

Chapter 291: The Cat Has Overeaten

“Goddess, kill that mistress.”

“My goddess is perfect, what Mistress Mei, scram.”

“She wants to compete with our goddess with such acting, she is totally shredded.”

“I think this show shouldn’t be called Beauty, it should be called The Mistress entering the Bedroom.”

All the comments below were in support of Yan Huan. No matter how many people the Su family had bought over to leave positive comments, it didn’t matter. They couldn’t wash down the comments of the general public. Moreover, the rest of the people weren’t dumb, they are able to differentiate between good and bad.

No matter how many people they hired, they couldn’t beat the millions of people in the country.

“What is wrong with this Su Muran?” A rich lady said towards the TV as she caressed her cat’s ear. She couldn’t help but complain.

“What else, she must have emerged from nowhere.” Ye Shuyun walked over and poured two glasses of fruit juice. One was for herself while the other was for the rich lady. “If the Su family wanted a female lead, it was a matter of opening their mouth.”

But this wasn’t becoming famous, this was ruining her name.

“She wants to steal my daughter’s scene, she needs to see if she has the talent to do so too.” Ye Shuyun dissed. “Not everyone has the acting skills of my daughter.”

“That’s right,” the other rich ladies added.

“That is right, Shuyun, look at Little Bean. What is wrong with him? He hasn’t eaten at all today.”

“Let me see,” Ye Shuyun picked up the cat from the rich lady and placed him in front of her eyes.

“Meow...” The cat meowed listlessly. He didn’t even want to move his ears and his nose wasn’t wet either. It was dry.

She placed him at the corner of the wall before picking some cat food for him.

However, he took a sniff before laying down. He didn’t move and didn’t want to eat either.

“Shujuan, this cat seems to be sick.”

Ye Shuyun picked up the cat again. He didn’t want to eat or drink water. He didn’t even drink his milk. Usually, he would have loved to eat all of this but he didn’t eat any today.

“Let me see,” Lei Shujuan placed down the cup and picked up the cat from Ye Shuyun.

The cat meowed at her in a tired manner.

“It seems like he is really sick.”

“What should I do now?” Ye Shuyun had a sick look on her face. “Lu Yi had asked me to take care of the cat properly when he passed him to me. If I caused it to die, what should I do? My son will leave the house.”

“Sis, what are you talking about. He wouldn’t die.” Lei Shuyun rolled her eyes. Why was she still so gullible at such an old age? Had she been living her life in vain?

“Let’s not talk about these first, I will get my son to pick us up.”

Lei Shujuan’s son was Lei Qingyi. As for her relationship with Ye Shuyun, they were blood sister. Or else, how could the Lu and Lei family be this close. But no many people know about this.

As for their families, there was much to say about it.

Back then when Ye Jianguo and Lei Qingyi’s grandfather came back from the war, they picked up the two sisters, Lei Shujuan and Ye Shuyun. They decided to adopt one of them each as they looked incredibly pitiful. Lei Qingyi’s grandfather wanted to find a wife for his son but Ye Jianguo didn’t have such intentions at all. However, the future proved that he didn’t need to think so much. Ye Shuyun ended up marrying into the Lu family while Lei Shujuan married into the Ye family.

Lu Yi and Lei Qingyi were cousins.

It didn’t take very long for Lei Qingyi to come over. He was quite worried when he saw the cat looking listless in his mother’s arms.

“What is wrong with this little fellow?” He rubbed the cat’s head and his mother gave him a painful slap.

“You are hurting him.”

Mother Lei stared at her son.

Lei Qingyi quickly retracted his hand. He used to do this to the cat too and he didn’t seem to be in pain.

“Let’s go get him checked out,” Ye Shuyun opened the door and walked out with her bag. The two of them loved this cat and it looked exactly the same as the one their daughter’s. Of course, their daughter was Yan Huan. They were die-hard fans of Yan Huan and were both gullible and delirious aunties.

They found a vet clinic and when they entered, the lady in front was holding on to a dog. The dog looked a little under the weather too and didn’t make much noise. It looked sick too.

“This is a poodle, isn’t it?”

The vet asked.

The woman raised her eyes, “Please be more respectful, this is my son.”

Alright, the vet understood.

“How old is your son?”

“9 months.”

“What is wrong with him? Where is he unwell?” The vet asked again.

“He doesn’t want to eat. He no mood and loves to bite people.” The woman picked up the dog and kissed it.

The vet nodded before stopping and asked again.

“Has your son gotten the rabies vaccine before?”

The woman was silent.

Not long later, she left in a haste. The dog that she was carrying seemed a little heavy, almost as if carrying him was hurting her arm.

Only then did Ye Shuyun walked over with the cat.

“If I may,” the vet pushed up his glasses, “is this your son or daughter?”

Ye Shuyun’s face looked somewhat embarrassed.

“This is my cat.”

“Oh.” The vet took over the cat. Luckily, someone normal.

He touched the cat’s stomach. “Don’t worry, the cat is fine. He had too much to eat and should be fine after digesting them. But what did you let him eat? How could he be fed like this? His stomach is so round.”

“I didn’t feed him anything?” Ye Shuyun looked at Mother Lei. “Did you feed him anything?”

She shook her head too. She didn’t feed him anything.

“What did he eat?” Ye Shuyun was still troubled. If no one fed him, what did he eat to get so full? Just as they carried him inside, Mother Lei took a casual glance at Ye Shuyun’s fish bowl. She then pointed out in the direction.

“Sis, your fish!”

“What’s wrong with my fish? Aren’t they fine?” Lu Yi had bought these fish for an incredibly high price and she had kept them for a very long time. They ate and drank well every day and were never mistreated before. Not a single one had died after so long.

However, when she turned around to look at the fish bowl, she was momentarily dazed. Her fish, where were her fish? Her precious fish, not one of them were left.

Chapter 292: I Refuse To Accept This Fate

Madame Lei lifted the cat by the armpits to eye level.

“Meow...” The cat was still not feeling well. Her small belly was round and distended.

“Your fish,” Madame Lei said, pointing to Little Bean’s belly, “is in there. Do you want to wait for her to poop it out?”

Ye Shuyun turned and glowered at Madame Lei.

Madame Lei laughed. "Let's go, Little Bean. I think you better stay with me for the next few days, for your own safety. You won't be able to eat my fish—my fish tank is fully enclosed."

"Meow..."

The cat meowed weakly in agreement. She shrank into herself and tried to make herself appear smaller—evidently she knew she had done something wrong.

Madame Lei happily walked off with the cat cradled in her arms, leaving Ye Shuyun to her growing despair.

There were only two words echoing in Ye Shuyun's mind: My fish...

At that moment, Yan Huan was still in the middle of filming Beauty, blissfully unaware of what Little Bean had done. She was entirely at ease; Su Muran, on the other hand, was gloomy and unhappy.

They were now shooting the scene in which Qin Jun and Mei Rushi vowed to love each other forever.

The camera zoomed out from the diabetes-inducing sight of Qin Jun and Mei Rushi acting lovey-dovey with each other, and then panned to a woman who was watching them from a distance. It was Chen Jing, heartbroken, yet defiantly keeping her tears at bay. She lifted her chin, threw back her shoulders, and walked away with her head held high.

The story then followed Chen Jing's fanatical attempts at revenge. Her eyes burned with all-consuming hatred, but the viewers did not find it repulsive; on the contrary, they found her wrath to be entirely relatable, and their hearts went out to her. They instinctively understood that Chen Jing was a helpless victim; her extreme measures were a testimony of her despair, a cover for her helplessness.

Even though the viewers sided with Chen Jing, the protagonist had to win in the end. That was just how it worked. The odds had been against Chen Jing from the beginning; her fleeting glimpses of triumph and victory proved to be nothing more than a fantasy that shattered upon her defeat.

She was driven out of the Qin household; at the same time, her father, a government official, fell from grace for other unrelated reasons, dooming her family and rendering Chen Jing homeless. Even so, Chen Jing's eyes remained clear and bright—she knew that she had done nothing wrong, and she refused to bow down to her undeserved fate.

But she could not escape her ultimate fate: in the end, she froze to death on the streets on a snowy night.

Right before her death, she reached out to intercept a snowflake as it floated to the ground, and watched it melt instantly upon her fingers. She did this several times as her body temperature dropped—soon, her fingers were no longer warm enough to melt the snowflakes.

When that happened, she allowed the snowflakes to accumulate on her open palm. She lifted them to her mouth, moistening her chapped lips with the taste of ice.

She lay upon the ground, her gaze fixed upon the boundless snow before her.

"I refuse to accept this fate. I won't accept it..."

Her broken, shattered voice rose in volume and pitch as she let out a savage, spine-tingling wail. It died away, leaving only profound bitterness and sorrow...

Gradually, she closed her eyes. A solitary tear rolled down her cheek.

“Over my dead body...”

Those were her last words.

This was only a little past the half-way point for Beauty; the rest of the script showed how the female lead had earned her happy ending. It was a good opportunity for Su Muran to turn things around and gain the viewers’ respect; unfortunately for her, she did not have the chance to do that.

The viewers wept over Chen Jing’s death; everyone agreed that Chen Jing had not deserved her tragic fate. One of the viewers was so moved by Chen Jing’s story they left a long comment on the Internet forum about it:

“I don’t understand why that homewrecker won. The male lead is a total scumbag, too. You have to be completely heartless to build your happiness upon the suffering of others. I feel so sorry for Chen Jing. She did nothing wrong. She was just an ordinary woman, a product of her time; she was manipulative and cunning, yes, but she was also kind and gentle—you can tell from the way her eyes lit up with delight when talking to the parrot. She only began to scheme and plot because she had been pushed to the breaking point. If, instead of Qin Jun, she had married a man who actually loved, understood, and respected her, she would have lived happily ever after. Anyway, as far as I’m concerned, the story ended with her death—there may be more episodes after this, but I’ll just pretend they don’t exist.”

Another netizen also left a lengthy comment in response:

“I completely agree with the previous comment. I’m dropping the show after this. Is the show trying to encourage women to steal husbands and wreck families? Unbelievable. The wife died, and they expect me to watch the mistress strut around like she’s earned her happy ending? Where’s the justice in that? How is Chen Jing, bless her poor soul, supposed to rest in peace? I’ll never forget Chen Jing’s last words: ‘I refuse to accept this fate. I won’t accept it.’ This is all too common in real life: the lawful wife ends up destitute and miserable, and can only say: ‘I refuse to accept this fate’ while her scumbag husband and his mistress live happily ever after. Well, like Chen Jing, I have only four words to say in response: ‘Over my dead body.’”

The comments that followed all said the same thing:

“I refuse to accept this fate. Over my dead body.”

It was supposed to be a beautiful, uplifting Cinderella story, but the viewers had a vastly different take on the story, one in which the female lead and supporting actress had swapped places. There were more than 20 episodes left in the story after Chen Jing’s death; Su Muran had been desperate to rehabilitate her image by showing that Mei Rushi was a nice woman who deserved her happy ending, but that proved to be impossible as the viewer ratings had immediately gone into free fall.

And she knew she had no one to blame but herself for choosing the role of a homewrecker as her acting debut. Mistresses and homewreckers were universally reviled, after all.

Su Muran had been pelted with rotting vegetables and eggs during a few high-profile shopping expeditions. It would have been the highest compliment if she had been playing a despicable villain; unfortunately for her, she was playing the female lead. It was practically unheard of for the female protagonist of a big-budget TV show to end up with rotting vegetables and egg on her face.

On the last occasion, her manager quickly shielded her and led her away, but they had not been quick enough to evade the cameras of the paparazzi. The photos of Su Muran with egg in her hair were quickly uploaded to the internet; instead of attracting pity, the photos only served to make her look worse.

The Su family was forced to hire bodyguards for Su Muran. Su Qingdong now wished he had never agreed to let his daughter enter showbiz; at the very least, he should have vetted her scripts carefully. He had been negligent, and because of that his precious daughter—the only heir to the family—had turned into the poster child for infidelity. The entire situation was horrifically embarrassing to the Su family as a whole.

At this point, Beauty was supposed to run for another ten episodes or so, but the rest of the episodes were cancelled at the request of the Su family. The Su family knew very well that the rest of the episodes would only serve to inflict further damage to Su Muran's reputation, instead of saving it.

Their main priority now was to find a good TV show for Su Muran that would help rehabilitate her image.

Chapter 293: Don't Let Go

All these things were the Su family's concerns and had nothing to do with anyone else. Of course this was later in the future.

Yan Huan stayed there a few more days to reshoot some scenes before she prepared to leave.

She was packing up her stuff when her phone by her side starting ringing. She grabbed her phone and saw the name on it. She immediately felt better. Of course, she could feel herself blushing too.

However adding up her age from both life, she was almost 30 years old. However, she still felt as if she was a little girl who had a crush. It was an indescribable feeling but wasn't a disgusting one.

"When are you leaving?"

Lu Yi asked her. He wanted to know her schedule.

Yan Huan counted the time, "I am packing my stuff now. If there is nothing, I should be able to leave soon."

"Alright," Lu Yi replied softly, "I will come pick you in a while."

"Okay." Yan Huan liked sitting in Lu Yi's car. Lu Yi's driving had always been stable and moreover, it was a free ride. Of course she would take it.

Yi Ling and Luo Lin were carrying giant bags of stuff. They were preparing to go back. The rest had to stay on set to continue filming the rest of the show. But they had nothing to do with Yan Huan. She was done filming over here.

Even though she didn't get the first female lead role this time, she acted the second female lead role incredibly interestingly. Of course, Su Muran was the mistress once again.

Just as she was about to come out, Lu Yi was already there.

"Oh, Lu Yi?"

Yi Ling rubbed her eyes as she quickly ran over. She threw the things on the ground as she touched the car. Wasn't this Lu Yi's car? She couldn't be wrong. She had scratched off some paint off his car back then and the mark was still here.

Yan Huan opened the door and entered.

"Why, your car is back?" She surveyed the surroundings of the car. It was indeed the same car. There were scratch marks in the car from Little Bean. Hence, Yi Ling said that the destruction from the two of them were pretty intense.

"The road there had just been fixed, someone sent the car over to me." With that, he opened the car door and placed the stuff that Yi Ling and Luo Lin had carried into the car boot.

The two women had taken their hands off things and didn't care about anything anymore.

Lu Yi closed the car boot before sitting in the car and driving back to where they stayed.

He didn't have much to say on the ride back. He was driving seriously. Yan Huan turned her face to look at the side profile of this man. At this moment, his lip was pursed tight. Not many people have seen his smile and there he didn't have much eye wrinkles. He was incredibly young, 27 years old. He had a pair of sharp eyes and it was no wonder people would be afraid of him. He naturally had a face that wasn't very appealing to women.

It was a face with much killer energy.

Lu Yi turned around and their eyes met. There was some comfort between their eyes, but he still didn't have much of a smile. His lips were still pursed. Of course, this was Lu Yi. The one who smiled every moment like a fool was Lu Qin, not Lu Yi.

Lu Yi took a blanket and handed it over to Yan Huan.

Yan Huan took it over and covered her body.

The seats in the car were pretty comfortable and when she first sat in this car, she knew it would be pretty comfortable to sleep in it. It wasn't uncomfortable at all.

It was no wonder Lu Yi loved this car the most. It was the best to drive in and comfortable for the passenger too.

Slowly, Yan Huan closed her eyes and fell asleep. At this moment, the car was still driving forward slowly. By the time they reached Sea City, it should be night already.

Yan Huan had no idea how long the car drove for and she was asleep the whole time. When she woke up, the sky outside was already dark.

She sat up and rubbed her eyes. Luo Lin and Yi Ling weren't around.

"Luo Lin has returned home, Yi Ling went up to pack the stuff."

Lu Yi extended his hand and touched Yan Huan's face. A red mark appeared instantly. Her skin was white to begin with and the mark was very obvious.

Yan Huan rubbed her eyes again and sat up.

The sky was already dark as she took a look outside. She grabbed Lu Yi's wrist and looked at his watch on his wrist. It was 9 plus.

"I am hungry," she pouted like a small girl, asking Lu Yi for food.

"What do you want to eat?" Lu Yi held onto her face. He had no idea when the mark would go away.

"Let's eat hot pot," Yan Huan thought for a while and felt that steamboat was the best. She had been filming a lot recently and had been eating a few months of bento sets. Even though she wasn't picky, she had things she wanted to eat too.

The weather wasn't very hot and it was just right to eat hot pot.

"Okay," Lu Yi promised as he opened the car door. Yan Huan followed; she wanted to stretch after sitting in the car for a few hours. She wanted to sleep too but she wanted to eat more.

"Put on an extra layer before going out."

Lu Yi helped her tidy up her hair.

"So messy, if your fans see you in such a manner, they might really think that you are a sloppy person."

With that, Yan Huan quickly arranged her clothes and looked around her surroundings. Perhaps it had been a habit from her two lives but she was more aware of her image. As a public figure, she didn't want any incriminating photos of her published no matter where she went. Of course unless it was on purpose. However, she suddenly thought of something. She lifted her head and saw the expression on Lu Yi's face, almost as if he was smiling.

How could anyone film here in this place. It was a small community with barely any people staying. There were strict security checks and a security guard stationed at the entrance. Those who enter can forget about leaving.

"Let's go," Lu Yi extended his hand.

Yan Huan looked at his hand before reaching out to it.

Lu Yi held it tightly and she thought to herself that she would never want to let it go for the rest of her life.

Yan Huan opened the door and Yi Ling was already busy. The moment she saw Yan Huan, she was still cleaning the sofa. "Why are you so slow, what naughty stuff have you been doing?" Of course she was only asking casually and wasn't thinking in the gutters. She was too innocent.

Chapter 294: You Have Me

"It's nothing." Yan Huan put her things away. She moved in the direction of the bathroom to shower and change her clothes when she suddenly remembered that she had forgotten to inform Yi Ling about their dinner plans. "Oh, right!"

She turned to Yi Ling. "Yiyi, Lu Yi's taking us out to dinner. He's treating us to hot pot."

"Really?"

Yi Ling did not wait for Yan Huan to reply; she tossed the cleaning rag in her hands to the side and said, "Well, in that case, the cleaning can wait. Gotta fill my belly first. I'll clean the place when we get back. It's not like it'll take long anyway."

"Yes, really," said Yan Huan belatedly. She sighed inwardly at Yi Ling's habit of dropping everything at the mention of food, but she did not really mind: this was the Yi Ling she knew, and most importantly, she was still alive.

Yan Huan was in an inexplicably good mood. She had been shouldering a heavy burden ever since the day she had woken up to her second chance at life, and now, finally, the weight on her back had grown a little lighter. But she knew better than to be complacent: this was only the beginning of her rivalry with Su Muran.

Su Muran was not the type of woman who would let her enemies off the hook so easily.

Yan Huan was not afraid. In her previous life, Yan Huan had played right into Lu Qin's hands because she had been naïve and stupid. This time around, she was going to stay far, far away from that scumbag and that witch.

She walked into the bathroom. Before stepping into the shower, she stopped to gaze at herself in the mirror. The face staring back at her was young, pretty, and clean—both literally and figuratively.

"I'm so glad..." she muttered to herself. She was glad that she had met her Mr. Right before it was too late, this time around.

She patted her warm cheeks and let out a soft sigh. After that, she showered and dressed herself.

When she walked out of the bathroom, Yi Ling had already changed into a fresh set of clothes.

Yi Ling pointed to the door. "We're going out for dinner, right?" She placed her hands upon her growling stomach. "I'm starving."

"Yes, we're eating out." Yan Huan put on a pair of black-rim glasses and a hat. She knew Lu Yi would never take her to a place that was crawling with paparazzi, but it was better to be safe than sorry. The paparazzi were everywhere these days.

Yi Ling bounced off the sofa and onto her feet. She eagerly yanked the front door open and ran out without waiting for Yan Huan.

Yan Huan got out her phone and called Lu Yi. Her heart soared when she heard his voice on the other end of the line, and a gentle, serene warmth washed over her. She could not help smiling.

"We're ready. What about you?"

“I’m waiting outside.” Lu Yi was already in his car. He was a true man of action: he never wasted a second of his time.

When Yan Huan and Yi Ling had gotten into the car and buckled up, Lu Yi started the car and drove east, towards a quiet section of the neighborhood.

“This place is run by a friend of Qingyi’s. We come here to eat sometimes. It’s a little out of the way, but the food isn’t half bad.”

Lu Yi parked the car. The restaurant was far from crowded due to its remote location, but Yan Huan was not the type to take any chances: she pretended to rearrange her hair as she covertly checked whether anyone had recognized her. Her precautions turned out to be entirely unnecessary; there were only a handful of diners in the restaurant, and they were all busy eating. No one was going to look up from their food just to take creepshots of her.

“Don’t worry.” Lu Yi turned to look at her. Yan Huan suddenly realized that he was standing very, very close.

“It’s safe here. No one will recognize you.”

He was so close to her now Yan Huan could feel his breath upon her face. It was a tingly, ticklish sensation; Yan Huan cupped her cheeks automatically; she could see her reflection in Lu Yi’s dark eyes.

His honest, sincere eyes remained fixed upon her. Yan Huan immediately looked down and kept her eyes on the tips of her toes, too shy to meet his eyes.

She did not see Lu Yi’s lips curve into an almost imperceptible smile.

A moment later, the waiter led them to a private room located at the back of the restaurant. As soon as he opened the door, they were greeted with the sight of Lei Qingyi leaping to his feet.

“Finally!” He checked the time on his watch. “What took you so long? I’m about to die of hunger.”

“You and me both.” Yi Ling automatically sat next to Lei Qingyi, and the two of them began to discuss the menu. Yan Huan did not join in; she was not a picky eater, and anyway they would all be ordering a mini hot pot of their own.

Once they had placed their orders, Yi Ling began to regale Lei Qingyi with stories from the production set.

“Did you know? Su Muran shamelessly stole the role that was supposed to go to my lovely Huanhuan, but she ended up wrecking the entire show. Her family then hired a bunch of shills to try to salvage her reputation online, but it didn’t work.”

“Hahaha!” Before the others could react, Yi Ling was already cackling maniacally at her own story.

“Oh you.” Lei Qingyi poked Yi Ling in the forehead; he did not know whether to be impressed or dismayed by her naivete. “You have no idea how powerful Su Muran is, do you? If Lu Yi hadn’t gotten his grandfather to help out, you’d be eating mud right about now.”

“You’re kidding, right?” Yi Ling’s jaw dropped. She quickly shut her mouth when she realized she was gaping like a fool—the last thing she wanted was to accidentally swallow a fly..

Lei Qingyi rolled his eyes. “What do you think? There’s only one thing the Su family is afraid of in this world, and that’s the Ye family. If it wasn’t for the Ye family, the Su family would have banished you and Yan Huan from showbiz by now.”

Yan Huan knew that was true. The Su family was no ordinary family; they were the local bullies, with a family tree that could be traced back a hundred years. Their foundation was strong, and they had aces up their sleeves. The fact that they had weathered every storm since the founding of the country, plus the fact that Lu Qin had abandoned his wife and sacrificed his own daughter to save Su Muran, were proof enough of the Su family’s power and influence. Lu Qin had not chosen Su Muran because of her qualities, or because she had been a rising star in showbiz, or because he had been head over heels in love with her; he had chosen her simply because she was the only heir to the Su family. As long as Su Muran was with him, he had the support of the entire Su family, thus giving him enough power to compete with Lu Yi for the position of top dog. In her previous life, Yan Huan had helped him amass a large fortune and a vast network of connections; all he had needed was an opportunity to seize real power and influence, and that opportunity had come to him in the form of Su Muran.

She did not know what had happened next. Who had won in the end—Lu Qin or Lu Yi? There was no way for her to know, because she had already turned into a pale corpse lying in a puddle of blood by then.

“What’s wrong?” A voice that was neither warm nor cold sounded from beside her, disrupting her straying thoughts and forcing her to return to the present. She looked up to see Lu Yi frowning slightly at her, a flicker of concern in his eyes.

“Nothing. I was just reminded of something.” Yan Huan smiled at him as she blinked back the tears that threatened to gather in her eyes. She tried to think of other things; the memories of her previous life were just too painful and sad for her right now.

Lu Yi reached out and pinched her cheek. “Don’t be afraid. You have me.”

He meant what he said: she had nothing to worry about, as long as he was around.

His laconic, matter-of-fact statement was all Yan Huan needed from him. She preferred his short and simple vow to the flowery verbiage that often proved to be nothing more than empty promises. Lu Qin had been guilty of that in her previous life: he had been a smooth talker—the kind who could nonchalantly spin a hundred lies without breaking a sweat—and he had unabashedly talked of giving his life to Yan Huan when they had been dating.

Chapter 295: She is Here

At the end of the day, the one who plunged the knife deep into her chest was still him.

“Alright,” Yan Huan smiled brightly at him before lowering her head to eat the hot pot. No one besides them had noticed anything between them only because they were too busy focusing on the food.

In any case, the other two had a huge appetite. They were soon engaged in a food war but Lei Qingyi was still gentlemanly. He would let Yi Ling have the food. He would give her anything that was nice first and even though he was a dummy who spoke crudely and had a foul mouth, he could be caring too.

Yan Huan didn't eat much and so did Lu Yi. As for Lei Qingyi and Yi Ling, they finished more than half of the food by themselves.

At the end, there were still quite a lot of food on the table. She stuffed all of them into her bowl and no matter what, she was determined to finish everything.

"You have eaten too much, put down those that you cannot finish." Lei Qingyi felt his brows locked. He was stuffing himself to death.

"It is not good to waste food," Yi Ling continued to eat, "you have no idea but I had no parents. I ran out from the orphanage when I was 10 and Mother Yan had always been taking care of me since then. She scrimped and saved and we would not be full at times. We have been scared of being poor since young and of course, we will not waste any food at all. Even though we are earning money now, people cannot forget their roots."

Lei Qingyi felt a tinge of sourness in his heart as he listened to this.

"That..." He held it in for a long time before opening his mouth.

"Yes?" Yi Ling raised her face from her bowl, "Why, do you still want to eat?"

"No," Lei Qingyi's face had turned red from holding his words back, "If you want to eat in the future, you can look for me," he banged his chest. "You can eat anything you want. If you cannot finish we can throw it away too."

"Really?"

Yi Ling's eyes brightened. She loved eating the most.

"Yes," Lei Qingyi nodded hard. "I will take you to eat whatever you want to eat. You don't have to pay for it. I will treat."

"Okay," Yi Ling's eyes squinted from her bright smile.

Yan Huan lowered her head. She had a helpless feeling of wanting to knock her head against the wall. Since the past, she had been afraid that Yi Ling would sell herself just for a meal. It seems like this was the case right now.

After eating, they didn't stay outside too long too. They went back home by themselves first. Yi Ling and Lei Qingyi couldn't bear to leave. The two of them had been talking about food the entire time.

The two of them seemed to be getting closer, almost as if they were bros.

But a guy and a girl, how could they be bros?

Yan Huan felt that it wasn't that easy for the two of them to be enlightened. But if this continues on, one day, even the stupidest of person will be enlightened. They would be able to understand something that they cannot fathom.

The next day, Lu Yi returned Little Bean.

“Eh?” Yan Huan carried him over and felt his stomach.

“Why is he fatter?”

Truly, he wasn't fat when Yan Huan first passed him to Lu Yi. But he seemed so fat that he cannot walk now.

“He ate all the fish in my mother's fish tank.” Lu Yi went to feel Little Bean's head. “My mother still hasn't calmed down yet. She wants to cry every time she sees the fish tank. After that, Lei Qingyi's mother had brought him over to take care of him. He eats fish every day and has become like this.”

“Sorry,” Yan Huan didn't know what to say. She knew that cats like fish, but this wasn't the way to eat them. The fish... in the fish tank. How did he eat it?

“It's alright,” Lu Yi pinched the cat's ears. “I have already ordered a new batch of fishes. The fish tank at home has also been sealed. It will be impossible for him to eat them next time.”

“Also, if you feel apologetic, you can give my mother a few autographed pictures of you, she will be very happy. She is your loyal fan.”

“Okay, give me a minute.” Yan Huan placed Little Bean down as he shook his head, wanting to jump on the sofa. However, he was too fat and couldn't jump up. He could only walk away shamefully to his bed and started lying down to sleep.

When Yan Huan came out again, she was carrying two sets of intricately designed wooden boxes.

“These are the SD dolls that the company has specially designed for me. I took two of them to give one each to you and Lei Qingyi. My autograph is one it.”

Lu Yi took it over. The doll had huge eyes and a small face that had a small mouth. If one looked closely, it did resemble Yan Huan herself, of course, a cartoon version of Yan Huan.

Lu Yi believed that his mother would love it. He could forget about everything but he wouldn't forget how his mother and Mother Lei would call Yan Huan their daughter.

“I will go back now,” Lu Yi touched her face, “rest well for the next few days, do not always think about filming new shows. You are famous enough already.”

“Okay,” Yan Huan promised with a smile. However, who knew her determination and perseverance behind her smile? She couldn't stop. Su Muran will grow in no time at all. If she stayed stagnant, she would be defeated squarely.

At the very least, she wanted to be better and be good enough for Lu Yi. When she entered his home, she didn't want to be looked down on. She wanted to carve out a name for herself.

After Lu Yi left, she touched her face softly. In that moment, something weighing on her heart seemed to vanish. It was lighter yet heavier at the same time.

Lu Yi drove back to where Ye Shuyun stayed as he prepared to give her the gift that Yan Huan had given. He wanted to comfort her injured soul, to bandage up the soul that had been damaged after it lost the fishes.

However when he opened the door, he could feel a different vibe.

“Mum, I am home,” He placed the stuff in his hands on the table. When he went in again, he saw someone that he hadn’t seen in a long time, someone whom he thought he wouldn’t see again.

Fang Zhu pushed up her glasses. She was dressed vintage and she seemed almost older. She wasn’t even 30 but it felt as if she was no different from any other woman who was 40.

Sigh... Ye Shuyun looked at this, then that, before calling her son.

“Lu Yi, come here and sit down. Xiaozhu, you too.”

Even though she had long given up on Fang Zhu and no longer expects her to be her daughter-in-law, she had already made her way over. They couldn’t be rude to a guest and chase her away. Even though Fang Zhu had things to say and she wasn’t able to let go even now, a good education from youth made her unable to chase people away.

Chapter 296: Looking For Dignity

Lu Yi sat down and casually crossed his legs. He looked at Fang Zhu, his face as inscrutable as a placid lake—it was the kind of bland, uninterested expression one usually directed to a stranger.

“I’ll go make us some tea. Don’t mind me.” Ye Shuyun got to her feet, relieved that she now had an excuse to get away. She had been sitting there glaring at Fang Zhu in awkward, restrained silence for some time now; if Lu Yi had returned even a second later, she was quite sure she would have lost it and gone for Fang Zhu’s throat.

“What do you want?” asked Lu Yi, his voice entirely devoid of emotion.

He had never felt anything for Fang Zhu. Some people were able to tell with a single glance that they had found their soulmate, while others dated for a while before finally realizing that they were not meant to be. The latter was precisely what had happened between him and Fang Zhu.

Lu Yi and Fang Zhu both knew that there had never been anything resembling love between them.

Fang Zhu adjusted her glasses.

“Lu Yi, I demand an explanation in regards to our relationship.”

Fang Zhu lifted her chin expectantly, like a teacher in the middle of lecturing her student.

“An explanation?” Lu Yi asked. “What exactly do you want to hear from me? I believe I’ve made myself perfectly clear—we’re just not right for each other, Fang Zhu.”

“Not right for each other?” Fang Zhu leapt to her feet, the veins in her temples throbbing furiously. “You think you can erase our history with those five words? I wasted my precious youth on you! Lu Yi! Prosecutor Lu! Are you trying to evade responsibility for your actions?”

At that moment, Ye Shuyun and her housemaid were plastered against the door, eavesdropping on Lu Yi and Fang Zhu's conversation.

"Ma'am, that woman is entirely shameless."

Ye Shuyun nodded vigorously in agreement. "She wants compensation for her lost youth? Well, my son wasted his youth on her, too!"

"How do you want me to take responsibility?" Lu Yi asked impassively. "By marrying you?"

"Of course." Fang Zhu threw back her shoulders haughtily as she reseated herself. Her posture was impeccable, but it did not look natural. It looked robotic..

Lu Yi thought of Yan Huan. The young actress was careful about her image in public, but when she was at home she always made herself comfortable. She liked to lie stretched out on the sofa, with Little Bean by her feet. He remembered watching her poke Little Bean over and over again with her toes, trying to get a response out of the lazy cat. He recalled the way she had laughed at her own silly actions—like an innocent, easily entertained child.

Fang Zhu, on the other hand, was like a tough, no-nonsense man. Lu Yi did not want a man, or a "bro"—he wanted a wife, a mother to his future children. And he did not require his significant other to be a high-achiever; he only wanted to be able to pamper her and dote on her. Try as he might, he could not bring himself to feel anything for Fang Zhu—she was just a stoic, icy man in his eyes.

Fang Zhu could not even begin to guess what was going through Lu Yi's mind. He had always been a difficult person to read, especially when he was deliberately keeping his emotions from showing on his face.

"Well?" Fang Zhu snorted condescendingly. "Are you trying to go back on your word?"

She did not actually mind having to marry someone else—breaking up with Lu Yi was not the end of the world for her. But the way the break-up had occurred annoyed her immensely: she did not like the feeling of having failed at something..

"No." Lu Yi's expression remained unchanged. His voice was flat and lifeless as he said, "I don't mind marrying you."

Fang Zhu smiled when she heard that.

Ye Shuyun, who had been hiding behind the door, rolled up her sleeves. She was about to march into the room and give Fang Zhu a piece of her mind when the housemaid restrained her. "Ma'am, let's not be too hasty—you can still join the battle if things go south."

Ye Shuyun let down her sleeves and settled back into her façade of being a proper lady. But the housemaid was not fooled—everyone knew that despite her lady-like name, Ye Shuyun had been notorious for her fiery temper when she was younger. She had mellowed out with the passage of time, but her temper was still very much intact; unprovoked, she was like a fine wine, but as soon as she lost her temper she turned into a boiling pot of water.

In the living room, Fang Zhu drank from the cup of water that had been set out for her on the table. The aura emanating from her was no longer sharp enough to cut—she had evidently found Lu Yi’s answer to be satisfactory.

Lu Yi turned his frosty gaze upon Fang Zhu. His expression was still entirely deadpan, but his slender phoenix eyes narrowed ever so slightly.

“We’ll get married this year,” he said in a nonchalant, matter-of-fact manner, as though he were merely pointing out the sun in the sky.

“You know very well that’s out of the question.” Fang Zhu set her cup on the table. “Lu Yi, I’ve told you many times that I won’t marry before I’m 30, and I won’t have children before I’m 35. I’ve barely started on my career.”

“And I want a baby next year,” Lu Yi added.

Fang Zhu’s expression grew icy. “Lu Yi, is this your idea of a joke?”

“No.” Lu Yi looked directly into Fang Zhu’s eyes as his aura grew increasingly oppressive. “Fang Zhu, I don’t mind marrying you, but it has to happen before the year is over, and I expect to have a child from you next year. You were quick to lay out your conditions, but you never thought to ask about mine, did you? Well, if you want me to marry you, you’ll have to agree to my conditions.”

“That’s not going to happen.” Fang Zhu stood and retrieved her handbag. “Lu Yi, there isn’t a single woman on this earth who will agree to marry you this year and bear you a child by the end of next year. You underestimate what it takes for a successful pregnancy and childbirth. What do you think I am—a sow? And besides, I’m only 26. I’m not about to give up the things I’ve fought so hard just to be a housewife.”

She was a modern woman, and she was not about to waste her life like that.

Lu Yi got to his feet as well. “I gave you your chance, Fang Zhu.”

Fang Zhu was momentarily at a loss for words. She pressed her lips together as she tried to control her temper.

“There are plenty of other fish in the sea for me, you know.” With that, she turned and walked out the door, the click-clack of her high heels ringing loudly in the silence. Lu Yi’s request was entirely out of the question for her. She would rather keep her pride and dignity than give in to his demands.

“What happened?” Ye Shuyun hurried over to her son, afraid that Fang Zhu had been physically violent with him.

“Everything’s fine, Mom,” Lu Yi said reassuringly. “Don’t worry, she’ll never visit again.”

“She’ll never visit again?” Ye Shuyun sat on the sofa. She tugged dubiously at Lu Yi’s sleeve. “How can you be so sure of that?”

“She only came to reclaim her dignity, and I made sure to give her what she wanted.” Lu Yi picked up the box he had left on the table and placed it in Ye Shuyun’s hands. “Here, Mom. This is for you.”

“What’s this?” Ye Shuyun had been about to ask Lu Yi to explain Fang Zhu’s sudden change of heart, but she forgot all about it as soon as she opened the box and saw what was inside. Her eyes almost dropped out of their sockets.

Chapter 297: Her Role Has Been Stolen

“My daughter, my god, it is a doll of my daughter. And it is autographed.”

“Yes, she signed it herself,” he took another over and handed it to Ye Shuyun.

“This is for Aunt, help me pass it to her.”

“Don’t worry, count on me,” Ye Shuyun almost slapped her chest in promise. However, the two dolls were different—one was in period clothing while the other was in modern clothes. She didn’t want to give away any of them; she wanted to keep both.

“That’s right,” she turned her head and stared at her son. “Why haven’t you left?”

Alright, Lu Yi understood. He wasn’t needed anymore. He turned around and walked towards his room. Ye Shuyun was still holding the two dolls outside. She didn’t know which one to choose.

Lu Yi went into his room and laid down. He closed his eyes when suddenly, he broke into a small smile. The coldness had disappeared and was replaced by warmth.

“There are the latest scripts. You might not be able to rest again.”

Luo Lin carried some scripts back, “Li Changqing treats you well. You have the best scripts again.”

“Isn’t someone better?” Yan Huan took over one of them and started flipping.

“Do you mean Su Muran?”

Luo Lin sat down. She didn’t guess incorrectly. Yan Huan was talking about Su Muran.

“Who else if not her?” Yan Huan pouted. “She is the real newcomer and the first female lead role had become a supporting role because of her. The emperor was given to a small actor. She has face and even more money.”

“Oh...” Luo Lin heard it, “It seems as if you don’t really like her?”

“Do you like her?” Yan Huan asked Luo Lin back.

“No,” Luo Lin was honest too. “Even though she always had many resources, but the more exceptional others are, the helpless she became. It wasn’t easy for her to clean herself up.”

“If the role was yours, I believe you can do better.”

Luo Lin stared at Yan Huan’s beautiful side profile. This small girl had something intoxicating about her. Just like a cup of sake, refreshing and leaving a lingering scent at the back of one’s teeth.

Yan Huan smiled. She wasn’t Su Muran. She had no father and their fathers couldn’t compete against each other.

“What about this?” Yan Huan handed over the script she had chosen to Luo Lin.

Luo Lin took it over, "This is not bad: The Return of the Condor Heroes. Even though it has been reproduced many times, every single version has been exciting. Which role do you want?"

Yan Huan held up her own face on the table. "I want to act..." That's right, what did she want to act?

"Xiaolongnu?"

Yan Huan rolled her eyes. If she didn't act that, who else could she act as?

"Huang Rong?"

Luo Lin asked again.

"That's worse, Rong'er is quite annoying in this drama."

"Guo Fu?"

"Hate that too."

"Lu Wu Shuang?"

"Nothing special."

"Then what do you want to act as, it cannot be Granny Sun right?" In Yan Huan's past experience, she has acted as a granny before.

"That is fine too," Yan Huan wasn't against this but Luo Lin wanted to kick Yan Huan in the head. "You are a fine girl; why do you like to act such roles?" She didn't even mention the Empress role that she had chosen previously because it was indeed a good role. But she couldn't have the intention of dabbling with the role of Granny Sun, could she?

"Give up on Granny Sun," Luo Lin wasn't Yi Ling who had no limits when it came to Yan Huan's requests. Moreover, that woman was nowhere to be found. She had been eating and drinking everyday with Lei Qingyi.

"Alright," Yan Huan shrugged. She didn't really entertain the thought of acting as Granny Sun either. She didn't really like the role of Xiaolongnu in the show either. She liked Li Mochou: someone who dared to love and dared to hate. Of course, this was a classic and was waiting for someone to break out of that mold.

"I want to act as Li Mochou. Someone else can have xiaolongnu."

"Okay..." Luo Lin gave it some thought. It was possible too. After all, Li Mochou had quite a lot of scenes too. As for Xiaolongnu, to put it nicely, she was gullible. But to put it plainly, she was a little dumb.

Perhaps she was a goddess in many people's eyes but to Luo Lin, she didn't like that role at all. She preferred a character and role with more soul and flesh. Someone like Li Mochou fit the profile.

It was decided then. She would discuss this with Yi Ling. Since Yan Huan and Luo Lin both chose Li Mochou, Yi Ling wouldn't say no either so long as she had food to eat. She had completely lost control of herself and she hadn't seen how fat she had become recently.

Luo Lin shook her head. She would contact Li Changqing in a while to discuss the script.

However, it wasn't long before Luo Lin went back to Yan Huan and frowned.

"What's role? Has my role been removed and I can only act as Granny Sun?"

"You can still laugh?" Luo Lin threw the script onto the table, "You can't even have the role of Granny Sun now. The role of Xiaolongnu has been decided. It is Su Muran. Li Changqing has informed me that you cannot be a part of this cast. Your Li Mochou role is gone. You suppressed Su Muran's acting in Beauty. Do you think she will let you act in this? I think you can forget about acting in any shows that has her in the future. You don't have to snatch any role from her anymore."

"Then I will not act in this," Yan Huan chose another script from the pile. "This one, take a look."

She wasn't very interested in the role of Li Mochou to begin with. Moreover, Su Muran was acting as Xiaolongnu; this show would definitely bomb. Such a thunderous Xiaolongnu, with such a thunderous actress. Why would she still want the role?

Luo Lin took the script and started flipping through it. It was a comedic period drama but the investment in this show was way smaller than The Return of the Condor Heroes's. It was only a tenth of it. Did she really want to act in the show?

"The script is decent but it has a small budget. You might not get much pay."

"Don't worry. I do not lack money now." Yan Huan really wasn't strapped of cash now. She could get a few endorsements now and she would have more than enough. Moreover, she has been getting most of her money from movies.

What she needed now was a good name, a show with high ratings.

This comedy was more of a period drama. Game Lake. It was a time travelling show too. Such shows weren't common as of now and it was kind of a new experience. If course, this show got the formula right. She was about to take on this show in her past life but she had met Lu Qin right about this time. She had fallen for his sweet words and didn't pick up this drama then. The show was unexpectedly successful back then and she was full of regrets.

Chapter 298: Changed Her Mind

She had made up her mind: this would be her next project.

She couldn't care less about The Legend of the Condor Heroes now—if Su Muran wanted the role of Little Dragon Girl, well, it was hers for the taking.

"I'll take this one," said Yan Huan decisively, "and that's that."

"Okay." Luo Lin got out her phone. "I'll get right on it, since you've made up your mind. I'll head over to the agency and sign the contract to make it official—we don't want to let Su Muran mess things up again. She's trying to indirectly ice you, you know, by instructing the production teams not to work with you. I didn't mention this, but..." she waved the scripts in her hand, "...it looks like she's already persuaded all the larger projects to shut the door on you. But it looks like she didn't bother to do the same with the smaller projects—or maybe she thinks it would be funny to throw you a few sad scraps from the table."

With that, Luo Lin turned and immediately made a beeline for the agency. The last thing she wanted was for Su Muran to swoop in and steal the crumbs in their hands again.

A moment later, Yan Huan's phone began to ring. It was Lu Yi.

She put the phone to her ear, kicked off her shoes, and began swaying her legs back and forth under the table. She was entirely at ease, and not at all self-conscious.

"Su Muran axed your role." Lu Yi knew everything Su Muran had done, because he had been keeping a close eye on Yan Huan. "But I've helped you deal with it. You can choose whichever role you want now—the female lead, the secondary female lead, it's all up to you."

Lu Yi leaned back into his chair. "Don't worry. I'll deal with everything she throws at you, and she won't even know it. Feel free to ask for whichever roles you're interested in. The Su family will never be able to lay a finger on you."

"It's fine." Yan Huan continued to kick her legs back and forth as she propped herself on the table. "I'm not interested in Condor Heroes. There's been so many remakes of it, and I don't think the upcoming project will bring anything new to the table. I've decided on another show. Luo Lin's already on her way to finalize the contract."

"Okay..." Lu Yi stood up and shoved his free hand into his pocket. "Do you want me to help you deal with Su Muran?" He knew that Yan Huan was a tough woman with a mind of her own; she would only ask him for assistance when it was absolutely necessary. She had not mentioned Su Muran to him again, which was why he had decided to check with her to see if she wanted to deal with Su Muran on her own.

"It's fine," Yan Huan repeated with a serene smile on her face. "The fact that she wants to ice me proves that she's afraid of me. Well, I'll wait to see if she can actually grow and mature into a competent actress. I'll welcome her as my rival if she can prove she's worthy of my time."

She was not lying; Yan Huan thought of Su Muran as her rival, a rival who she hoped would eventually be able to put up a good fight. She had lost to Su Muran once, in her previous life, and she needed Su Muran to be at her peak potential before going up against her again. She needed to defeat Su Muran when the latter was at her most powerful, to alleviate the sting from her previous defeat.

She refused to accept that she had somehow lost to an incompetent woman.

She would wait for Su Muran to grow as an actress—and then it would be a race to see who would be the first to win the Best Actress award.

"If you need help, just let me know." Lu Yi was not particularly surprised. Yan Huan had always been a proud, capable woman who preferred to handle things on her own, instead of relying on other people all the time.

"Okay." Yan Huan had not realized it herself, but her voice suddenly sounded sweet and shy—like a purring kitten rubbing its head against a leg.

“I’m making dumplings today. Do you want to come over?” she asked. She already knew that Lu Yi would come—he only declined the offer when he was extremely busy and had to work through the night, or when he had to visit the Lu family home.

“Okay. I’ll be there at seven.” Lu Yi sat down and booted up his computer, eager to finish his work as soon as possible. The sooner he finished his work, the sooner he would be able to head over to Yan Huan’s place and eat his favorite dumplings.

Yan Huan hung up the phone and went to the kitchen to check whether she would have to head out and replenish her supplies; she had to make sure there would be enough dumplings for everyone that night. Lei Qingyi was capable of devouring an entire bucket of dumplings on his own, after all. She had only two words for Lei Qingyi’s massive appetite:

Absolutely. Terrifying.

She was relieved to find that she had enough flour for the dumpling skin, and plenty of shrimp meat for the filling. She had set apart the ingredients the day before, in preparation for the dumpling dinner that night.

She called Yi Ling and asked her to get some takeout on her way home, just to be safe.

Meanwhile, Luo Lin had just pulled up before the agency office. As soon as she stepped into the building, Li Changqing quickly invited her into his office.

“We’ve resolved the issue with Condor Heroes. Yan Huan is free to join the production.”

Li Changqing did not explain what had happened. He merely stated the end result—Yan Huan was now able to play Li Mochou in Condor Heroes.

Luo Lin knew better than to ask for the nitty-gritty details. She had a pretty good idea what had happened: Su Muran had tried to lock all the doors available to Yan Huan, but she had once again underestimated the power and influence of the man watching over Yan Huan.

As a general rule, Yan Huan did not pick fights with other people, but if someone decided to mess with her, the man watching over her would automatically help her deal with it—as he had done for Condor Heroes.

But his help had not been necessary this time.

“Manager Li, Yan Huan won’t be joining the Condor Heroes project.”

Luo Lin placed the script in her hand on the table. Condor Heroes was a big-budget affair—even the background actors in it were famous stars—but the shoot would take longer than average due to the length of the show. More importantly, any project that involved Su Muran was bound to be a trainwreck.

They had therefore chosen to pass on the opportunity.

“She’s turning down the offer?” asked Li Changqing, bewildered. The Legend of the Condor Heroes topped the list of the year’s most anticipated shows. It would be directed by Yan Hua—a director who

only helmed big-budget shows—and there would be many A-listers involved. What a waste to turn down the offer!

“We’ll be taking this role instead.” Luo Lin did not bother with explanations. Yan Huan had decided, and that was that—there was no way the actress would change her mind now, not even if someone put a knife to her throat.

Li Changqing wanted to try to persuade Luo Lin to get Yan Huan to change her mind—Yan Huan was now free to join the production, after all, and there was no reason to turn down a good offer out of spite. But he saw the determined look on Luo Lin’s face, and knew any attempts at persuasion would be futile.

That did not stop his mouth from twitching in dismay when he saw the script Luo Lin had placed on the table, however.

“This one?”

“Yes.” Luo Lin did not think there was anything strange about Yan Huan’s decision. “Yan Huan chose it herself.”

“Okay.” Li Changqing privately thought it was silly of Yan Huan to choose a no-name show over a classic like *The Legend of the Condor Heroes*, but he kept his opinions to himself. He knew he did not have a say in the matter.

Over at the Su residence, Su Muran’s pretty features were now twisted with anger.

“What did you just say? Yan Huan is now free to join the *Condor Heroes* project?”

“That’s right,” Su Muran’s manager replied sullenly. Yan Huan was a much better actress than Su Muran, as evidenced by the way she had out-acted Su Muran in every scene for *Beauty*. The role of the Little Dragon Girl was supposed to be a chance for Su Muran to redeem herself and save her reputation: she was pretty enough, after all, and with the help of makeup, and a large ensemble of A-listers in supporting roles for *Condor Heroes*, it would be easy enough for her to rid herself of the stigma from *Beauty*.

Chapter 299: The Uncle and the Flower

But if Yan Huan was there, it would be problematic. The rest wouldn’t have much conflict with Su Muran since she would definitely get the most outstanding and prettiest role. However, it was different with Yan Huan. She was way better than her in terms of looks, acting or fame. If Yan Huan was there, she would definitely be suppressed. The larger the following of the show, the more she would be suppressed.

Su Muran herself knew too that Yan Huan wasn’t after the role of Xiaolongnu. She wanted the role of Li Mochou. There were scenes between those two characters throughout the show. She knew deep down that she wasn’t a match against Yan Huan.

“I thought it had been decided that she wasn’t allowed into the cast?” Su Muran blamed her manager. This show was heavily invested by her father in order to make her famous. It wasn’t to bring her down.

Her manager had no idea what to reply, "The cast didn't want to say much but I think you should be able to ask about it."

Su Muran's face blackened.

She didn't have to ask to know who it was.

It was the Ye family. But she couldn't understand where Yan Huan had come from. She was an orphan with no parents, no power and no means. She couldn't understand why the Ye family would be on her side all the way. They would even care about the things going on within the cast of The Return of the Condor Heroes. She had wanted to suppress all the shows that Yan Huan could act in to prevent her from picking up any shows. However, she didn't expect the Ye family to butt in again.

When she returned again, she was evidently in a bad mood. Right at this moment, she was called in for a scolding by Su Qingdong.

"I told you to not anger Yan Huan if there was nothing. You guys have nothing against each other. The Ye family went to find grandad again. Do not think the Ye family do not know about the things you have done. They have long hands that can reach into places even you cannot see."

"But daddy, I cannot keep let her suppress me right?"

Su Muran lifted her head and showed a wronged look. Su Dongqing felt pity for her.

He walked over and tapped her shoulder.

"She can suppress you now because you aren't strong enough. If you surpass her one day, with our resources, are you afraid to lose to her? You are Su Muran, a Su person. You were born talented."

Su Muran had nothing to say after hearing his lecture. This shouldn't be a problem?

Yes, she had a good education from young and she had the most elite of resources provided for her. But she couldn't compete against Yan Huan's acting. All the directors would love to have Yan Huan, a ratings monster.

One of them was a hit while the other was doomed to fail. Even a fool would choose the one that would be a hit.

Her face blackened as she returned to her room. She had no idea what to do now. The Return of the Condor Heroes was about to start filming but she still had to deal with Yan Huan the entire drama. Was she about to be suppressed again?"

"What did you say?" Su Muran sat up suddenly as she asked her manager who had just returned, "You said Su Muran is giving up on this show?"

"Yep," Her manager quickly replied. "She is planning to film another show called Game Lake. The budget isn't big but she is the first female lead. She signed the contract pretty quickly."

"Why?" Su Muran didn't understand. Any fool would know to act in The Return of the Condor Heroes and not a small budget show.

“This...” her manager had nothing to say. “Perhaps she couldn’t join any shows then and could only choose this one. She might have signed it as soon as possible in fear that she wouldn’t be able to act in this. Or perhaps she is the first female lead in this but the second female lead in The Return of the Condor Heroes.”

“Fool!” Su Muran could finally rest easy.

Game Lake and The Return of the Condor Heroes started filming almost at the same time. The lensing ceremony for the latter was a huge event. Many stars turned up since it was a major show that was directed by Director Yan Hua. Of course many stars would turn up in support.

As for Game Lake, it was way more toned down. It was just a meal with everyone and there was no press conference. It started filming quietly.

Game Lake was a time travelling drama where the characters travelled from a game into the past. The main character had the powers he had in the game with him where he could grow herbal medicine. It then followed his journey in the ancient world.

This was a comedy and everyone’s mood were incredibly relaxed while filming. There was much laughter. As compared to the set of The Return of the Condor Heroes, Yan Huan was more relaxed in this cast.

Game Lake had an expected filming time of 3 months and by that time, the show was almost done filming. This show didn’t have much meaning to it but it was incredibly funny and was an exceptionally relaxing show for others to watch.

When Game Lake finished filming, The Return of the Condor Heroes was only one-third completed. It would take them till next year to be released at this pace.

Luo Lin asked Yan Huan if she wanted to rest. She didn’t want to, she needed to film another show, a Chinese New Year film. She liked to star in those less popular films with low budget. It might be low budget but it brought about shocking box office ratings.

She picked up another ordinary show this time, a show that left one laughing from start to finish. She acted as a lady from a small village who almost became a prostitute after being cheated by someone. She ran out and met a wacko man. He had no money nor power and was a little foolish. The lady was kind enough to bring him home at the end of the day. Along the way, they did everything. They collected bottles, washed the dishes, sang for a living. The handsome man was a little dumb but was a good friend. He used the money the lady made to start a business and quickly earned enough money. The lady brought the mentally ill man throughout the journey and he got better and better. It turns out that this man wasn’t an uncle and he wasn’t old either. His beard was too long which made him looked old. He was a rich man but was kidnapped and injured his head. If it wasn’t for this lady, he would have died from illness or hunger.

At the end of the show, the lady from the village became a phoenix as she lived out the rest of her life perfectly. Even though there were many jokes, this movie had a positive message and brought about innocence and beauty in this materialistic world. Of course, this was only a movie and because it was only a movie, it didn’t need to have any deep meaning. So long as it could bring laughter and make one go to the movie theatres again, it was a success.

Chapter 300: Roping In An Investor

The director of the film was Huang Ming, the director of *Divorced*. Yan Huan knew, from her previous life, that he would go on to be a legendary director, and play a key role in helping Su Muran win her Best Actress award.

Yan Huan had turned down all the other movie offers for Director Huang's road trip movie: *The Uncle and the Flower*.

It was an unusual title, but that was not necessarily a bad thing; it was instantly recognizable and helped set the movie apart from the rest.

They seated themselves as Director Huang expressed his delight at seeing Yan Huan again.

"You're really here! I was afraid you'd be too busy to come." Director Huang fought the urge to wipe the cold sweat from his brow. Everyone knew that Yan Huan was a massive box-office draw now, and that naturally meant that there was a long, unending stream of offers from film directors for her to choose from. Director Huang's new movie had a bigger budget than *Divorced*, but it was still a far cry from the big-budget projects starring A-listers.

He had been worried that Yan Huan would decline to meet him.

He held Yan Huan in high esteem: she was an amazing actress, a true professional.

"It's been a while, Director Huang." Yan Huan shook hands with Huang Ming. "It's only been a little over a year since we last met, and look at you—your upcoming movie's been nominated for a slot in the Chinese New Year lineup! That's really impressive!"

"And I have you to thank for my success." Huang Ming chuckled. He knew he had been immensely lucky: he did not have many movies under his belt, but *Divorced* had been such a huge hit it had helped open many doors for him. It was still up to the State Film Administration to decide whether he would be able to release his upcoming movie as part of the Chinese New Year lineup, but he was reasonably sure of getting it. Even if the movie did not make it into the Chinese New Year lineup, he knew he had an 80% chance of getting a slot for the first of January, which was the next best thing.

"Here's the contract." Huang Ming placed the contract on the table. "This is just the first draft. Have a look, and let me know if you'd like to change any of the conditions."

Yan Huan picked up the contract and looked it over carefully.

The contract did not list a fixed amount for her paycheck; instead, it stated that she would receive 30% of the net profit from ticket sales. It was the same condition he had offered for *Divorced*.

It was obvious that Huang Ming was far from certain that his movie would be a box office success. Yan Huan guessed that he had offered her a share of the net profit because he was afraid that she would turn down the offer if she saw the meagre sum he could afford to pay out of his pocket right now.

"When do we start?" Yan Huan set the contract aside. She was entirely flexible when it came to her contract, but she had to know when principal photography would begin so she would be able to prepare for it.

Huang Ming hesitated for a moment, too embarrassed to say that he did not yet have enough money to shoot the movie. *Divorced* had made a killing at the box office, true, but as the director, he had not actually earned as much as he could have. Most of the profits from *Divorced* had gone to the investors, and a sizable chunk had gone to Yan Huan. He had money, but not enough to fund the entire project.

“Ms. Yan, I’ll be honest with you: I haven’t found an investor. I have some money of my own, but it won’t be enough. I’m sure I’ll find investors soon enough, so don’t worry. I’m confident in my skills as a director, and I’ll be acting as both producer and director for this movie.”

He had been planning this movie for a very long time, and was eager to shoot it as soon as possible, before other problems turned up. But all the larger investors had chosen to invest in the other candidates for the Chinese New Year movie lineup. He had not been able to find an investor yet, but he was quite sure that this was a problem that would be easily solved.

A bold idea began to form in Yan Huan’s mind when she heard what Huang Ming had said. She had a feeling that this was a golden opportunity for her, and she would be idiotic to let it slip through her fingers.

“How about this, Director Huang,” Yan Huan paused as she considered what she was about to say next, “I’ll join the project, and also get someone to invest in it.”

Huang Ming was overjoyed to hear that. He had been agonizing over the lack of investors, and if Yan Huan could help him with it, well, all the better. It was a win-win situation for both of them: Yan Huan would star in his movie, and he would get an investor through her.

Yan Huan knew it was a good deal, and so did Huang Ming.

By the time Yan Huan returned to her apartment, the street lights had come on, and every window in the city shone bright. She took a moment to take in the comfortable silence, the peace and freedom that had been forcibly taken from her in her previous life. She was free to live her life, and not be taken for a madwoman or a fool.

She got out her phone and dialed a number. She had a potential investor candidate in mind.

She heard his deep voice on the other end of the line, and knew that he was still working: she could hear him typing on a keyboard.

“Lu Yi...” She whispered his name.

Lu Yi removed his hands from the keyboard. There was a flicker of warmth in his smoky dark eyes, but it was hard to tell whether it was just a trick of the light, or whether it had come from deep within him.

“How are you today?” Lu Yi’s voice was just as perfect as she had remembered it to be. He was not the talkative type, but every word he said was important and relevant. He was not as charming as men who knew how to whisper sweet nothings, but on the other hand, men like him were generally the most faithful and loyal to their significant others.

“Okay, I guess.” Yan Huan stretched herself out on her large bed.

She sat up and said seriously, “Lu Yi, have you ever thought about investing in movies?”

“Investing in movies?”

Lu Yi rubbed his brow. “I’m bad at business.” He spent most of his waking hours in the prosecutor’s office, and did not have time to dabble in business. He had a number of highly profitable investments under his name, but those were taken care of by his team of investment advisors.

He was not a big spender. He did not even know how much money or assets he had, exactly.

“There’s a movie I think you should invest in,” Yan Huan said a little shyly as she looked at the tips of her toes. In her previous life, Lu Qin had invested in movies, and his investments had earned him a lot of money every year. His sizable fortune had helped secure his power and influence within the Lu family. Lu Yi, on the other hand, had not bothered to try his hand at business as his attentions were focused entirely on his work within the government. Lu Qin and his mother had gloated about Lu Qin’s wealth at every opportunity, conveniently forgetting that they had only been able to invest because they had the necessary capital to do so in the first place—capital that had not been theirs.

The capital had come from Yan Huan. It had been her money to begin with, but Lu Qin and his mother had shamelessly taken all of it without leaving her a single cent. She remembered how Lu Qin had cleaned out the money in her bank account—over one billion dollars—and then used it to woo Su Muran. He would never have caught Su Muran’s interest or go on to win the Best Actor award, if it had not been for Yan Huan’s money.

Well, this time she was going to earn an astronomical amount of money for both herself and Lu Yi. She was going to make Lu Yi a very, very wealthy man indeed.

“All right, I’ll transfer the money to your account tomorrow. You can use the money to invest in whichever movie you like.” Lu Yi did not press Yan Huan for further details; in fact, he did not particularly care about the outcome of the investment. Win or lose, he felt it was his duty to support his future wife in her endeavors.

He was already thinking of Yan Huan as his future wife—a thought that had never occurred to him when thinking of Fang Zhu.

In other words, it had never been a compatibility issue between him and Fang Zhu. He simply could not, for the life of him, see Fang Zhu as a woman he could ever possibly marry.