

The Apple 41

Chapter 41

Qiao Mu was speechless and her face was completely twisted in shock.

What more could she say? What else could she say?!

Why could this man easily render her speechless with a single sentence regardless of her best lines?!

Growing up in the Qiao family had sharpened Qiao Mu's tongue. When she was encountering Yu Tingyun and her daughter, she could always gain the upperhand with little effort, especially when Qiao Ya tried to use words to attack her. In the end, Qiao Ya was always the one who suffered, and she was always the one who succeeded!

But, her advantage was completely destroyed by the man before her. This was simply too embarrassing!

As expected, Yu Tingyun and her daughter were not on the same level as this man!

Qiao Mu felt that she was too embarrassed when she choked on her words because of him. She was thinking about speaking up to restore some of her dignity, "Uncle..."

However, Li Yan did not give Qiao Mu a chance to retort. He straightaway carried her onto his lap, and pulled her petite body into his embrace.

He lowered his head to look at her, and her reflection was reflected in his eyes. With his thin lips, he said with a firm voice, "Qiao Mu, it seems like I need to remind you that once you become my woman, you can't even think about other thoughts! Even if it's really incest, you still belong to me till the end!"

Qiao Mu was at a loss of words.

Damn it! What a pervert!

Qiao Mu had only called him her uncle just to disarm him, but he was actually taking this seriously!

His woman... When did she become his woman?

The man's gaze fixed intently on Qiao Mu's face and it immediately made Qiao Mu nervous. His expression was dead serious. It seemed like he would kill her if she said "no".

Qiao Mu withdrew herself as she nodded timidly. She did not have the rights to shake her head at all!

Li Yan was very satisfied with her behavior as his finger trailed along the bridge of her nose, "Be good."

This action...

Qiao Mu felt as if something was tugging on her heartstrings, and it was a feeling that she could not put into words. She almost said "big brother" aloud, but when she noticed the man's expression, the two words were stuck in her throat.

Qiao Mu was flustered when she climbed out of Li Yan's embrace. She was well-behaved when she sat aside, and her heart mysteriously sped up.

When she was younger, Li Yan often ran his finger down the bridge of her nose, and she especially liked his touch because he would never treat anyone else the same way.

At that time, although the big brother's expression was cold, his eyes were so warm and gentle. But the expression of the man before her right now was so cold that all other semblance of warmth had been cast out.

Qiao Mu's action made Li Yan's expression turn even colder.

He had only touched her, why was she frightened enough to flee from him now? She was so nervous, as if he would really have her for dinner. Was he really that scary?

Where did that naive, clueless, and socially inept young girl go? Back then, it had been nearly impossible to scare her off — she clung to him like an eel.

Li Yan pursed his lips together. He really did not like to be pushed away by her!

In order to ease her nervousness, Qiao Mu's gaze shifted to the scenery outside of the car window, but she was shocked by the view.

"Uncle, why did you bring me home?"

The car already drove into the mansion area, and the Qiao family's mansion was right in front of them.

Li Yan glanced indifferently at Qiao Mu's nervous expression as he raised his brows, "They won't kill you, don't worry."

Qiao Mu grabbed Li Yan's hand, "We can't let them know that we have such a close relationship. Quickly stop the car, I'll get down from here."

However, the car was still driving smoothly without listening to Qiao Mu's instruction at all.

The Qiao family's entrance was just before her eyes, but the car did not drive in.

Qiao Mu was stunned, and then she saw the car drive into... Li family's mansion!

The owner of Li family's mansion had not returned in ten years, but everything in the mansion had been well-maintained.

Li family's mansion was just next to Qiao family's mansion, but Qiao Mu had never entered Li family's mansion within these ten years.

Qiao Mu looked at the mansion compound from the car, and every part of the mansion seemed so familiar to her. This mansion was once her happy place.

"Get out." Li Yan interrupted Qiao Mu's train of thought.

Qiao Mu was puzzled as she raised her head, "Uncle, why do you bring me to your house? If the neighbors see us, they will misunderstand! Indecent thoughts will be the first thing they'll come up with!"

"When are we not doing something indecent?" Li Yan's tone of voice sounded matter-of-factly.

Qiao Mu was left speechless.

Alright, there was indeed something indecent going on between them!

Although the Li family and Qiao family were neighbors, their mansions were enclosed so no one could see anything in the mansions from the outside.

But Qiao Mu still had lingering fears. After she got out of the car, she sneakily dashed into the mansion without waiting for Li Yan.

Li Yan could not help but smile. He really could not do anything to this little thing.

Qiao Mu finally let out a breath of relief after she entered the mansion. She rested her body against the glass door as she looked out from the inside. She watched as Li Yan walked over with steady steps. The slight twinkle in his eyes appeared as if he was mocking her mouselike timidity.

He was blatantly laughing at her!

“Second Young Mistress Qiao?” Someone suddenly called out to her.

Qiao Mu turned around abruptly and saw a man in his fifties or sixties was smiling at her.

“Are you... Uncle Chen?” Uncle Chen was the butler of the Li family. Qiao Mu had met him when she was younger.

The butler nodded, “Second Young Mistress Qiao, I knew it’s really you. Our young master had returned from overseas, so Second Young Mistress Qiao would definitely come over to pester the young master so he would play with you. You’re exactly like this when you’re younger.”

Qiao Mu’s expression was somewhat unnatural. Pestered Li Yan? He was obviously willing to play with her, alright?

At that moment, Li Yan entered the mansion and glanced indifferently at the butler, “Uncle Chen, ask the kitchen staff to prepare our dinner.”

The butler answered yes and then went to the kitchen.

Qiao Mu was a lot more relaxed after she entered the compound and wandered around in the huge living room. The Li family’s mansion was a lot bigger than the Qiao family’s mansion. Although the huge house felt somewhat empty, she still felt more comfortable than she was in the Qiao family’s mansion.

Qiao Mu went up to the second floor and stopped before Li Yan’s bedroom before she pushed the door open to enter the room.

All of the bedroom's furnishings were in black and blue without any hint of warmth, and it gave off the same cold and indifferent vibes as Li Yan.

Qiao Mu looked out from the balcony and she could see her bedroom in the Qiao family's mansion. When she was younger, she would always observe him from her bedroom. There was once when she happened to see him changing, and she called him happily to praise him, "Big brother, you have an amazing figure!"

Ever since then, Li Yan would draw the curtains when he returned to his bedroom, and she no longer successfully peeped into his bedroom again.

She actually had so many memories just within the short period of three years.

But Li Yan's return this time would cause her a series of obstacles. She was barely coping with Yu Tingyun and her daughter, and she would definitely be pressured if Li Yan chose their side.

Qiao Mu was lost in her thoughts so she did not hear the footsteps behind her. When she came back to her senses, an arm wrapped around her waist before she could turn around. Her body immediately fell into a strong embrace.

Her heart started to beat faster when she smelled the familiar mint.

A low yet hoarse voice started speaking above her head, "Little thing, what shameful thoughts are you having in my bedroom?"

Qiao Mu turned around and grinned, "I'm thinking whether you would help others bully me?"

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"Others? Qiao Mu, she's my cousin. What about you? Who are you to me?" Li Yan lowered his head to look at the little thing, trying to read her mind again.

Qiao Mu lowered her gaze. He was right. She was the outsider to him!

She raised her head to look at him as she wrapped her arms around his neck with a smile, "Didn't uncle just say that I'm already your woman? By this comparison, am I not a little closer to you?"

She was throwing caution to the wind!

It was obvious that the young woman was purposely pleasing him from her expression. Li Yan narrowed his black eyes and a sudden hint of anger appeared in his eyes.

He grabbed her waist and smiled coldly, "You can't just say that you're my woman."

Qiao Mu was stunned as she bit her lip, "Uncle, then what reason do you have to not gang up on me with the others?"

Li Yan's lips curved into a ridiculing smile and his expression was cold. She had racked her brains to prevent him from exposing her conducts ever since she saw him again. She never ever thought that he could protect her when she encountered troubles!

She treated Yu Tingyun and her daughter with caution, like they were her enemies. She now treated him the same.

His deep black eyes darkened, and the arm wrapped around her waist suddenly propped her up. He then turned around and placed her onto the huge bed.

His tall figure immediately pressed against her body, "I will definitely protect you if you become my woman!"

Qiao Mu's heart started to beat faster and she was somewhat panicking now, "But we've already..."

"Is once enough?"

Qiao Mu bit her lip and her eyes showed that she was feeling hurt, "I knew it, you just want to bully me with them!"

The anger in Li Yan's eyes slowly disappeared after hearing what she said. He squinted his eyes, "Qiao Mu, remember, I'm the only person who can bully you!"

A hint of shock flashed across Qiao Mu's eyes, "Li Yan, you..."

The rest of her words were swallowed by the man who pounced on her. Qiao Mu widened her eyes but Li Yan did not give her any time to react before he deepened the kiss.

The overbearing yet feverish male scent overwhelmed her senses. Qiao Mu only felt her breathing quicken. She was so stunned that she lost the ability to react.

She actually forgot to adjust her breathing because she was too nervous. Her face was red because she was somewhat out of breath.

Li Yan was very unsatisfied with her performance. He opened his mouth to bite her lip and she yelped in pain. Only then, she started to breathe normally. Then, the man took the opportunity to pry her unguarded mouth open and his tongue entered her mouth directly without any resistance.

Qiao Mu let out a moan as her brain went blank. Finally, she realized her current situation.

Qiao Mu began to resist his advances, but his fervent lips and tongue would not let her go, and she was overwhelmed in an instance.

The man had no intention of letting her go. Qiao Mu was somewhat scared now. After all, the last time was an intoxicated mistake, but she was sober this time. Her mind was telling her she could not continue this muddled mess with him.

Li Yan discovered that his body was easily turned on by this little thing, and he was acting somewhat out of control.

He felt that Qiao Mu was extremely docile. But when Li Yan looked up, he realized that the young woman's body was trembling nervously. She was biting her lip, and her eyes were completely filled with timidity.

He stopped in his action as his brows furrowed together.

She was actually not resisting him at all even though she was this frightened and nervous?

In a split second, Li Yan's anger bubbled up in him as he sneered, "Why? Are you afraid?"

"I... Uncle..." Qiao Mu was somewhat stuttering out of nervousness.

She only acted so unrestrained last time because she was under the influence of drugs and alcohol, to the extent that she could not recall the process at all. But this time was different. This time she was completely clear-headed. That was why she was at a complete loss when she faced his sudden advances.

He could sense her nervousness, Li Yan was angry when he saw her repulsion toward him.

He leaned over to look at her, "Just persevere to the end since you want to seduce me. Don't pretend to please me if you can't do it!"

After saying that, he got up and left the bedroom in huge strides.

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Qiao Mu bit her lips as her whole body went limp with relief. But the nervousness still lingered in her heart.

His words had been filled with ridicule and disdain. She clenched her fists, feeling extremely upset.

He had been completely unaware of her life in the Qiao family all these years. He had once given her three years of happiness, but she had been standing on her own feet for the following ten years.

With the Qiao Family, she could not afford a single misstep. Why was he treating her like this when he only had this much leverage?

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Dinner was ready by the time Qiao Mu went downstairs.

The butler saw her and said with a smile, "Second Young Mistress Qiao, come and have dinner. The young master's waiting for you."

"Uncle Chen, I won't be eating here. I'll make a move first." Qiao Mu hung her head low as she headed for the entryway.

He probably did not wish to see her after being so angry just now.

However, before the butler could speak up, a deep voice could be heard from the dining room, "Come and eat!"

Qiao Mu stopped in her tracks and felt extremely resentful. But her stomach was grumbling, so she hung her head and walked over.

The man opposite her had a cold expression on his face, as if she owed him a few million RMB. He was the one who bullied her just now!

All six dishes were served when Qiao Mu discovered that regardless of the dish being vegetables or meat, every dish had been stir fried without any red chilli in sight.

She felt something tugging at her heartstring. She bit her lip and started to eat with her head down.

He still remembered!

He remembered that she could not eat spicy food.

When she was younger, Qiao Mu could not take spicy food at all. She could not stand even the slightest bit of spiciness that came into contact with her tongue. Every time Li Yan brought her out to eat in a restaurant, he would specifically instruct the kitchen to keep chilli away from the dishes.

In the following years after he left, no one would care about her taste buds, and she slowly got used to spiciness. She could even eat Sichuan cuisine now.

Qiao Mu understood from a long time ago when facing things that she disliked, others would not adapt to her. She had to adapt to the ways of others. In the Qiao family, she had always tried her best to adapt. After so many years, she had already forgotten how it felt like for someone else to care.

She had already forgotten about a small matter like her personal food preferences, yet this man actually remembered!

Qiao Mu lowered her head and ate, but she was extremely upset. Why did he give her a carrot after hitting her with a stick?

“Qiao Mu.”

The man sitting opposite her called out to her. Qiao Mu stopped moving but she still remained in her position with her head hung low.

“Raise your head!”

Qiao Mu raised her head and revealed her red, watery eyes.

Li Yan's brows were furrowed together. Did he frighten her with his actions just now? He had already let her off the hook. What was she feeling upset about?

Qiao Mu lowered her head once again. Before he could ask, she mumbled with a low voice, "I'm fine. It's just that these dishes taste too mild to me."

"Too mild?"

Qiao Mu pointed at a plate of stir fried beef, "Actually, this beef will be tastier if it's spicy."

She paused before she added again, "I can take spicy food now."

An unknown emotion flashed through Li Yan's black eyes, "Qiao Mu, you're crying because the dishes were too mild?"

"I'm not crying. It's just that the rice is too hot, and the steam got into my eyes." It was hardly persuasive.

"If you lower your head further down into your bowl, your head will be having a steam bath."

Qiao Mu was left speechless by his blatant sarcasm.

Li Yan put down his chopsticks and said to the butler, "Clear the dishes, redo them, with chilli this time."

The butler was just about to respond when Qiao Mu immediately reached out to interrupt, "It's fine. It's really quite tasty!"

Then, Qiao Mu picked the beef up with chopsticks and took one huge bite after another.

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After she finished her meal, Qiao Mu stood up and mumbled, "I'm going home now."

Li Yan glanced at Qiao Mu. He got up and picked his coat up. "I'll send you home."

"You don't have to send me home. It's just next door, I can go back on my own." Qiao Mu waved her hand. He was acting as if nothing had happened in the bedroom just now.

Li Yan ignored her rejection as he walked over to hold her hand and walk out, "Qiao Mu, do you know that there are a lot of rag pickers who sleep nearby the wealthy suburb at night? I don't want to wake up tomorrow morning and find you abducted by someone else."

"Oh," Qiao Mu answered tamely. She really did not know about that.

Li Yan sounded resigned. "You're really getting dumber as you're getting older."

Qiao Mu grimaced and muttered with a low voice, "You're really becoming fierce."

"What did you say?"

His sharp gaze swept over to Qiao Mu as she stopped her big eyes from blinking blankly. She snapped her jaw shut!

After both of them left the mansion, the butler behind them shook his head in resignation. The security around the mansions were extremely strict. How would any rag pickers appear around here?

Miss Qiao actually believed in the young master's off-handed lie. They still acted no differently from their childhoods.

When they close to the gate of the Qiao family's mansion, Qiao Mu stopped in her tracks as she was worried that someone might spot them, "Uncle, I've reached home. You can go back now."

"Not till you pass through the doorway. I'll watch."

Qiao Mu nodded and waved at him, "Goodbye, uncle." After she said that, she ran away as quickly as she could.

Li Yan's lips curled into a smile. This little thing had slipped into her habit of calling him "uncle".

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Qiao Jiannan was in his study when Qiao Mu returned home, and so she went over to greet him. She was just about to go back to her bedroom when she was stopped by Yu Tingyun at the corridor.

"What's the matter, Aunt Yun?" Qiao Mu was somewhat surprised. In private, Yu Tingyun would usually ignore Qiao Mu. Yu Tingyun had stopped her on purpose today.

Yu Tingyun stood upright, and as before, her posture made her look like an aloof noble person. She said indifferently, "I have something to say to you, Qiao Mu. You're already an adult since you're 18 years old now. If you don't want to come back to this home, you don't have to come back in the future."

Did not have to come back home in the future?

The meaning behind her words was obvious.

Qiao Mu gave a slight smile and she had a puzzled expression on her face, "Aunt Yun, I don't really understand what you mean."

"You're so smart, of course you can understand what I mean. I know you don't like to stay in this home. You did not have the ability when you were younger, but you can totally leave the Qiao family now that

you're an adult." Yu Tingyun was speaking very slowly with a smile on her face, and it appeared like she was giving Qiao Mu very good advice.

Why did the "kind stepmother" suddenly grow impatient?

A hint of coldness flashed across Qiao Mu's eyes, but the smile on her face appeared extremely naive. She said very directly, "Aunt Yun, I know what you're worried about. Relax, the Qiao family has raised me for so many years. I won't take anything that doesn't belong to me."

Yu Tingyun's expression became stiff when her worries were mentioned aloud.

Qiao mu yawned, "It's quite late now and I'm going to sleep. Goodnight, Aunt Yun."

Yu Tingyun stared at Qiao Mu's back as she left, and her eyes were filled with raw hatred. Yu Tingyun could not understand how others would think that Qiao Mu was pure and naive when she was actually a young woman, one capable of dark schemes?

Since young, Qiao Mu had not caused any trouble in this household even once. Although Qiao Ya always bullied her, she would never complained to Qiao Jiannan. Her sensibility was totally unbecoming of a child's nature.

Yu Tingyun remembered when Qiao Jiannan once went on a business trip, Qiao Ya had locked Qiao Mu in a room and starved her for a day. But after the incident, Qiao Mu only came to her and said, "Aunt Yunt, please tell big sister to stop doing this in the future. If father knows about this, he will be very unhappy about it."

How deep and dark was the mind that designed such words?

But Qiao Jiannan had mentioned the company's share today, and that Qiao Mu should enjoy the rights to own the company's share as a legal adult. But Yu Tingyun did not intend to give Qiao Group's share to an illegitimate daughter!

If she did not cut Qiao Mu off from the Qiao family now, Qiao Mu would covet everything from the Qiao family upon graduation!

Chapter 46

In contrast to Yu Tingyun's sleepless night, Qiao Mu had a very good sleep.

She slept through the entire night. Upon waking up, Qiao Mu went downstairs to have a simple breakfast with a glass of milk and a piece of bread.

Yu Tingyun's gaze toward her was even colder than before, but Qiao Mu did not pay it any heed.

Actually, Qiao Mu was very grateful toward the Qiao family for raising her this many years. Although Yu Tingyun did not truly accept her as family, she could completely understand her position.

So she always tolerated Qiao Ya's bullying and Yu Tingyun's indifference, but they should be done with bullying her after so many years.

She did not think that Yu Tingyun would be impatient enough to kick her out. Actually, she only had to wait for another two years for Qiao Mu to graduate. Qiao Mu would then leave the Qiao family like how it was supposed to be. Yu Tingyun's worries were completely unnecessary.

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When Qiao Mu walked out of the Qiao family's mansion's compound, she heard an ear-piercing car honk behind her. She turned around and saw Qiao Ya's white Mercedes-Benz. The car was very close to her. The road was so wide, so it was very obvious that Qiao Ya did this on purpose.

Qiao Mu moved to the side of the road, but the car was honking even more aggressively.

“Qiao Mu, can’t you just walk on the side of the road? A good dog will never block the path. Can’t you just watch where you’re going?” Qiao Ya yelled disdainfully from the car.

Qiao Mu stopped in her tracks and looked at Qiao Ya, “Miss Qiao, you’re my older sister. If you say I’m a dog, aren’t you a big dog then?”

“You!” Qiao Ya ground her teeth in anger.

At the same time, a Bentley Mulsanne slowly drove toward them. With a single glance, Qiao Mu could already recognize that the flashy black car was Li Yan’s car.

Qiao Mu’s eyes brightened up as she waved toward the car, “Uncle, can you give me a ride?”

Inside the car, Li Yan’s gaze fell onto the young woman leaning on the car window. She was blinking with her big eyes and staring directly at him, as if she was saying “Please quickly agree, please quickly agree”.

Before Li Yan could say anything, Qiao Ya said in a very scornful voice, “Qiao Mu, what are you thinking? Uncle’s company is not on the same path with your university at all. Can you not trouble uncle...”

“Get in the car!”

Li Yan straightaway interrupted Qiao Ya before she could finish talking.

Qiao Mu ignored Qiao Ya’s horrified expression as she started grinning. She said while she opened the car door and got into the car, “There’s a benefit of not driving a car, too. I get to ride in my uncle’s luxury car!”

After she finished talking, she slammed the car door loudly with an extremely arrogant attitude.

Qiao Ya almost exploded out of extreme anger. Immediately after that, that black car swiftly drove past her car.

Qiao Mu's mood was extremely good as she sat in the car. It had been a long time since she had such a carefree feeling.

From the young woman's smug expression, it was obvious that Qiao Ya had often bullied her. Li Yan's black eyes darkened at the thought. It seemed like his warning toward Qiao Ya when he left back then had gone completely unheeded.

Qiao Mu realized that she was going overboard with her smugness, and so she scratched her head in embarrassment, "Uncle, thank you for the ride."

"How do you want to thank me?"

"Isn't a verbal thank you enough?" He only did her a small favor but he wanted her to thank him more ceremoniously. He was really pushing it too far!

"No." Li Yan glanced faintly at Qiao Mu as the corners of his lips curved into a half-smile, "You know what I want."

Qiao Mu blinked dumbly for a moment before her face started blushing. She really did not want to know what he wanted, but why was she suddenly recalling the scene in his bedroom yesterday night...

Qiao Mu turned her face away toward the window and mumbled, "I don't know."

"Are you sure?" Li Yan raised his brow and lifted her chin so she could meet his gaze, "My dear niece, I thought we shared a mutual hobby!"

Hobby...

This pervert!

The car came to a standstill when Qiao Mu slapped his hand away and immediately got out of the car.

She stood outside the car and glared fiercely at him with her big eyes, “Li Yan, you’re a pervert!”

Chapter 47

Li Yan looked at the arrogant little thing outside of his car as his lips curved upward. She wanted to leave after she was done taking advantage of him? There were no free lunches in the world!

Li Yan reverted to his usual expression of ice when she disappeared from his sight. He picked up his cell phone to make a call, “Lei Yi, I need you to look into this...”

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After Qiao Mu returned to university and attended two classes, she stayed in her dorm to sketch out some clothing designs. Fashion design was her major, and so she sold her hand drawn designs to fashion design companies to earn some money. She did not care about rights of use as long as she was paid.

Qiao Mu was busy with her task when Chi Xia moved closer to whisper into her ear. “Mu Mu, you still haven’t told me about your uncle. Your stepmother’s younger brother is too handsome!”

“Don’t interrupt me. If you want me to return your money to you earlier, you better be good and shut up.”

Chi Xia grimaced as she opened a bag of chips and started eating, “Little Mu Mu, you’ve grown up. You’re actually keeping secrets from me.”

Qiao Mu was left speechless.

Qiao Mu’s cell phone started ringing and she glanced at the caller’s ID before she answered the call, “Senior, what’s the matter?”

“I’m indeed calling you for something.” Han Su’s clear and bright voice said through the cell phone, “Mu Mu, I did you a favor last time. Shouldn’t you return the favor?”

“Senior, this obviously doesn’t sound like a good thing when you’re beating around the bush.”

Han Su laughed, “Actually I’m going to a private banquet tomorrow night, and I need a female companion with me. Can you do me the honor and accompany me?”

Qiao Mu was stunned, “Senior, you should have a lot of suitable candidates around you, right? My time is so precious and yet you choose me!”

“But you’re the only one who owes me a favor.”

“...Alright.” After all, he had helped her before, so it would be rude for her to reject him.

After Qiao Mu hung up the phone, Chi Xia asked, “Han Su? Why did he call you?”

Qiao Mu took a chip and put it in her mouth before she said, “He needs a female companion. I agreed to his request because he helped me before.”

“Help? He drove you into such a messy situation, and that counts as helping you? Han Su’s known to be distant from everyone else, but why is he so enthusiastic toward you? I’m certain he has evil intentions!” Chi Xia was very opinionated about Han Su’s favor.

Qiao Mu shrugged helplessly. “I’m the one who asked for his help. Why do you blame him? Alright, wasn’t it all in the past?”

Chi Xia snorted as her brows furrowed together, “Mu Mu, be honest. Is Han Su into you? If not, why would he be so persistent?”

The door was suddenly pushed open and Yao Shu was standing at the entrance. She asked nonchalantly, “What are you talking about? What’s wrong with Han Su?”

Chi Xia shrugged, "Nothing. I'm asking Mu Mu if Han Su likes her."

Yao Shu's expression changed, "How is it possible? Han Su definitely doesn't like Mu Mu!"

Chi Xia laughed, "Why are you so agitated? If not, does he like you?"

Qiao Mu rolled her eyes at Chi Xia, "Even snacks can't shut your mouth up!"

Chi Xia and Qiao Mu continued to chat, and they did not notice Yao Shu's face scrunching up.

Yao Shu sat on the chair and took out her cell phone to text a message, "Dear, what's your relationship with Qiao Mu?"

Very soon, she got a message in return, "Qiao Mu? Baby, don't tell me you're jealous? There are too many people who like me, but you're the only one I like."

Yao Shu asked again, "But why do you always turn off the lights every night when we're together? You never look at my face, and you always treat me like a stranger when we meet during the day."

"Baby, you're thinking too much again. Isn't it more exciting this way? Don't you like it?"

Yao Shu blushed when she read the message. She raised her head to glance at Qiao Mu, and her eyes were filled with smugness.

Han Su belonged to her!

Chapter 48

Top floor of the LSA Building.

Lei Yi stood before the office desk as he spoke in his calm voice, "Young master, I've already investigated the matter as per your instructions. Zhou Jieru is indeed Miss Qiao's birth mother. She has a gambling addiction and she is deep in gambling debt. For the past two years, Miss Qiao has been helping her pay her debts. In the Qiao family, Miss Qiao does not have any other allowance, so most of her money was earned by herself. Zhou Jieru believes that her birth daughter is having a very well-off life in the Qiao family, so she frequently asks Miss Qiao for money. The Qiao family did not allow Miss Qiao to meet her birth mother, so the Qiao family members were unaware of these matters."

Li Yan pursed his lips and his expressionless face kept radiating coldness.

His long fingers tapped rhythmically against the table as he asked, "Qiao Jiannan doesn't care about Miss Qiao when she's living like this?"

"Qiao Jiannan's unaware about this. Mrs Qiao is the one responsible for Miss Qiao's living expenses, and she only gives a fixed amount of living expenses." Lei Yi said.

Li Yan knew that her life in the Qiao family was not smooth-sailing, but he did not think that her birth mother was such a massive burden!

He leaned against his seat and said coldly, "Keep tabs on Zhou Jieru, inform me if she contacts Qiao Mu once again."

"Yes, young master." Lei Yi answered.

Lei Yi paused for a while before he continued, "Young master, Second Young Master Su has organized a private banquet tomorrow night, and the second young master asked me to pass the message to you."

Li Yan said coldly, "I'm not going."

Lei Yi nodded. It was obvious that the young master was in a very bad mood, and so he left the office silently.

After five minutes, Li Yan's cell phone started ringing. It was a call from Su Chen.

Li Yan picked up the phone and Su Chen's husky voice could be heard through the cell phone, "Big brother, you're not giving face to me by not attending my banquet."

"I'm not free. Don't waste my time if you don't have anything else to say."

From his tone of voice, Su Chen could tell that Li Yan was having a bad mood. Su Chen laughed, "I heard the northern suburbs have caught your eye. I've invited the mayor's son for you, if you don't come, Lu Jingzhi will snatch the property rights from you."

"Goodbye!"

"Hey, don't..."

"Su Chen held the phone listlessly as the other end beeped. Who got this guy so mad again?"

But even though he acted coldly, Su Chen was sure that Li Yan would still attend the banquet.

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Gold and Jade Hotel.

One after another, many people started to arrive at the banquet hall.

Su Chen looked at the man standing at the entrance and gave Lu Jingzhi a meaningful glance, "I knew big brother would come."

Lu Jingzhi leaned on the couch and lazily crossed one leg over another, "If Ling Xi knows that the three of us are having fun together while he's suffering in South Africa, he's going to make a big deal out of it."

Su Chen patted Lu Jingzhi's shoulder, "Don't get so comfortable, come and help me greet the guests."

"This is your banquet, not mine." Despite Lu Jingzhi's words, he still stood up and looked at Li Yan, who was walking over to them, "Big brother, I thought that the land in the northern suburbs is mine!"

"It won't be yours even if I don't come." Li Yan said indifferently. He walked gracefully toward the couch and sat down.

Lu Jingzhi shrugged disapprovingly. Even if he could snatch the land from anyone else, he could not snatch it from this man. He would not stand a chance. He had not addressed Li Yan as his big brother for so many years for nothing.

Su Chen pointed to somewhere in the crowd, "The mayor's son is already here."

Su Chen looked at Li Yan after he said that, only to find Li Yan's gaze at the banquet hall's entrance. His sharp, almond-shaped eyes narrowed dangerously.

It seemed like this tiger had found its prey.

Su Chen and Lu Jingzhi exchanged looks and together, stared at the banquet hall's entrance...

Chapter 49

They followed Li Yan's gaze and saw a young man and a young woman chatting happily as they entered the banquet hall.

The young man was the young master of Han's family. They had met before, and there was nothing wrong with him.

As for the young woman in the long white dress beside him...

Su Chen and Lu Jingzhi were slightly stunned. They turned their gazes onto Li Yan once again, but saw that his expression had darkened. His eyes were burning with anger, as if he was going to burn a hole through that young woman's body with his gaze.

Li Yan's gaze fixed intently on that figure in white. She was holding the man's arm with a smile on her face, and Li Yan knew that man.

He was the man who had claimed to be her "boyfriend"!

Lu Jingzhi smirked and his expression was somewhat rogueish. "Don't tell me, this beautiful young woman happens to be the big brother's woman that Ling Xi mentioned?"

Su Chen's deep black eyes squinted cryptically. It was obvious that Lu Jingzhi did not recognize the other person's identity.

.....

Qiao Mu followed Han Su into the banquet hall.

Qiao Mu was wearing a long white dress, and her long, shiny black hair gently draped over her shoulders. She did not dress flamboyantly nor reservedly, and her beauty was just perfect...

Han Su lowered his head to look at Qiao Mu beside him. In normal times, Qiao Mu always acted carefreely and spoke according to her own wishes, but right now at that moment, she appeared so magnificent. The aura from the core of her very bones was on full display.

She was just an eighteen year old young woman, but she could actually be this beautiful.

Qiao Mu realized that Han Su was staring at her, so she blinked in confusion, "Senior, what's wrong?"

“Your dress really suits you, I have quite a good taste.” Han Su’s bright eyes were twinkling as he stared at Qiao Mu.

Qiao Mu chuckled, “Senior, who else would boast like you do? Right, as you’ve said before, I just need to follow you after I go in. That you’ll bring me out the way you brought me in.”

“Relax, do you think I’ll leave you here alone?” Han Su looked resigned.

Since young, Qiao Mu had never attended any other events apart from Qiao family’s banquets. Although she disliked rich people’s parties, she could not reject Han Su when she owed him one.

Qiao Mu followed Han Su into the banquet hall. She unintentionally looked up and suddenly met a powerful gaze that froze her. With a sudden quiver, she noticed the man who was sitting on the couch in the corner.

Although she was a distance away from him, Qiao Mu could clearly see how dark his expression was. The coldness deep within his black eyes could not be held back by mere distance.

Li Yan was actually invited!

Qiao Mu thought the private banquet mentioned by Han Su was just some gathering between his friends. She did not think that the banquet was this grand!

Why was she this lucky? Of all the people, Li Yan was here!

At this time, Han Su also discovered Li Yan’s presence. He lowered his head to look at Qiao Mu, “Isn’t it your uncle over there?”

Without waiting for Qiao Mu to speak up, Han Su started to smile, “We’re encountering your uncle once again. Now your uncle will really think that we’re a couple. Let’s go over to say hi.”

Qiao Mu was speechless.

He looks angry enough, could he not make things any worse?

.....

On the other end, Lu Jingzhi looked at Han Su and Qiao Mu as they walked over, and he started laughing as he somewhat took pleasure in their misfortune, "They still dare to come over? Don't they notice that the tiger is baring all its fangs?"

Su Chen felt resigned, "Can you speak less and shut up. Just enjoy the show."

Lu Jingzhi simply sat down and crossed his legs as he waited for the show to begin.

But why did he feel that this young woman looked so familiar?

A thought flashed across his mind...

Then, the young woman stood before Li Yan. She stood respectfully and mumbled softly, "Uncle..."

Chapter 50

Qiao Mu mustered up her courage before she walked toward Li Yan. She really could not bear Li Yan's scary gaze, so she lowered her head respectfully.

Could he stop glaring at her? His scary gaze was so accusatory.

She blinked innocently. What did she do wrong? Was she not just returning a favor?

Qiao Mu took a deep breath and smiled at Li Yan, "Uncle, you're here too. what a coincidence!"

"A coincidence indeed!" The corners of Li Yan's lips slightly turned upward. His voice was deep and charming, yet icy cold at the same time.

He looked up to look at Han Su, and his gaze inadvertently fell onto Han Su's arm. Just now, his little thing's hand had been wrapped around there!

Han Su could sense Li Yan's coldness, and he was somewhat surprised. He still remained calm and collected when he said with a smile, "Hello, Young Master Li. I'm Han Su. We've met before."

"We've indeed met before. You're her boyfriend, right?"

The word "boyfriend" sounded ice-cold coming from Li Yan's thin lips.

Han Su was stunned before he explained, "It was a misunderstanding last time. Didn't Mu Mu explain to you? At that time, I didn't know you were her uncle. I only said that I was her boyfriend to help her out of the situation. I'm just Mu Mu's senior."

Li Yan's expression softened a little, but just slightly.

Mu Mu?

Lu Jingzhi was almost already certain about her identity after she called Li Yan "uncle".

In Beijing, Qiao family's daughter was the only person who could call Li Yan "uncle". Qiao Ya, of course, would not receive such treatment. If it was not Qiao Ya, she must be...

Lu Jingzhi was somewhat uncertain when he looked at Su Chen. He said with a low voice, "Su Chen, who is this young woman?"

Su Chen glanced faintly at him, "She is who you think she is."

Lu Jingzhi was stunned. She was really Qiao Mu!

It made sense after he thought about it. Over the years, not many women could earn a second glance from Li Yan, and Qiao Mu was the only one who could receive such attention from him.

He did not expect the treatment from ten years ago to remain the same after all this while.

Lu Jingzhi never saw Qiao Mu again after Li Yan went abroad, because Qiao Mu never attended any other events or banquets. Naturally, Young Master Lu, who could not remember women's faces even after meeting them, did not remember Qiao Mu's appearance. It was normal for him to not recognize her.

But Su Chen could recognize her with just one glance. Qiao Mu's appearance had not changed much, and a while back, he happened to see a photo of Qiao Mu when she was younger.

Most importantly, it was because of Li Yan's response just now. In a huge city like Beijing, Qiao Mu was the only person who could sway Li Yan's emotions.

Su Chen stared at Qiao Mu. In his memory, the young girl always acted carefree and wild before Li Yan, but this young woman before them was lowering her head respectfully. She seemed terrified of Li Yan.

The atmosphere was somewhat awkward. After Han Su greeted Su Chen and Lu Jingzhi, he said to Li Yan again, "Young Master Li, Mu Mu is my female companion tonight. Don't worry, I'll send her back to the campus safely after the banquet ends. I'll bring her to the other side now."

Qiao Mu smiled at Li Yan, "Uncle, I'll come find you in a while."

The man's expression was so dark, and he was obviously angry. She did not dare leave him as it is.

Li Yan watched as Han Su took Qiao Mu away, but remained silent.

Lu Jingzhi was very curious when he asked, “Big brother, ten years have already passed. Why are you getting your hands on Qiao Mu again? You acted really fast!”

Li Yan picked up a glass of red wine and swirled it around before taking a sip. His voice sounded indifferent as he said matter-of-factly, “I’m not the one who made the first move.”