bodyguards had quickly separated them from the excited reporters.

Feiya pulled Meng He into the car and said expressionlessly, "You were too impulsive... You merely lost the first round. You can just win the second and the third round."

"What do you understand?" Meng He shouted at her and even his eyes were red.

He and Dou Xiangling joined the competition together and he must win against her!

Feiya stared at his expression and said, "I've contacted an internet army for the following two rounds. When the time comes, they will vote for you online. Rest assured, I guarantee that you'll definitely emerge in the top three."

Meng He immediately furrowed his brows at her words. His strong self-esteem made him dislike Feiya's actions. "I don't need an internet army. Moreover, I will get first place."

Feiya used an extremely weak voice and analyzed the current situation for him. "Dou Xiangling is from the Dou Family and their students are all over the world. Many people should have yet to react in the first round, but there will definitely be more attention in the following rounds. When the time comes, do you think you'll win against Dou Xiangling in the online audience voting?"

Speaking of this, she went silent for a few seconds before she added, "There's someone backing that Zi Yi. That person wants her to win and we have no other options."

Meng He's first thought was that since Zi Yi had a backing, she must have cheated and he asked, "Who's the person behind her?"

### **Chapter 372: Someone Wants to Make Things Difficult for Zi Yi**

Feiya did not reveal who the person was and she merely said, "I can't touch that person. You just need to know that you have to compete for the top three and that will do."

"Why?!"

Meng He clenched his fist. Wasn't this woman very capable? But yet she was asking him to fight for the top three. A flame of fury inexplicably rose up and he could not help but sneer. "Aren't you supposed to be very capable? Yet, you can't even handle two women now."

Feiya looked at him and her heart slightly turned cold. She said expressionlessly, "You can at most compete for the top 2, I've already bought an internet army group. If you still can't win against Dou Xiangling, it's because you're incompetent."

"You—"

Meng He did not expect Feiya to say that. In order to have him marry her and have children together, this woman had been heeding all his whims in the past. Yet, she had said that today. This caused him to suddenly feel that it was unfair.

That feeling caused his already fierce gaze to intensify. He gritted his teeth and said, "The first place must be mine. I don't need you to do anything and I can beat them myself."

He opened the car door and quickly alighted without even bothering to turn back.

Feiya looked at his departing back view and her clenched hands loosened ever so slightly. She glanced at the palms of her hands that were swollen due to her nails and said to the driver after a long time had passed, "To the Lu Group."

The Lu Group had a branch office in Country X. Feiya felt that since Zi Yi was the President's woman, he must have arrived here too. She intended to meet with him.

...

There was another round of competition in the afternoon and the contestants were only given an hour of break time in between.

When Zi Yi and Dou Xiangling walked out of the art museum together, the group of reporters who saw them were all extremely excited, seemingly about to swarm over to them like bees.

Yet, a group of well-trained bodyguards swiftly appeared and stopped the reporters from approaching.

At the same time, Housekeeper Ye, who was wearing a suit, had walked up to Zi Yi and Dou Xiangling. "Ladies, I'll be fetching you home for lunch."

Dou Xiangling was a little surprised to see him. "Why has Housekeeper Ye come here?"

"The Second Young Master instructed me to come and fetch the two ladies."

Hearing his words, Dou Xiangling looked at Zi Yi with a smile.

The corner of Zi Yi's lips had also curled up.

The two of them then followed Housekeeper Ye and headed to one side.

The reporters did not even have the chance to ask questions. They kept taking photos and made random guesses as to who were the ones who brought them away.

Just then, a group of contestants who came out, just so happened to see the three of them leaving.

One of them said sarcastically, "As expected of the Dou Family. They're able to be so high-profile even in these types of International competitions. I feel like we're here to fill up the numbers for this competition."

The person next to him begged to differ. "Even though the Dou Family is world-famous, they're known for being low-profile. It's obvious that the group of bodyguards are men of that housekeeper, who is under Zi Yi."

Another person suddenly snorted coldly. "With such a great show of resources, is she trying to tell us that she has a powerful backing? She's merely a woman from China, I don't believe that her backing is so powerful that she could manipulate the competition."

His words caused a group of people to suddenly turn silent and some thoughts started to bud in their hearts.

Their conversation had reached the ears of the reporters who were eavesdropping on them.

The reporters were all excited.

When Zi Yi and Dou Xiangling returned to the villa and were about to have lunch, Shadow suddenly appeared.

Dou Xiangling and Housekeeper Ye were momentarily surprised.

Zi Yi seemed to have guessed that something happened and asked, "What's wrong?"

"Master, news that you used your backing to manipulate this competition will be released online soon."

Dou Xiangling and Housekeeper Ye's expressions sank at his words.

"Yiyi..."

Zi Yi gave Dou Xiangling a look as if to calm her down as she asked Shadow, "Which media companies are involved?"

Shadow mentioned several companies.

There were not only just a few media companies. Instead, there were dozens of them. Moreover, their influence over the internet was not to be looked down on.

Zi Yi pondered for several seconds before she said, "Let them release the information."

The corner of her lips curled up. "Not only are you to let them release the information, but also help them publicize it."

"I understand, Master."

Shadow turned invisible after it responded.

Zi Yi was met with both their surprised and puzzled gazes and she said, "It just so happens that we can get everyone to be aware of this competition. When the time comes, we'll use our capabilities to shut their mouths."

Dou Xiangling was momentarily stunned upon hearing that. She suddenly recalled that Zi Yi had never appeared in the Painting and Calligraphy circle before and many people would use malicious intentions to suspect her abilities. If that's the case, wasn't it better to use real abilities to make them shut up?

Dou Xiangling nodded in agreement. "This sounds good."

Zi Yi was about to start eating, when her phone suddenly rang.

The phone call was from Lu Jingye. He seemed to have also gotten to know of this matter.

Zi Yi explained to him about her plans and they ended the call afterwards.

While they were halfway into their lunch, Zi Yi's phone started to ring again.

This time around, there were N number of messages coming in.

She picked up her phone to take a look. All of them were messages from people she knew asking her what had happened and why there was all this negative information about her over the internet.

Zi Yi was too lazy to reply to them one by one and said to Shadow, "Help me reply to their messages and inform them of my plans."

After the meal, Housekeeper Ye sent Zi Yi and Dou Xiangling to the art museum.

This time around, there was even a larger crowd outside the venue and all of them appeared to be very agitated.

The moment Zi Yi alighted from the car, reporters shouted out loud as they were blocked by the bodyguards.

"Miss Zi, many netizens are spreading that you're a young lady from a rich family in China and you parachuted into the finals?"

"Miss Zi, were you already aware of the contents of this morning's competition, which was why you had completed the painting so quickly?"

"Miss Zi..."

...

This group of reporters seemed to have been injected with stimulants, as their questions were sharper than the other.

It just so happened that the other eight contestants who managed to advance to the next round arrived at the entrance too.

The moment they heard what the reporters asked, they stopped at the same time.

Dou Xiangling furrowed her brows and whispered to Zi Yi, "Yiyi, are you sure you're not intending to say anything?"

"I won't respond, let the others talk."

As Zi Yi remained silent, the question that the reporters asked became even more explosive.

At this moment, Meng He used a casual tone to speak to the contestant standing next to him. "To know if she had cheated or not, we can adopt a real-name registration system for the next online voting and let the netizens come up with the topic. The system can then randomly select a topic to use as the topic for the round."

When the contestant next to Meng He heard what he said, he felt that it was a good idea and mentioned this suggestion out loud.

At first, everyone remained silent as they heard it.

Shortly afterwards, the other six contestants agreed to it.

The reporters were also excited after having heard what they said.

One of the reporters asked in a loud voice, "Miss Zi, what do you think of your opponent's suggestion?"

Zi Yi spoke. "Sounds good."

The reporters were broadcasting live at this moment and the netizens started to discuss this competition due to the suggestion.

All of them felt that it was a good idea.

Soon, the people from the Painting and Calligraphy Association also got to know about this. After a round of discussion, they agreed to this mode of selection.

### **Chapter 373: Second Round of the Competition, the Netizens Come up With the Topic**

The International Painting and Calligraphy Competition was originally something that was known within their own circle. Those that paid attention were people who studied art and a group of art collectors.

After the voices of doubt and speculations about Zi Yi in the afternoon, the second round of the competition had been the focus of attention.

Some of them started to dig up information about Zi Yi.

“This Zi Yi is not a simple figure. First, she was a spoiled brat, and shortly after, she suddenly turned the tables and clinched first place in M.Uni’s independent enrollment. How did she manage to do that?”

“Everyone, you can go and look at Zi Yi’s appearance in the morning competition and we’ll talk after.”

“So beautiful. This is the first time I’ve seen such a beautiful girl. She’s as beautiful and delicate as an angel.”

“Such a beautiful lady must already have a boyfriend.”

“If those conjectures are true, there must definitely be a powerful person behind a beautiful woman. This would then also confirm the speculations.”

“The person backing her must have used some methods in order to let her clinch the first place spot. Winning first place in an International Painting and Calligraphy competition sounds very impactful.”

“The painting she painted in the morning is honestly very good. It’s to the extent that I can’t even tell apart the painting and the real deal. Could it be that she had made a switch during the competition? Then who is the real owner of the painting?”

...

The guesses on the internet increased explosively. When the International Painting and Calligraphy Association revealed the topic of the second round of the competition would be determined by the netizens, the whole internet exploded.

At the same time, numerous international online media started to broadcast the competition.

In less than half a day, the international competition had become known by the whole world.

Within the art museum.

Country X’s Calligraphy and Painting Association Chairman was currently conversing with a group of judges about how the netizens would come out with a topic.



“Only ten minutes have passed and there are already tens of thousands of suggestions.”

“These people are all real individuals and we are also able to locate their specific locations. Moreover, those that came up with the topic are people from all walks of life.”

The group of judges lowered their heads and started a discussion.

One of the judges was worried. “If the system chooses an extremely difficult topic, is four hours too little?”

Another judge thought for a moment and suggested. “If the topic that the system randomly draws out is very difficult, we can postpone the last round by one day and extend the second round. The contestants who advance would have a day off.”

“I agree with this suggestion.”

Shortly after, several judges agreed with the suggestion.

The afternoon competition was originally stated to start at 2 p.m.

However, as the topic would be given by the netizens, the competition had been delayed for half an hour.

2:30 p.m.

It was the cut-off time for the netizens to suggest a topic.

“Oh heavens, in such a short time, there are 158,435 people who came up with a topic!”

People belonging to the Painting and Calligraphy circles were all shocked when they saw the number of responses.

“These people come from all around the world and are from all walks of life. The topics they suggest would definitely be very strange. I wonder if it would make things difficult for the contestants.”

Members of the Painting and Calligraphy Association quickly flipped through the topics that were submitted. All their expressions became heavy.

Country X’s Association Chairman said to the judges, “Some of the topics aren’t very difficult. We have to choose one among so many. Otherwise, our circle would be the one who embarrasses ourselves.”

Upon hearing that, everyone discovered that they were too hasty in making this decision.

Just when everyone was in a dilemma, the International Association’s Chairman received a phone call. After hanging up, he said excitedly, “Someone has solved this problem for us! The system will automatically remove those useless and strange submissions.”

Only then did they breathe out a sigh of relief.

2:40 p.m.

The International Association Chairman came out and announced the rules of the competition. “As there are too many submissions, for the sake of fairness, we will implement the system and continue scrolling

through the suggestions for a minute. One minute later, the topic that is selected will be what the contestants have to work with.”

After the Chairman finished his speech, all kinds of topics appeared on the large screen and the system started to scroll through. Everyone was staring at the screen.

They had held their breaths as they waited for the result.

A minute later, the topic was shown on the screen.

[Use a piece of hay to make everyone cry (Note: no people or animals can appear in the drawing)]

The contestants looked at the screen and pondered for a while before they turned around and walked towards their easel.

When the ten contestants began drawing, the netizens started a discussion.

Some said that the topic was too simple and there were also some who said that it was extremely difficult.

Thus, a debating contest had progressed over the internet.

On the other hand, half an hour had passed in the competition venue and some of them had yet to touch their brushes.

The judges looked at the ten contestants and conversed in a low voice.

“I didn’t expect such a topic to have been chosen, it’s going to be difficult for them.”

“I beg to differ as I think that this topic is good. The highest realm in our circle is for us to be able to convey the artistic concept of our painting. As long as you can move people with your artistic concept, then it’s considered a real success.”

“It seems like the person who submitted this topic is a kindred spirit.”

“I wonder who among all of them would be able to complete such a painting.”

Everyone turned their attention to the canvas of the ten contestants. At this conjecture, everyone had more or less drawn something.

When their gazes shifted to Zi Yi’s canvas, they could not shift their eyes away.

What Zi Yi drew was, in fact, very simple. It was a piece of grass floating in a stormy sea.

It was precisely that piece of grass that made those who saw the painting unconsciously think back to their lives.

The group of judges had teared up.

The netizens who were looking at Zi Yi’s painting were also silent.

Her painting clearly looked plain on the surface so why did they suddenly start tearing up at the sight of it?

Some of the netizens left comments online.

“This is the first time I cried while looking at a piece of painting. When looking at it, I actually recalled the grievances I had suffered in the past, and feelings of unwillingness soon surged forth.”

“I thought that I have lived the past dozens of years happily, but when I saw that painting, I felt apologetic to my parents. My happiness was given by them but I have never been grateful to them.”

...

It took Zi Yi three hours to complete the painting.

After she was done, she felt somewhat unsatisfied and drew a sun at a corner of the canvas with a paintbrush.

Unexpectedly, the additional detail she added caused everyone to cry even harder.

“Wuuuu... earlier on, the painting reflects the depression of darkness but with the addition of the sun, I feel hopeful again.”

“I finally understand what it means to cry out of joy. It’s because there’s hope.”

After Zi Yi finished painting, she put her brush aside and headed to one side.

Those contestants who were halfway done started to get anxious when they saw that she had completed her painting so quickly.

Only Dou Xiangling and Meng He, who were seated in different positions, were still concentrated as they painted. Both of their faces revealed confidence.

Another hour or so later, Meng He put down his brush and stood up. “I’ve finished painting.”

#### **Chapter 374: Zi Yi Getting Acknowledged, Dinner Party Invite**

The top five contestants would advance after the second round, but six contestants ended up advancing.

As usual, Zi Yi was the first. In second place were Meng He and a man called Allen who was from Country F. The third place belonged to Dou Xiangling.

No one dared to come out and dispute the fact that Zi Yi obtained the first place as the facts had already been laid out in open.

As for Dou Xiangling’s third place...

It was not that her painting was bad. Instead, her heart was filled with goodness and happy thoughts. Therefore, she was unable to draw out the heart-wrenching pain like Meng He. The other guy named Allen was also very skilled.

At this conjecture, the discussion over the internet has reached an all-time high.

“I have to admit that Zi Yi’s painting is full of soul.”

“At first glance, her painting is very shocking. But when I took another look, it made me cry.”

“It was clearly full of desperation and the sun she added at the end made people feel hopeful again. However, the thought of crying was even more intense.”

“If this kind of painting can’t win the first place, then I can only say that other people’s work is unworthy.”

“In the past, some master’s paintings were sold at sky-high prices. I’m pretty curious. If this painting were to be put up for sale, what price would it fetch?”

“I can confirm that normal people are unable to afford it.”

...

When the judges announced the results, the other contestants were already impressed by Zi Yi as they viewed her in a new light.

One of the female painters from Country F walked over to Zi Yi and said sincerely, “Zi, I apologize for holding contempt towards you previously. Your painting is really good.”

She then held out her hand and said, “Can we have a hug?”

The female contestant came in sixth place and did not manage to advance to the next round.

Zi Yi was not fond of having too close contact with strangers and she merely held out her hand.

“Shaking hands will do.”

The female contestant was stunned at first before she smiled and held out her hand to shake hands with Zi Yi.

“I will stay until the end of the competition before I leave. I hope that I can see you coming in first.”

“Okay.”

Zi Yi took back her hand and looked towards Dou Xiangling.

She was currently chatting with an acquaintance who did not successfully advance to the next round. Throughout the entire conversation, her expression was gentle and unassuming. Even if she had won third place this round, she did not reveal the slightest unwillingness.

Zi Yi was just about to look away when she saw Meng He standing alone out of the corner of her eye.

Meng He was a proud guy. It was to the extent he disdained conversing with anyone. However, his appearance was considered very attractive to women from western countries. Right now, there were already two contestants who had been eliminated from the first round heading in his direction.

However, he did not pay them the slightest attention as his gaze was locked on Dou Xiangling throughout.

Looking at this, Zi Yi revealed an indiscernible frown.

Just then, Meng He ignored the two women who came up to him and walked towards Dou Xiangling’s side.

Zi Yi had also tagged along.

“Dou Xiangling.”

Dou Xiangling was currently conversing with her acquaintance and she looked up upon hearing someone call for her.

Meng He stared at her closely and said, “There’s one last round left. I will definitely win against you.”

Dou Xiangling calmly nodded and said in a lukewarm manner, “Okay, all the best.”

She then continued to chat with her acquaintance.

Meng He looked at Dou Xiangling who was not taking him seriously in the slightest. He was so angry that a fierce fire burned in his chest.

Clearly, they had always been rivals and he paid so much attention to this, yet she did not take it seriously at all.

How can she do this?!

Meng He stared at Dou Xiangling in great rage.

Seeing this, Zi Yi stepped forward to Dou Xiangling and called out, “Cousin.”

When Zi Yi had reached where Dou Xiangling was at, Meng He’s aggressive eyes looked at her.

Zi Yi tilted her head and returned his stare with a gaze of her own.

Dou Xiangling was just talking to Hank about Zi Yi and when she saw that she was making her way over, Dou Xiangling smiled and proudly said, “Yiyi is my cousin.”

Hank was first surprised for a moment, before he nodded in understanding. “The Dou Family not only produces capable people but also beautiful women.”

Hank then smiled and invited Zi Yi. “Zi, your painting is superb. I feel that I’m still lacking compared to you. I wonder if you would mind if the three of us were to have dinner tonight to discuss painting?”

Just as Zi Yi was about to reply, Country X’s Association Chairman loudly said, “Ladies and gentlemen, please tone down momentarily. I have something to announce to everyone.”

Thus, everyone present fell into silence.

The Chairmen of Country X and the International Painting and Calligraphy Association stood side by side and there was a smile on their faces.

Country X’s Association Chairman said, “As the topic of the second round is rather unique, the organizing committee will be adjusting the topic of the third round. Therefore, tomorrow’s competition will be postponed by one day.”

He then added, “Tonight, the organizing committee will be holding a dinner party. I hope that everyone present can attend it. The dinner will be held at Count Alistair’s house. Our staff will send the detailed address to your phones.”

When everyone heard the venue of the dinner party, they were all surprised.

“Isn’t it a dinner party held by the organizing committee? Why would it be held at Count Alistair’s house?”

“Didn’t you see the list of members of the organizing committee? Count Alistair is an art enthusiast and an honorary member of the committee.”

“No wonder. But to be able to visit Count Alistair’s house for a dinner party is surely exciting.”

There were many people looking forward to the dinner party. In addition, such events could also promote communication between various artists.

Most importantly, many of them planned to befriend Zi Yi and so, they were even more willing to attend the dinner party.

It was already 6 p.m now and they still had to return to their respective hotels to change their clothes and do their makeup. Therefore, they did not continue to linger as they left one after another.

Zi Yi and Dou Xiangling left together and unsurprisingly, they were surrounded by the group of reporters again.

Zi Yi could not be bothered to answer the reporters’ questions and Dou Xiangling did not wish to comment much this time around. Under the protection of the bodyguards, the two of them got in the car and left.

As soon as they left, Meng He came out from the art museum.

Two bodyguards came up to him and said, “Mr. Meng, Miss Feiya ordered us to pick you up.”

Meng He recalled the unpleasant interaction he had in the afternoon and gave them a cold gaze before he stepped aside.

The two bodyguards looked at each other and hastily followed after him.

The reporters were feeling disappointed, as they did not manage to interview Zi Yi and Dou Xiangling. The moment they saw Meng He walking out, they surrounded him with all their microphones.

Meng He simply gave them a cold glare before he left.

The reporters were unhappy with his attitude.

“What’s there to be arrogant about? Didn’t he only come in second place in the second round of the competition? Perhaps he might drop out of the first three in the next round. Does he honestly think he’s all that great?”

“That’s right. Miss Zi is the one that’s really skilled. Miss Dou’s painting is also rather good. I feel that he can only come in third place at best.”

...

Meng He clenched his fists in anger when he heard what they said. He had the urge to turn around and give them a beating.

He would never let Dou Xiangling surpass him!

...

Just as Zi Yi and Dou Xiangling got in the car, they received the address for tonight's dinner party from the organizing committee.

Dou Xiangling smiled and told Zi Yi about Count Alistair. "Count Alistair is a fanatical fan of paintings and he is fond of collecting famous paintings from all around the world. My friend previously said that Count Alistair's house is full of painting and it looks like an art gallery when you enter."

She thought about it for a moment and added, "Precisely because he is a fan of paintings, Count Alistair might ask you for a painting when the time comes. He has a rather good reputation in the circle and can be befriended."

### **Chapter 375: Cousins Wearing Cheongsams to Attend the Dinner Banquet**

Since it was a dinner banquet, they had to wear formal clothes.

"What a headache. It's too late to buy a dress either."

When Zi Yi heard Dou Xiangling's concerns, she didn't think of it as a problem. "Cousin, didn't you bring a few cheongsams? Those are prettier than those evening gowns."

Dou Xiangling thought about Zi Yi's words for a moment and felt that it was a feasible idea. However... "Yiyi, do you have any evening gowns?"

"Nope," Zi Yi answered her honestly. "All of my clothes are casual clothes."

She didn't think about it in the past, but ever since she got together with Lu Jingye, it seemed like all her clothes had been prepared for her by him. Therefore, she did not have a single dress or skirt in her wardrobe.

Dou Xiangling tilted her head to the side and seemed to have suddenly thought of something. "Why don't you wear my cheongsam? I just happened to have brought one which I haven't worn yet."

Having said that, Dou Xiangling was suddenly expectant. "Even though I'm shorter than you, that cheongsam is more towards a longer style. You'll definitely be able to wear it."

Other than the fact that Dou Xiangling was shorter than Zi Yi by a few centimeters, their figures were more or less similar.

Most importantly, she wanted to see how stunning Zi Yi looked when she wore a cheongsam.

Zi Yi looked at Dou Xiangling's shining eyes and pursed her lips to think about it for a moment before she nodded. "Alright then."

Thus, the two of them headed upstairs.

Dou Xiangling headed to her room to grab the new cheongsam and passed it to Zi Yi.

The cheongsam had a drop collar design and the color was a crescent white, embroidered with a blue and white porcelain pattern.

If Dou Xiangling were to wear it, she would definitely look like she belonged to a good family and resemble a fair lady.

However, it was different when Zi Yi wore it.

Her stunning appearance and her curvaceous figure made her appear even more gorgeous and charming.

Together with the drop collar design and the height of where the slit of the cheongsam was at...

It made her seem enchanting.

Coupled with her cool and aloof temperament, she seemed so noble that it gave off a feeling that one could only look at her from a distance and not come into contact with it.

Dou Xiangling was stunned when she saw Zi Yi wearing the cheongsam.

This was the first time Zi Yi had worn a cheongsam and she was not used to it. She stood before the mirror and pulled the clothes from her chest. She then said to Dou Xiangling, who was standing beside her, "Cousin, I feel that it's a little tight."

Dou Xiangling walked towards her and pulled the sides of the cheongsam. "It's just nice. You've brought out the full potential of this cheongsam."

The corner of her lips curled up and she said, "If you wear this and attend the dinner party, everyone's eyes will be on you tonight."

Zi Yi quirked her eyebrow and deliberately revealed traces of dandiness. Her whole temperament changed and she seemed slightly naughty. "Whoever dares to stare at me, I shall beat them up so much that they won't dare to look at me for another second."

Dou Xiangling was amused by her words and she said, after she finished laughing, "You're a lady tonight. Don't think about beating people up... even if you really do want to beat someone up, get Shadow to do the job."

Zi Yi's eyes curved into crescents and a sudden thought appeared in her mind. She took out her phone, opened the camera, and took a selfie. She deliberately omitted her face and sent the photo to Lu Jingye.

[Ah Jing, guess who is this?]

Unexpectedly, Lu Jingye did not even need to guess as the reply was immediate.

[Wear a shawl.]

Zi Yi: "..."

Lu Jingye's second message soon arrived.

[The temperature difference between day and night in Country X is pretty drastic. Wear a thicker shawl, and don't catch a cold.]

Zi Yi: "..."



The third message: [Be obedient.]

Dou Xiangling looked at Zi Yi's appearance as if she did not know what kind of expression she should have on her face. She then laughed and said, "Yiyi, don't stand there and stare at your phone. Let's go."

Zi Yi recovered her senses and the word, 'old-fashioned' repeatedly sounded in her mind. However, the corner of her lips curled up uncontrollably.

She checked her wardrobe and did not find any shawl she could use. She then asked Dou Xiangling. "Do you have a shawl?"

Dou Xiangling did indeed have one.

"You want one?"

"Yep."

Dou Xiangling was a little surprised, but she still went to fetch two shawls.

The shawls she had were those of thin fabric. In fact, there was little difference between wearing them and not wearing them.

Zi Yi put on the shawl over her shoulders and thought that as long as she wore something, that old-fashioned man would have nothing to say.

Since Zi Yi was using a shawl, of course, Dou Xiangling would also follow suit.

Only then did they head downstairs.

However, she did not expect to see Housekeeper Ye holding onto a shawl at the lobby as he smiled and waited for her.

"Miss Zi, Second Young Master just called and told me to prepare a shawl for you."

He then passed her shawl to her and added, "The material is made of X-silk fabric and you won't feel too warm."

Before Zi Yi managed to react to his words, Dou Xiangling directly laughed with her hands covering her mouth.

Zi Yi changed the shawl and looked at Dou Xiangling who was smiling brightly with a wooden expression.

Dou Xiangling continued to laugh for a while. After she finished laughing, she said, "Actually, it's not bad to have such a boyfriend."

Zi Yi laughed at what she said and nodded in agreement.

The two of them headed outside the villa together.

Housekeeper Ye had already prepared the car, driver, and bodyguard for them.

After the two of them got in the car, it drove out of the villa.

Count Alistair's house was not too far from Lu Jingye's villa. By the time Zi Yi and Dou Xiangling arrived, it was already past 7 p.m.

The Count's house was of a typical Western European Baroque style, with a round spire and numerous carvings. The house was rich in colors, giving off a magnificent feeling.

As soon as the car stopped, a servant came over and opened the door for them, and led them inside.

Obviously, the people attending tonight's dinner party were not only the contestants. There were also some nobles.

Along the way, they had received everyone's attention. There were many men who forgot how to walk just because they had walked past them. Some of the women could not help but feel sour at that.

"They aren't wearing evening gowns?"

"But the dresses they're wearing are really beautiful."

"What's the use of it being beautiful? They're simply being disrespectful to Count Alistair by wearing that."

"That's right. Everyone here is wearing evening gowns but they are actually wearing those types of clothes? Are they deliberately trying to attract everyone's attention?"

...

Those who were making their way inside had all stopped in their tracks to look at them.

Dou Xiangling furrowed her brows when she heard their comments towards them. However, she did not intend to argue or reason with them and felt that it was better to avoid trouble.

However, Zi Yi stopped and looked at those noble young ladies who were commenting on their attire. Under the gazes of the public, she walked towards them and asked coldly, "How are our clothes disrespecting Count Alistair?"

The few noble ladies did not expect Zi Yi to confront them directly. After they blanked out momentarily, they were displeased.

"Did we say anything wrong? Everyone who participated in tonight's dinner banquet is dressed to the nines. Only the two of you are dressed differently from everyone."

"Do you know the cheongsam culture of China?"

"Ugh..." That noble lady was speechless.

Zi Yi calmly explained to her the origin and history of cheongsams.

After she was done, she looked toward the few noble ladies and said, "Every country has its own clothing tradition. Us wearing cheongsam is because we have attached importance to attending this dinner banquet. However, it had unexpectedly ended up as us being disrespectful to Count Alistair. I honestly wish to ask the few of you, could it be that the etiquette of your country is unable to accommodate another country's traditional culture?"

## Chapter 376: Zi Yi Did Plastic Surgery

Zi Yi questioned them back straightforwardly and instantly caused the few noble ladies to turn red and they could not find any words to refute her.

This situation here was soon known by Count Alistair's people. A man wearing a burgundy suit soon walked out from the inside.

Before he had come out, the servants had reported the situation to him. When he saw that it was Zi Yi standing there, his eyes revealed amazement at first glance. He then revealed a gentleman's smile and walked over, while deliberately talking in a humorous tone. "Beautiful ladies, our hall inside is more beautiful than outside. Why don't you come in first?"

He then motioned for them to head inside.

When the few noble ladies saw that there was a chance for them to get out of the predicament, they hastily met gazes and headed in.

The man walked over to Zi Yi and Dou Xiangling and first did a gentlemanly gesture before he introduced himself, "Dear beautiful ladies, my name is Ansel. Welcome to my house as guests."

He then smiled and looked at Zi Yi, "The painting Miss Zi completed today during the competition is exceptionally amazing. My father has been obsessed with the two paintings done by Miss Zi ever since he had laid his eyes on them.

There's also Miss Dou's painting. Miss Dou truly deserves to be known as the forerunner among the younger generation of artists. Every single painting of yours is so fascinating."

"Thank you."

Dou Xiangling politely thanked him while Zi Yi merely gave him a brief nod.

Ansel then made an invitational gesture towards them and led them inside. While walking, he said, "What Miss Zi said earlier is very reasonable. Every country has its own clothing traditions and the cheongsam of your country is really stunning. It's even more charming when worn on the two ladies.

Therefore, there's no need to worry about what others say. Tonight's dinner banquet is to welcome the contestants and you can wear anything you prefer."

Ansel's words were considerably pleasant to the ears and Dou Xiangling chatted with him longer due to politeness.

Whereas Zi Yi kept her mouth shut and followed them, without the slightest intention of speaking.

This caused Ansel to look in her direction several times.

When the two of them were led away by Ansel, some women standing behind them could not help but whisper, "I didn't expect Ansel, the son of Count Alistair to personally come out and welcome Dou Xiangling and Zi Yi. Could it be that Count Alistair intends to connect with the Dou Family through marriage?"

"It's likely. The Dou Family is extremely well-known and if they could connect through marriage, it is surely a good thing for the Count Family. However, I noticed that Young Master Ansel has been looking in Zi Yi's direction. Does he fancy her?"

"Say, do you think she has undergone plastic surgery before? How could there be such a beautiful woman? I feel that even her figure has gone under the knife."

"Absolutely. It's obvious that a woman like her is the restless type. Did you see those men? They practically have their eyes glued onto her."

...

They entered the main entrance and passed through a corridor with murals hung on both sides before arriving in the hall.

Within the magnificent hall, it was already crowded with people. Everyone either had a glass of red wine in their hands as they chatted about life or perhaps they were appreciating the paintings in the hall while enjoying the wine alone.

Count Alistair's living room was full of paintings. Every single painting was genuine and priceless.

Ansel raised his hand to beckon to a servant. He then picked up two glasses of red wine from the tray.

"Miss Zi, Miss Dou, my father will be arriving shortly. You can casually hang around for a while."

Having said that, he even turned to Zi Yi and asked, "Beautiful Miss Zi, can I invite you for a dance later?"

Zi Yi held the glass of wine in her hand and refused without the slightest hesitation. "Apologies, I don't dance."

Ansel originally wanted to say that he could lead her if she did not know how to dance. However, he understood the meaning behind her words in the next second. Traces of disappointment flashed through his eyes, but he still said in a gentlemanly manner, "What a pity then."

He then looked towards Dou Xiangling.

"Beautiful Miss Dou..."

"Ansel."

A feminine woman's voice suddenly interrupted.

Shortly after, they saw a woman leisurely walking over. She wore a tight, short black dress that revealed her figure as she headed over towards them while walking gracefully in her high heels.

When the woman arrived next to Ansel, she naturally grabbed his arm and looked at Zi Yi and Dou Xiangling.

That gaze of hers was filled with hostility.

After the woman sized them up, she deliberately said, "Ansel, there are so many artists who are here today. You can't be so impartial and only attend to these two beautiful ladies."

Following that, she looked at Zi Yi and her eyes were filled with hostility, which she self-assumed that she had concealed very well. “Ever since Miss Zi entered, all the men’s gazes are all attracted to you. I believe Miss Zi must have spent quite the sum of money to maintain such a beautiful appearance?”

How could Zi Yi not detect the sarcasm in her words? Similarly, her lips curled up, and she replied, “There’s a saying in our country. A natural born beauty is hard to conceal. The amount of cosmetics I use is surely lesser than yours.”

“How do you know if you don’t use more cosmetics than I do?” The woman pointed out. “I only use a set of skincare products, and I do not get any injections or consume any medicine. At most, I would visit the skincare centers to learn some facial massages. I feel that I spend much less time and effort on my face and body as compared to Miss Zi.”

“Is that so? But I only use a bottle of skin care essence and nothing else.”

That bottle of essence was personally refined by herself and it was a dozen times more effective than the so-called skincare products in this world.

“How is that possible!” The woman did not believe her words and was about to rebuke her.

Just then, Zi Yi looked at her and revealed a puzzled expression. “Compared to my appearance, I prefer to showcase my talents. Moreover, we’re here tonight to discuss the paintings, so... why do you keep discussing such a meaningless topic with me?”

The woman: “...”

Zi Yi looked away and said to Dou Xiangling, “Cousin, let’s go and check out the paintings on the wall.”

Dou Xiangling immediately nodded in agreement. “Okay!”

Thus, the two of them turned away and headed elsewhere.

The woman was angered so much by Zi Yi that her face had nearly distorted.

At this point in time, Ansel spoke in a tone that contained slight displeasure. “Lucy, I think that you’re targeting Miss Zi.”

Lucy’s heart trembled for a second and she hastily controlled her expression before revealing a delicate smile as she held his arm. “How could I be targeting Miss Zi? I’m only curious about what kind of skincare products Miss Zi uses. Moreover, when women gather, we will always like to discuss such topics.”

Ansel gave her a look and said nothing else.

After the guests had all arrived, Count Alistair walked out from the side corridor with a group of people.

Together with him were the two Painting and Calligraphy Association’s Chairmen, a group of Master Painters, along with several middle-aged aristocrats.

The group walked out as they chatted and the originally noisy hall immediately quieted down.

Count Alistair looks like a gentlemanly middle-aged man. However, those eyes of his seemed to contain indiscernible wisdom.

First, he said a few courtesy words of welcome, before he then looked towards Zi Yi.

### **Chapter 377: I've Taken a Fancy to Miss Zi. Mr. Meng, Do You Want to Cooperate With Me?**

Everyone thought that Count Alistair would say a few words to Zi Yi. Yet, he shifted his gaze away and raised his hand. The servant brought the wine over and he lifted a glass as he said, "Tonight's dinner banquet is held rather late this time and I believe the various contestants are also tired. I have got my men to prepare a buffet and resting area for everyone to take a break, so that you can chat while having something to eat as you converse.

I'm an enthusiast of paintings and so, there's no need for everyone to restrict yourselves due to my presence. You can simply treat me as your fan."

After Count Alistair finished his speech, he raised his glass. "As a fan, I'm proposing a toast to everyone."

Following that, the crowd drank the wine together.

Soothing music sounded at the same time. Count Alistair and the group of people emptied the center position and those who liked to dance took up the space.

Zi Yi glanced over at some of the men who were making their way over and said to Dou Xiangling, "Cousin, let's go and get something to eat first."

Dou Xiangling felt somewhat awkward. Even though everyone had yet to have dinner, the food that is served during dinner banquets is mostly used for viewing purposes and no one would really eat with everyone staring at them.

Zi Yi noticed her thoughts and simply grabbed her hand as they made their way over.

Dou Xiangling whispered to her about the unwritten rule at dinner banquets, "This will cause others to laugh at us."

Zi Yi pretended not to hear her and soon, they arrived at the buffet area.

The food served was very abundant and everything looked particularly delicious.

Zi Yi grabbed two plates and handed one over to Dou Xiangling. "These types of unwritten rules are applicable for occasions where one has to entertain another. We're here as guests today and what's more, Count Alistair even said that he's our fan. Why should we keep up our image at a fan's house?"

Dou Xiangling was unexpectedly speechless. However, when she sensed the gazes staring in her direction from all around, she still tried to struggle a little. "No one is eating and it'll be too embarrassing if we are the only ones eating."

It just so happens that two women, who were standing not far from them, deliberately spoke in a tone of voice where they could hear.

"How do they have the cheek to eat? Aren't they afraid of dirtying their clothes? It'll be really embarrassing then."

“With so many people looking at them, I don’t believe they won’t find it awkward and can continue to eat.”

The corner of her lips curled up when Zi Yi heard what they said and she replied to Dou Xiangling, “Why should we be embarrassed? The ones who should be embarrassed are those who find it awkward to come over despite the fact that they are salivating due to hunger.”

After Zi Yi said that, she grabbed a tong and picked up a small cake for her and Dou Xiangling.

Dou Xiangling hastily accepted it.

Zi Yi continued to walk forward.

Dou Xiangling originally found it embarrassing, but as she followed behind Zi Yi who did not feel the same way, she somehow started to let herself go.

It has been seven to eight hours since they have eaten and they were already rather hungry. If that was the case, why should they make things difficult for themselves?

Thinking of this, Dou Xiangling also picked up a tong and went to grab some fruit salad.

More and more women who wanted to see them make a joke out of themselves started to gather around.

However, when they saw Zi Yi and Dou Xiangling’s expressions as they enjoyed the food, the onlookers subconsciously swallowed their saliva.

Zi Yi swept her gaze over to them and those women who did not manage to look away in time felt extremely awkward.

Dou Xiangling gave them a friendly smile. “The food here in the Count’s house is very delicious. Are you sure you don’t want some?”

The group of women looked at each other and did not manage to resist the temptation. Following that, several other women joined them.

While they ate, they chatted about today’s competition and they were soon engaged in the conversation.

“It seems like Mr. Meng is very concerned about a certain lady over there?”

A sudden voice caused Meng He to tighten his grip on the wine glass. He shifted his gaze away from the dining area and looked towards Ansel who was heading towards him.

Ansel walked to him and first raised his glass. Clearly, he wanted to touch glasses.

Even though Meng He was unaware of Ansel’s intentions, he still raised his wine glasses.

Ansel looked towards Zi Yi and did not bother to beat around the bush. “I’ve taken a fancy to Miss Zi. Mr. Meng, do you want to cooperate with me?”

Meng He stared at him and revealed an expression as if he did not know what he was saying.

Ansel laughed. He took a step closer after laughing and deliberately said in his ears, "Your patron, Miss Feiya has come asking for me to think of a way to prevent Miss Dou from participating in tomorrow's competition for your sake."

Meng He's expression sank at his words and he whispered angrily, "I've said that I will win with my own skills. Why is she doing this? Also... she's not my patron!"

He said the last sentence by gritting his teeth.

Ansel looked at Meng He's fierce gaze for several seconds before he laughed. He took a step back and said in a casual tone, "There's something that Mr. Meng might not know of yet."

Meng He asked, "What is it?"

"Miss Feiya has been kicked out of the board today. In other words, she is and also has nothing now but in order to let you get what you want, she is prepared to cooperate with me on something."

The string in his mind snapped and he asked eagerly, "What are you planning to do?"

"Of course, it's to invite Miss Dou to a place where she is unable to partake in the last round of the competition. After the competition ends, we will release her."

"You can't do this. Dou Xiangling is merely a weak and harmless woman..."

"Tsk tsk... so it turns out, Mr. Meng is a love saint."

Meng He's secret seemed to have been exposed and his expression turned livid.

"Mr. Meng, don't be nervous." Ansel leaned over and said in his ear, "Since you're fond of Miss Dou, why don't you give yourself a chance? After all... Feiya is nothing and has nothing right now and she is unable to control you anymore."

His words were like a heavy hammer that struck Meng He's heart heavily.

He did not respond to Ansel. Instead, he looked at him with a vigilant gaze.

Ansel smiled in response and his smile was full of certainty. "Aren't you already tired of Feiya meddling in your private affairs and wish to get rid of her? I'm giving you a chance right now. As long as you bring Dou Xiangling to the backyard, I'll get people to watch over Feiya and give you a chance to realize your wish. How does that sound?"

Meng He still looked at him with the same gaze, but his heart sped up.

Ansel's smile deepened. "I'm not trying to help you. I just need someone to lead Miss Dou away while I'll bring Miss Zi to find someone."

Meng He opened his mouth. The desire in his heart overpowered his reasoning and he asked, "Why should I trust you?"

Ansel gave him a reason. "Because you've been converting Miss Dou for a long time, while I wish to obtain Miss Zi. It works for both of us."

### **Chapter 378: Dou Xiangling Was Taken Away**



Dining area.

True to what Dou Xiangling had said earlier, Count Alistair had sent someone to invite Zi Yi over.

When Zi Yi was led over to where Count Alistair was, the International Painting and Calligraphy Association's Chairman was currently speaking. "We only found out yesterday that Miss Zi is a member of China's Painting and Calligraphy Association."

The group of people revealed expressions of surprise at his words.

Just then, Count Alistair saw Zi Yi making her way over and he smiled amicably as he asked, "Miss Zi, I wonder if you are satisfied with tonight's dinner banquet?"

Zi Yi nodded her head and said, "The food here is rather delicious."

The group of middle-aged people smiled knowingly.

Count Alistair said, "It seems like Miss Zi is a frank person. Women generally do not consume any food during such dinner banquets. The food prepared here is for everyone's consumption and if it is regarded as a display, the host would feel that no one likes the food they prepared."

Zi Yi nodded her head in agreement.

They started to have a discussion on this matter and when those people around them who were deliberately eavesdropping into their conversation felt sour internally. When did Count Alistair ever take notice of such details? It's clearly because he wanted to prevent Zi Yi from feeling embarrassed!

In particular, a group of young ladies from noble families who were waiting for Zi Yi to embarrass herself had left the vicinity out of anger and helplessness.

After they discussed for some time, Count Alistair brought up the purpose of inviting Zi Yi over. "Miss Zi should have heard from others about me. I have a passionate love for paintings and whenever I encounter a great painter, I would wish to request for them to leave a painting behind... I have a presumptuous request. I wonder if Miss Zi could complete a painting for me before leaving Country X?"

Count Alistair was very polite, and it made others unable to reject him. However, Zi Yi had no intentions to refuse either and said, "Sure. There's no need to wait until the competition ends. I'll be able to complete a painting for Count Alistair tomorrow."

"That'll be great." Count Alistair was extremely excited. He raised his hands for the servants to bring more wine. After Zi Yi took a glass, he raised his glass towards her. "Miss Zi, the painting you completed today is really amazing. I wonder what name you have given it?"

Zi Yi thought for a moment and said, "It can be called Crossing the Darkness or Looking for Dawn."

"Good, good. These two names are very fitting for the artistic concept behind your painting."

Everyone praised Zi Yi.

On the other hand, Dou Xiangling who had not tagged along had her gaze towards Zi Yi's direction. When she saw that she was having a great conversation with the group of people, the corner of her lips unconsciously curled up.

Her cousin was the best no matter where she went.

Just then, a woman came up and asked Dou Xiangling. "Dou, are you really cousins with Zi Yi?"

"Yes, she's my aunt's child."

"Wow, you're pretty amazing yourself and you even have such an outstanding cousin. It's really enviable."

A few other women had also echoed and expressed their envy.

Just then, a male voice interrupted. "Hi ladies, can I have a chat with Miss Dou alone?"

Everyone subconsciously turned over to look at the man walking over.

His slim white suit outlined his slim waist and his neutral appearance along with his aggressive eyes instantly made the group of foreign women fall for him.

"What a beautiful man."

When Meng He heard the word 'beautiful', his hands that were hanging by his side clenched tightly and he tried his best not to get angry.

He looked at Dou Xiangling and said, "Dou Xiangling, there's something I wish to clarify with you before the end of our competition."

Dou Xiangling subconsciously furrowed her brows.

The corner of his lips curled up and when the other women were going gaga over him, he said, "You can rest assured that I only wish to tell you why I always like to compete with you for the first place. I won't do anything to you."

Dou Xiangling's frown still remained on her face, even after hearing what he had to say. However, she was indeed slightly curious as to why Meng He would always compete with her. She merely pondered for two seconds and said to the women beside her, "You guys can continue chatting first."

She then got up from her seat and followed Meng He to another side.

While walking, Meng He said, "It's too noisy here, let's head outside and talk."

Dou Xiangling stopped in her tracks.

Meng He seemed to have guessed her thoughts and said, "Don't worry, I just asked the servants around the Count's house. There's a garden in their backyard and the guests can go there to take a breather... Or could it be that you're worried I would do something to you if I bring you out?"

Dou Xiangling looked at him with that calm gaze of hers. She pursed her lips and nodded her head.

The two of them continued to head outside.

When they reached the door, one of the servants even asked, "Dear guests, I wonder if you need anything?"

Meng He stopped and said to him, "We wish to get some air in the backyard of the Count's house."

The servant nodded and led the two of them towards the backyard.

Dou Xiangling inexplicably breathed a sigh of relief and felt that she had been too paranoid.

Under the lead of the servant, they soon arrived at the backyard.

There was a garden in the backyard and a fountain in the middle.

The garden was shrouded in the night lights, giving off a hazy beauty.

Meng He wanted to continue leading her deeper into the garden but Dou Xiangling stopped walking and said, "It's already very quiet here. We can talk here."

Meng He stopped and turned towards her. Seemingly lost in his memories, he said, "The first time I saw your name was on the first semester's ranking board of scholarships in M.Uni. Originally I thought that I would get the first class scholarship, but I didn't expect you to surpass me by one point.

At that time, I felt unjust and specifically inquired about you, only to find out that we were from the same department. Moreover, we took the same course in the second semester.

Later on, in every competition or examination, the difference between our marks would be very slight. This resulted in my increased attention towards you. At the same time, the thought of wanting to win against you got stronger."

When Dou Xiangling saw Meng He's smile as he said that, she felt an inexplicable sense of panic.

This man does not seem to be in his right mind.

Meng He looked at her and an evil glint surged forth from his eyes. "Do you know, in order to win against you, how hard had I worked in the following years? Especially when you would surpass me from time to time, this caused me to feel unhappy."

Dou Xiangling's brows knitted together even more tightly and she had a feeling that Meng He had a mental problem.

Meng He smiled at that moment, his smile contained an indescribable ferocity. "Following that, I went abroad, due to some reasons, and in those few years, other people would always tell me about your achievements. The capabilities of Miss Dou are surely powerful. The achievements we need to strive for years to obtain, you have easily obtained them."

"I earned those achievements on my own abilities. I didn't depend on the name of the Dou Family."

"You didn't depend on the Dou Family? Don't you know that as long as your name appears in the circle, everyone would be willing to give you a green light? All just because your surname is Dou."

Meng He suddenly approached her.

### **Chapter 379: You Want to Make Use of Me and Threaten Ah Jing?**

Dou Xiangling subconsciously stepped back.

Meng He seemed as if he had not seen her retreating and smiled happily. "I've finally figured it out now. Rather than competing with you, it's better to make you my woman. In that case, I'll be able to be like you and get a green light from everyone wherever I go."

Dou Xiangling's expression instantly sank. "Meng He, what do you think you're doing? This is Count Alistair's house. Do you know what would happen if you dare to mess around?"

"Ha... Dou Xiangling, you're really a well-protected princess."

"What do you mean by that?"

When Dou Xiangling asked that question, she saw two bodyguards heading in their direction out of the corner of her eyes.

She knew that the situation did not look good and turned with the intention to leave.

However, Meng He grabbed onto her arm and prevented her from leaving.

"Meng He, let go of me!" Dou Xiangling struggled to get out of Meng He's grip.

"I won't let you go."

When Meng He said that, those two bodyguards had already made their way over. One of them used a cloth sprayed with drugs and covered Dou Xiangling's mouth.

Dou Xiangling wanted to call for help, but she had lost consciousness before she could even shout.

Living room.

Zi Yi suddenly felt a sense of unease. She subconsciously turned to look at the dining area.

When she saw that Dou Xiangling had disappeared, she excused herself from Count Alistair and his group before she headed over.

The group of women, who were engaged in conversations, were surprised to see Zi Yi coming over.

Zi Yi asked, "Where's my cousin?"

One of them answered, "She was called out by Meng He earlier."

Zi Yi furrowed her brows. "Which direction did they leave in?"

That woman pointed in a direction.

Under their surprised gazes, Zi Yi turned and strode over in large steps. While walking, she ordered Shadow. "Shadow, immediately look for my cousin."

Just as she reached the aisle, she saw Ansel coming over from one side. "Miss Zi, what happened? Your expression doesn't look too good."

Zi Yi looked into Ansel's eyes for several seconds before she said, "It's nothing, I'm only going to look for my cousin."

"Where did she go off to? Why don't I follow you and we'll search together?"

“Your backyard.”

Ansel nodded his head and led her in the direction of the backyard. As they walked, he said, “Does Miss Zi know who Dou Xiangling left together with to the backyard? However, our backyard is very safe and there’s no need to worry.”

Zi Yi did not answer him and silently walked side by side with Ansel.

Just then, he asked in a casual tone, “Miss Zi doesn’t seem to like talking?”

Zi Yi tilted her head and glanced in his direction with a cold expression.

Ansel revealed a heartbroken appearance as he said, “Or perhaps Miss Zi does not like talking to me?”

Zi Yi replied only after a few seconds, “You’re overthinking things.”

She shut her mouth after that and did not say anything else.

Ansel opened his mouth with the intention to say something. However, he swallowed the words and kept quiet.

The two of them soon arrived at the backyard.

The backyard was very silent. Not to mention Dou Xiangling and Meng He. There was not even a single servant.

Zi Yi turned to look at Ansel at that moment and asked with a stern voice, “Mr. Ansel, where did you bring my cousin to?”

Ansel immediately revealed a puzzled and surprised expression. “Miss Zi, why do you say that? Could it be that you think I was the one who hid Miss Dou?”

“Ha!”

Zi Yi stood there and waited for Shadow to locate Dou Xiangling.

Ansel looked at Zi Yi’s indifferent expression. She was still so charming that he could not shift his gaze away from her. He then spoke in an extremely gentlemanly voice. “Miss Zi, I heard that you’re dating Lu Jingye, the President of the Lu Group?”

Zi Yi furrowed her brows and said, “So what if I am?”

Ansel revealed an even gentler smile. “It just so happens that I wish to discuss a rather large project with President Lu. Why don’t you be our middleman?”

Zi Yi narrowed her eyes. “You wish to make use of me and threaten Ah Jing?”

“How could I possibly do that? I only wish for you to be the middleman. In that case, the chances of me meeting with President Lu would increase.”

Just then, dozens of bodyguards came over from several directions.

Zi Yi looked at the bodyguards and a sharp glint streaked across her eyes. Her hands subconsciously reached into her bag and took out a circular ball. She then looked at Ansel and asked again, "Where's my cousin?"

Ansel seemed to point in a direction out of kindness and said, "Right behind there. Does Miss Zi wish to head over? Mph..."

Zi Yi retracted her hand and looked at Ansel whose face turned ashen as he held his stomach. She then coldly said, "If something were to happen to my cousin, I will make you regret it."

Ansel never expected Zi Yi would suddenly punch him. He disregarded the pain he felt and suddenly burst into anger as he shouted at the bodyguards, "Arrest her!"

Dozens of bodyguards quickly surrounded Zi Yi.

At the same time, Ansel reached out with the intention to grab onto her.

Zi Yi's feet twisted and she threw the circular ball into the air. A dazzling light that made the surrounding people unable to open their eyes flashed and Zi Yi ran in the direction where Ansel had pointed to earlier.

Zi Yi knew that Ansel would never give her the opportunity to return to the villa. In that case, she might as well go and save Dou Xiangling first.

The Count's backyard was very large and there were numerous stone carvings.

The sound of footsteps soon followed and Ansel calmly ordered. "Immediately send more people to search right away. Check the surveillance too. I don't believe she has the capability to escape from here."

Zi Yi hid behind a large stone carving and took out her mobile phone to connect to all the surveillance in the Count's house. She first checked out where Dou Xiangling was brought to.

When she noticed that Shadow had already located and rescued her, she directly gave Shadow an order. "Bring my cousin out. Wait for me in the car."

She then quickly controlled all the surveillance equipment in the Count's house.

Just then, the sound of footsteps approached.

Zi Yi put away her phone and ran in a direction.

She wore high heels tonight and she could not take large steps due to the cheongsam she was wearing. The moment she started running, she had been discovered.

"She's over here!"

Someone nearby shouted and soon, the others had gathered around.

Zi Yi simply removed her shoes and picked it up while pulling up the cheongsam and quickly ran behind one of the large stone carvings. She was regretting it deep down: *I shouldn't have worn a cheongsam.*

She noticed that under such a situation, wearing a cheongsam and running was simply cumbersome.

Just then, she heard barking sounds of German shepherds. She clicked her tongue. Do they honestly think that a few German shepherds can scare her?

Zi Yi raised her skirt and ran towards the walls.

She took out a circular ball while running and the corner of her lips curled up. She was not worried in the slightest that she would get caught.

When she had run around 100m or so, sure enough, several German shepherds had caught up to her. They encircled her and barked. Shortly after, a group of bodyguards had also caught up to her.

The men and dogs all glared at her like tigers watching their prey. Just then, Ansel's smiling voice sounded. "Miss Zi, why aren't you running anymore?"

### **Chapter 380: Do You Think You Can Catch Me?**

Zi Yi looked at the German shepherds staring at her and shifted her gaze to Ansel, who had walked over in her direction.

Ansel looked at her as if looking at his prey that had finally fallen into his carefully arranged net, and he felt a strong sense of excitement deep down inside.

Zi Yi narrowed her eyes as she looked at Ansel and a cold smirk curled up on her lips. "Do you think you can catch me?"

"Aren't the facts placed right in front of us at this very moment?" Ansel spread out his hands. "I don't believe you can escape from the encirclement of my bodyguards and these dogs."

"Then let's see."

The moment she said that, a circular ball appeared in her hands.

Ansel sneered and all his bodyguards took out sunglasses and put them on.

"Is Miss Zi trying to use strong light to blind us again? Then I'm afraid you might have to be disappointed."

"Do you think I will do the same moves the second time?"

Zi Yi's wrists twisted and the circular ball in her hand rapidly shot out and transformed into a sharp rotating weapon.

Whoosh~

The next second, all the bodyguards and dogs felt that their chests were bare, and shortly after, pieces of clothes and fabrics along with traces of blood danced in the air.

Everyone was momentarily surprised at first, before they subconsciously covered their chest.

Ansel only managed to react after a second delay. He was extremely furious and stomped his foot in anger. "Capture her!"

The group of bodyguards and German shepherds were about to pounce towards Zi Yi. However, she then controlled the rotating weapon to block them in front of her. At the same time, while the weapon was blocking them from approaching her, she raised her cheongsam and continued to run towards the wall.

Muffled sounds coming from the bodyguards and the German shepherds could be heard from behind her from time to time.

Seeing that Zi Yi was about to reach the wall, the sound of a bullet piercing through the air came from behind.

At the same time, Zi Yi's powerful sixth sense detected the additional defense system activated near the wall.

Moreover, it was the most advanced defense system at the current time.

In actual fact, Zi Yi was not worried about the defense system. However, there were incoming bullets from behind and she did not have time to take out her phone and destroy the defense system.

The speed of the bullet was very fast and she only had time to throw out one circular ball.

The ball instantly transformed into a protective barrier.

Just then, sounds of hidden weapons flying past her could be heard from above.

“AHHH~”

Zi Yi saw those holding onto a gun getting shot by the hidden weapons and they held onto their hands in pain. She subconsciously looked behind them, only to see a blond-haired man carrying arrows and he had his back against the light. He was on the other side of the wall and only half of his body was exposed.

The blond-haired man did not stand close to the wall. It was most likely that he had something under his feet.

He was holding onto a crossbow in his hands and his lips pressed together tightening. He gave off a look like he was a death god.

Zi Yi looked at him and somehow felt that he was her Ah Jing.

The blond-haired man did not look at Zi Yi. The weapon in his hand was aimed at Ansel.

At first, Ansel's expression changed. Following that, he grabbed one of the bodyguards next to him to block his front, before he shouted to the other bodyguards, “Kill him!”

Several other bodyguards pointed their guns at the blond-haired man at the same time.

There was not the slightest change in his expression. The blond-haired man pulled the trigger and a sharp weapon was shot towards Ansel.

The sharp weapon then stabbed the bodyguard in front of Ansel.



Ansel was frightened out of his wits. He then dragged the bodyguard with him and immediately took out his phone to press an alarm.

At once, a loud alarm instantly sounded throughout the Count's villa.

At this moment, the blond-haired man's voice sounded from behind Zi Yi. "Run towards the back of the house."

Zi Yi turned to look at the blond-haired man only to see that he had disappeared from her line of sight.

Zi Yi thought about it for a moment and started to run to the back of the villa.

The back of the Count's villa was those types of duplex palace-styled buildings. After she ran in, she was met with a corridor that connected to many rooms.

A famous painting was hung on the wall in between every room. There was not a single soul around at this moment. However, Zi Yi was not wearing any shoes and her feet which stepped on the floor did not produce any sounds.

Loud voices could be heard from the backyard and there were many people searching in her direction.

Zi Yi ran past the corridor and turned at a corner, only to see a staircase ahead. Without even standing still for a second to think, she ran up the stairs.

The cheongsam was in the way and she simply lifted it up.

When she reached the second floor, she did not immediately run up to the roof. Instead, she ran into one of the rooms.

The room was very dark. Zi Yi sensed her surroundings for a moment and did not detect any danger. Only then, did she pull out her phone and swiftly start to do her work.

After she swiped for some time, the sound of footsteps that were chasing after her had soon left and the second floor returned to its original silence not long after.

Zi Yi then used her phone to shine around the room. She was surprised to see what the room was used for.

"There's a studio in Count Alistair's home? Who's the painter in their family?"

Zi Yi had checked up on Count Alistair's family when she returned to change her clothes. He had two sons and two daughters. Ansel was the Count's eldest son, and he would be taking over his company. His second son had opened a winery by himself and his business was doing pretty well. Among two of his daughters, none of them had studied painting either.

Zi Yi could not figure it out and decided to put it aside and was just about to open the door to leave.

However, just as she pushed open a crack, she heard the sounds of footsteps coming from the staircase.

There were two sets of footsteps.

Zi Yi shut the door and held her mobile phone to connect to the surveillance. She discovered that it was Ansel and Allen who had tied with Meng He for the second place in the second round.

The two of them were clearly headed for the room Zi Yi was in.

She was thinking if she should knock these two people unconscious.

When, just then, she detected movements from the window, and immediately after the window was opened and a figure jumped inside.

Zi Yi swiftly grabbed a circular ball in her hand.

Yet, a familiar voice sounded before she could throw it out. "Yiyi, it's me."

Zi Yi was delighted the moment she heard the voice and she quickly responded. "Ah Jing, I'm here."

Lu Jingye quickly headed towards her following the direction of her voice. He then hugged her waist and they swiftly spun around towards the side and hid in a narrow space.

Soon, the door was opened and the lights inside the room were lit up at the same time.

Allen's voice sounded. "Zi Yi ran away. Is our plan going to be exposed?"

Ansel's tone of voice sounded irritated. "What are you worried about? That woman definitely didn't escape from my house. With so many people looking for her right now, I don't believe we can't find her."

As if he did not wish to continue on this topic any further, Ansel said, "This studio is specially prepared by my father for those painters. Hurry and paint. As long as you can complete a painting that satisfies him, our plan will not have failed."

"Okay." Allen then asked, "What about Meng He?"

"Ha!" Ansel sneered. "He's merely a man who depends on a woman and he has yet to clearly see his position. Feiya no longer has the capability to protect him right now. I will keep him out of the last round of the competition."

Allen was satisfied with his response. "Good. I want to get first place in the last round of competition tomorrow."

"Rest assured, Dou Xiangling is in Meng He's hands and perhaps something might happen to her... As for Zi Yi, other than me, there are also others who are planning to scheme against her. Even if Lu Jingye does manage to rush over, he won't be able to rescue her."