

As Agreed 41

Chapter 41: Business Trip Scandal

These days, with Gu Shaoting not at home, Shu Pan also found herself in a relaxed state. She was busy taking care of her father and Auntie Lu, escorting them back to their hometown. Indeed, the scenery of their hometown was beautiful, with picturesque mountains and rivers. After returning, her father's mood became much brighter. It was truly a good place for recuperation. Her father even jokingly suggested that she should come back and live there in the future, to which she just smiled in response.

Meanwhile, the River International Airport was bustling with activity. Reporters crowded the entrance, all seemingly waiting for someone's arrival. In the midst of the bustling crowd, Tong Fei stood out in her white knitted dress. The form-fitting dress highlighted her figure, showcasing her envy-inducing long legs. She possessed a tall and beautiful stature, with flawless porcelain-like skin that radiated a charming and innocent aura. Behind her large sunglasses, her star-like aura was undeniable.

The reporters had their cameras and microphones ready, prepared to capture the latest gossip news. Many had received information that Tong Fei and her ex-fiancé, Gu Shaoting, were abroad together, supposedly for a work-related meetup. Today, upon their return, the news was perfectly timed. Additionally, Tong Fei was attending an anniversary event for an international brand she endorsed, which was also the reason for her appearance.

Sure enough, Tong Fei emerged from the airport. "Miss Tong, is this trip for endorsements? We heard that you and Mr. Gu came together."

"No comment. Thank you, everyone." Tong Fei's assistant, Zhou, quickly stepped in to fend off the reporters' questions.

Tong Fei smiled and said, "Thank you for your concern. Please give us some space."

With that, she hurriedly left.

“Mr. Gu, why did you choose this flight today?” Wearing black-framed glasses and a deep blue suit, Zhang, the fair-faced secretary, watched the approaching reporters with a headache.

Ever since encountering Tong Fei in the U.S., his temples had been throbbing. It was just such a coincidence that on the second day of Mr. Gu’s business trip, he bumped into Tong Fei, who was endorsing a brand in the U.S. Due to her longer time in the industry and her increasing international recognition, Tong Fei’s fame had grown significantly. Coupled with their past relationship, she was like an octopus, always finding opportunities to get close to Mr. Gu, dining together, having coffee together. Upon learning that they were on the same flight today, she had secured her own ticket without hesitation. Now, the two of them were leaving one after the other.

The man in front of him was none other than the boss, Gu Shaoting. Wearing a black suit, a hint of intriguing smile tugged at his lips as he remarked, “I’m evaluating your abilities.” After speaking, he strode towards the bustling crowd.

With drooping shoulders, Zhang looked helplessly at his boss. This assessment was truly a headache, especially with these entertainment reporters who were more persistent than flies. Businessmen usually didn’t attract the attention of entertainment reporters, but unfortunately, his boss was irresistibly charming. After a rumor with the self-proclaimed “number one beauty in the entertainment industry,” supermodel Tong Fei, he had been swept into the entertainment world.

Actually, his boss did indeed share a deep connection with Tong Fei.

Seeing Tong Fei getting into the car arranged by her agency and driving away, he noticed more and more reporters flocking around him. He quickly approached them and tried to shield them away, a miserable task indeed!

Finally making it outside the airport, a black luxury car was waiting by the entrance. The driver respectfully bowed to the incoming individual, opened the back door, and incidentally blocked the approaching reporters. Realizing that they wouldn’t get an interview, the reporters shifted their attention to Zhang, who was left behind. With a mournful expression, he watched himself being left behind and cornered by reporters, while his boss, expressionless, got into the car and provided the paparazzi with a perfect side profile shot. What an evil boss. The one who would suffer would always be his secretary..

Chapter 42: Self-staged Drama

Gu Shaoting opened his laptop in the car and glanced over the recent projects the company had signed. He was seated in the passenger seat while He Ming, beside him, suddenly turned and said, "Tong Fei's calling, for you."

Gu Shaoting raised his eyes slightly, but his gaze remained fixed on the computer screen. Then he extended a hand to take the phone.

"Hello, Tong Fei, what's up?" he answered.

"Shaoting, are you in the car? I got a bit startled by all those reporters at the airport just now. Sorry for causing you trouble," Tong Fei's voice sounded gentle and tender, evoking a sense of pity.

"It's alright, I'm a grown man, what's there to be afraid of? Just be cautious when you're out." Gu Shaoting's deep and magnetic voice came from the other end of the phone.

"I heard from Auntie that Grandpa's birthday is in a few days. I'll go and visit him then."

"Alright, that sounds good," Gu Shaoting replied casually before ending the call and handing the phone to He Ming.

After that, Gu Shaoting closed his laptop, rubbed his forehead, and leaned back on the rear seat, closing his eyes to rest. He Ming wisely remained silent and turned his attention to the driver.

Meanwhile, in the company's chauffeured car, Tong Fei's assistant, Zhou, couldn't help but ask with confusion, "Miss Fei, why did you instruct me to notify so many reporters to come to the airport? Gu Shaoting isn't divorced yet, and you're stirring up a scandal with him. It could be a big problem if the reporters find out."

Tong Fei replied nonchalantly, "What's there to worry about? They'll definitely get divorced eventually. Besides, Shaoting's attitude toward me is lukewarm. If I don't ignite a spark, it won't catch fire. This will make his wife back off."

Zhou said, "Oh, I see. That's why."

Tong Fei gazed out of the window, her mood far from calm. During their time in the US, she had actively approached him and dropped many hints, but Gu Shaoting remained unmoved.

Despite having such a seductive figure in his presence, he acted like a fool and remained indifferent to her advances.

So, she staged this whole situation herself, having her assistant spread rumors to let everyone know she was with Gu Shaoting.

She was certain that the entertainment headlines would explode sooner or later, and she didn't believe Shu Pan wouldn't notice.

If she did notice, she surely would have thoughts. Could she really not divorce Gu Shaoting?

She was always full of confidence in getting what she wanted.

After spending so long in the entertainment industry, her heart was weary, and she longed for a home and a support system. Without a doubt, Gu Shaoting was the best choice.

Rather than going straight home, Gu Shaoting had the driver take him and He Ming to a restaurant. He intended to have a good meal. He wasn't accustomed to the foreign cuisine.

Now it would be best to have a pot of sticky congee, just like the one he had that day. Somehow, Gu Shaoting suddenly remembered and felt a nostalgic aftertaste.

He Ming began teasing as soon as they sat down, “Not bad, my man. You’re on a business trip with a beauty by your side. You’re living the good life, huh?”

“Get lost, it’s just a coincidence we ran into each other in the US. Nothing happened,” Gu Shaoting explained, a rare occurrence.

He Ming had always found Gu Shaoting’s relationship with Tong Fei to be confusing, like trying to see flowers through the fog. He couldn’t fathom what attracted Gu Shaoting to Tong Fei, as his socialite friends were far more suitable in terms of background and education.

Due to Gu Shaoting’s previous relationship with Tong Fei, their friends were acquainted with her, making them more amicable toward her.

“Oh, by the way, Shu Laide has returned to his hometown. He’s no longer in Bin City,” He Ming suddenly mentioned.

Gu Shaoting was taken aback, clearly surprised by why Shu Laide would return to such a remote place. Of course, Shu Pan wouldn’t tell him. “Well, he’s wise, quick on his feet. He’s no longer under my nose,” Gu

Shaoting’s thin lips uttered a chilling sentence..

Chapter 43: Grandpa’s Birthday

After dinner, Gu Shaoting returned home.

Upon his return, Shu Pan was probably in the midst of taking a shower as the sound of rushing water emanated from the bathroom. He suddenly felt a surge of warmth within himself. He hadn’t been drinking tonight, so what was going

Before long, Shu Pan emerged from the bathroom, clad in a soft pink sleepwear ensemble. Though it was modestly covered, the fabric accentuated her alluring figure with its graceful contours.

Seeing her, Gu Shaoting felt even more parched in his throat. He briskly walked to the kitchen, poured a glass of cold water, and guzzled it down, feeling much relieved afterward.

“Grandpa’s birthday is on Saturday. Get ready for it,” Gu Shaoting suddenly spoke, startling Shu Pan.

However, since they were the only ones in the house, Shu Pan knew he was addressing her.

“Sure, I know.” She definitely wouldn’t forget Grandpa’s birthday. She pondered what kind of gift she should get for him.

The Gu family in Bin City was a prominent and well-connected lineage.

Grandpa Gu’s birthday wasn’t initially planned to be grand, given his advanced age and preference for tranquility. He simply wanted to invite close family and friends for a cozy reunion dinner.

However, on that Saturday, quite a few people with intentions to connect with the Gu family showed up, bearing expensive gifts and offering birthday wishes without any invitation.

Birthdays were meant to be festive occasions, and since the guests were already there, they couldn’t be turned away. By late afternoon, the living of the Gu family’s ancestral mansion was already filled with guests.

The guests continued to arrive gradually, and Shu Pan came relatively late due to waiting for Gu Shaoting.

She wore a simple sweater dress with a coat over it, paired with low-heeled flat boots. She looked poised and playful at the same time.

Because so many guests were present at home, Grandpa Gu was busy attending to them, unlike last time when he focused all his attention on Gu Shaoting and Shu Pan.

So, after parking the car, Gu Shaoting didn't wait for Shu Pan and headed into the house on his own.

Shu Pan carried a gift, one that she had picked herself. She had chosen a cozy branded sweater for Grandpa Gu. It was a light gift with deep sentiment, as Grandpa Gu lacked nothing, and caring for him was the best gift she could give as a junior.

When Shu Pan entered, she saw that Gu Shaoting was already in conversation with Grandpa Gu.

Though they were separated by a distance and the crowd was noisy, Shu Pan could still hear their conversation.

"Where's Pan? Why didn't she come with you?" Grandpa Gu asked with confusion.

"She's coming right behind me. She met some friends on the way," Gu Shaoting explained.

Afterward, he spotted familiar friends and walked away.

Seeing this, Shu Pan approached Grandpa Gu to wish him a happy birthday and offered her gift.

Grandpa chuckled with a wide smile that he couldn't quite close his mouth. Then, he joyfully held her and bombarded her with questions. It wasn't until one of his old friends approached to exchange pleasantries with him that Shu Pan could finally take her leave.

Shu Pan always felt that such occasions weren't suitable for her. Every time she encountered such gatherings, she was cautious, fearing making a mistake and becoming the subject of ridicule.

Not far away, Gu Shaoting was engaged in conversation with his friends, while Song Can, the hostess of the event, dressed elegantly, exuded charm, and seemed completely at ease in social situations. She appeared to be a natural when it came to socializing.

Observing Song Can busily moving around, Shu Pan hesitated about whether to approach and greet her..

Chapter 44: The Appearance of the Supporting Actress

As Shu Pan hesitated, a graceful figure entered the room with the crowd. Upon closer inspection, she recognized it as Tong Fei, though she hadn't actually met her in person before. She had only seen her in newspaper articles.

The news of her secret meetings with Gu Shaoting had been spreading like wildfire these past couple of days. It was hard to ignore, but Shu Pan had gradually managed to remain calm. Even though occasional ripples of pain still washed over her, most of the time she simply ignored these reports.

Wherever the beautiful woman went, she couldn't be ignored. Tong Fei was dressed in a black cashmere skirt and wore a beret. Her overall demeanor was elegant and refined, and she possessed a natural grace that made any attire look stunning.

Shu Pan couldn't help but mock herself internally. She and Tong Fei were like the difference between an ugly duckling and a swan. Even without the matter of her father, any discerning person could tell who was the wise choice for Gu Shaoting.

Tong Fei walked in with a large gift box in her hand, making her way toward Grandpa. She affectionately called him "Grandpa" and handed over the gift, along with some auspicious words.

Standing nearby, Shu Pan watched as Grandpa accepted the gift with a casual

"Thank you." He then turned to address others

After all, guests had come to celebrate, so he couldn't be overly critical. He politely added, "Please help yourselves."

Tong Fei realized that her presence wasn't being well received, recognizing Grandpa's attitude. She forced a smile and said, "I'll leave you to chat, Grandpa.

I'll go find Auntie."

With a simple "Hmm" from Grandpa, she walked away.

Not far away, Song Can noticed her and approached, placing her hand affectionately on Tong Fei's arm. Their intimate interaction might have led an unaware observer to believe they were mother and daughter.

Song Can led Tong Fei over to her circle of close friends and companions.

Meanwhile, not too far from Shu Pan, a group of women were discussing their husbands. Because they were close by, Shu Pan could hear their conversation quite clearly.

"My husband went to France a few days ago and brought back a bag like this. It's hideous, just look at this one in my hand. Can you believe it? It's the new limited edition this month. Men's taste is so different, right?" One slightly plump woman, who was closest to Shu Pan, pointed to the recently released limited edition bag, seemingly expressing disdain while actually boasting.

"I thought it was just our husbands whose taste wasn't great. So, men are like this? Look at my necklace. The pendant is this huge diamond, totally mismatched. It feels like nouveau riche, no elegance at all..." A slightly older woman raised her hand and touched the sparkling pink diamond pendant around her neck, lingering slightly on the radiant gem.

Following suit, the woman beside her, with a somewhat troubled expression, chimed in, "Exactly, who doesn't agree? My husband is the same way. Every time he comes back from a business trip, he brings me a gift. Like these shoes on my feet, they're the latest model, globally limited. They cost six figures. It's a shame to leave them untouched. However, they're hard to match with outfits, so it's quite frustrating sometimes..."

"That's exactly how it is in our household too."

Shu Pan found the conversation incredibly dull. She didn't know these women and had no interest in their topics, so she couldn't join the conversation.

As it was Grandpa's birthday celebration, she endured the situation.

In truth, she looked like an outsider now, completely out of place. Everyone else seemed to have found their roles and positions in such an occasion, while she remained lost, unable to fit in..

Chapter 45: Provoke

For men, young and beautiful women can bring them vanity. Similarly, for women, a loving husband was their capital for showing off, making others envious.

In a group of women gathered together, the atmosphere seemed harmonious and cheerful, but in reality, they were subtly praising while belittling each other in their competition.

Only Shu Pan maintained a faint smile on her face and stayed silent on the sidelines.

The husband she loved not only didn't love her back, but also hated her. What could be more tragic than that? She had nothing to show off about.

Initially, it was bearable, but as time passed, Shu Pan started feeling increasingly uncomfortable. She looked around, hoping to find a place to escape. Suddenly, a voice called out to her, "You're Shu Pan, right? I've heard Shaoqing mention you." The voice was soft and gentle, making her involuntarily turn her head.

Though she couldn't see the person, she could sense that the voice belonged to an attractive woman.

Shu Pan's body tensed, a bad feeling rising within her heart. She turned around to find Tong Fei indeed standing there.

Shu Pan thought, if Xiaomeng were here, she'd definitely mock Tong Fei mercilessly. But Shu Pan had never been able to be confrontational, and in this kind of situation, she truly wanted to keep her distance. Yet, here she was, approaching Shu Pan. It was truly helpless.

Tong Fei faced Shu Pan and giggled sweetly, "Ms. Shu, I've long heard of your reputation. A few days ago, I happened to meet Shaoting in the US. I wonder how Miss Shu feels about the news in the newspapers?"

Shu Pan's fingertips trembled slightly, but her face remained emotionless, still displaying that calm demeanor.

Tong Fei's impact was like a fist striking cotton. Then she whispered in Shu Pan's ear, "What's the point of clinging to Mrs. Gu's position? Shaoting doesn't love you. He was only playing a role with you before. If you're sensible, it's best to get a divorce as soon as possible."

"Ms. Tong, isn't it? Thank you for your concern, but this is a matter between my husband and me. I'd appreciate it if an outsider like you wouldn't get involved. After all, crossing boundaries wouldn't be good for Ms. Tong's reputation or career." Shu Pan couldn't help but retort sarcastically, her anger rising. She wanted to say aloud, if Tong Fei could make Gu Shaoting divorce her, she might actually thank her!

"Oh my, isn't that the famous model Tong Fei? She's here too. It seems her relationship with Gu Shaoting is quite something. Look at her, even women are moved by her allure. It's no wonder Gu Shaoting fell for her seductive charm." The slightly plump woman who was flaunting her limited edition bag suddenly spoke up, her voice slightly lowered but sharp enough to be heard.

"That's right, Mr. Gu is handsome and wealthy. It's only natural for so many women to be drawn to him. Who wouldn't be tempted?"

Shu Pan saw that Tong Fei was completely composed, and not at all embarrassed. She couldn't help but inwardly criticize her, thinking that people truly have no shame. In the eyes of women, Gu Shaoting was like a delicious treat.

As Gu Shaoting and Shu Pan's marriage had been low-key without extravagant celebrations, and only a few people knew about it, many were unfamiliar with Shu Pan. Shu Pan was fine with that.

Seeing that Shu Pan was out of her element, Tong Fei also lost interest. She turned and approached Song Can, leaving behind a faint fragrance that made Shu Pan feel nauseous.

By around 6 O'clock, most of the guests had arrived. The food and pastries were ready, and the minor disturbances had passed. The guests enjoyed themselves.

Throughout the evening, Gu Shaoting was busy greeting friends, family, and business partners. Shu Pan felt like an outsider, completely excluded. Neither Gu Shaoting nor Song Can seemed interested in introducing her. This was for the best, as gradually, she would withdraw from their circle..

Chapter 46: Burning with Anger

After the banquet concluded, Shu Pan saw Tong Fei pulling Gu Shaoting aside, not sure what they were discussing. Tong Fei's coquettish demeanor made it hard for anyone to refuse her requests.

Sure enough, she saw Gu Shaoting nodding and leaving with Tong Fei.

Thinking that she might need to take a ride back, Shu Pan decided to greet the grandpa first. With many of his old friends and former business partners attending the birthday party, he was busy socializing, leaving no chance for Shu Pan to exchange a few words with him.

After exchanging a few heartfelt words with the grandpa and letting him know that Gu Shaoting had left for something, Shu Pan returned home around 9 o'clock. Since she hadn't eaten much at the birthday banquet, she made herself a bowl of soup noodles for the night and then went to her room to take a shower.

Not long after, she heard a noise in the living room, indicating that Gu Shaoting had returned. Shu Pan didn't intend to go out and greeted him. Since her father's incident, they had started sleeping in separate rooms. In a daze, Shu Pan woke up feeling thirsty. She got up and walked out of the room, planning to go to the kitchen to get some water.

"Bang!"

She heard something falling in the living room. As she turned towards the living room, she realized that Gu Shaoting had returned without her noticing. He was sitting on the couch, his eyebrows furrowed tightly. One hand was clutching his stomach, while the other reached for a medicine bottle on the coffee table. His forehead was covered in a thin layer of sweat, and he looked in a lot of pain.

Seeing this, Shu Pan was startled and hurried over. "Gu Shaoting, what's wrong?" She noticed broken glass on the floor and water spilled around. It seemed he had accidentally knocked over a glass.

"Gu Shaoting, what happened to you?" Shu Pan was taken aback by his pale and bloodless face. She half-supported him and helped him retrieve the medicine bottle from the coffee table. However, the bottle was empty, not a single pill left.

Seeing him pale and in obvious pain, Shu Pan was genuinely scared. Her voice began to tremble as she said, "There's none left, what should we do? Do you have backup medication? Let me check the medicine box."

Shu Pan searched through the medicine box, turning it upside down, but couldn't find the medicine she needed. She panicked.

Gu Shaoting shook his head slightly, his hand still clutching his stomach. He looked like he was in agony.

"So, what do we do?" Shu Pan was frantic, like an ant on a hot pan. Seeing him in so much pain, she didn't know what to do.

Gu Shaoting, enduring the pain, managed to say, "Don't worry too much. It's an old problem. Fetch me a jacket and take me to the hospital."

Shu Pan nodded in a hurry and went back to the room to get a jacket for him. Then she helped him out with her keys.

Due to the pain, Gu Shaoting was almost leaning entirely on Shu Pan's side. At that moment, no one paid attention to their usual distance and detachment. Shu Pan struggled to help him into the car. He clenched his teeth, gripping his stomach, and leaning against the passenger seat. Shu Pan looked at his agonized expression and felt worried. She bent down and adjusted his seat a little lower, helping him balance. Then she started the car and drove toward the largest hospital in Bin City.

As it was getting late, there weren't many cars on the road. Shu Pan encountered a red light and felt anxious. Seeing Gu Shaoting's pale face, her inner turmoil increased. Fortunately, nothing unexpected happened, and they

soon arrived at the hospital..

Chapter 47: Hospitalized (1)

Gu Shaoting was quickly taken to the emergency room, where he received an injection and medication. His complexion improved slightly, and while his eyebrows were still furrowed, he no longer looked as pale as before.

During the time he was receiving an IV, Shu Pan was concerned and asked the doctor. They explained that his gastric ulcer had recurred, probably due to alcohol or spicy food stimulation. Although it wasn't too severe and didn't require surgery, he needed to stay in the hospital for observation.

Shu Pan couldn't help but sigh. She guessed that he had been drinking too much recently. She had seen him intoxicated several times recently. She thought about saying something but ultimately decided against it. Considering their recent situation, she kept her concerned words to herself.

Hearing the doctor's explanation, Shu Pan felt relieved. She looked at Gu Shaoting, who was now asleep on the bed. Although he still had a furrowed brow, he appeared less fragile than before. At that moment, he seemed vulnerable, like a child. His sickness had stripped away the cold and distant facade

he usually wore. Shu Pan stood up, gathered the necessary documents, and went to complete the hospital admission procedures on his behalf.

When she returned, Gu Shaoting had regained consciousness in a dazed state. He glanced at Shu Pan, who was sitting beside him, then closed his eyes again, appearing confused.

Since she had left in a hurry, she hadn't brought any daily necessities. She knew there was a supermarket near the hospital entrance, so while he was sleeping, she planned to buy some towels, a toothbrush, and a basin.

Before leaving the hospital, Shu Pan specifically asked the doctor about his condition. They advised him to take care of his stomach during this period, reduce alcohol consumption, and try to eat lighter foods, especially avoiding excessive drinking.

Worried that he might wake up hungry in the middle of the night, Shu Pan bought a bowl of congee for him.

In the middle of the night, Gu Shaoting did wake up, but due to thirst. Lying in the hospital bed, he hazily recognized that he was in a hospital, not at home. His throat felt incredibly dry. He reached out to grab the cup on the bedside table but found it out of reach.

Rolling slightly, he saw Shu Pan sleeping at the bedside, her hand resting on his leg. For some reason, a warm feeling flowed through his heart. Afraid of waking her, he moved as carefully as he could.

Although he was being cautious and his movements were slight, he still managed to wake the lightly sleeping Shu Pan. Seeing him awake, she hurriedly asked, "Are you awake? Are you still feeling uncomfortable? Is your stomach still hurting? Are you hungry? Would you like some congee?"

As she spoke, she reached out and touched the package of congee, which was still slightly warm.

Gu Shaoting looked at her, shook his head slightly, and realized that she had been startled by him yesterday. He wanted to reassure her that he was fine now, but when he tried to speak, he found his voice stuck in his throat. "I'm fine," he managed to rasp out, his voice hoarse and dry.

Seeing this, Shu Pan quickly poured a glass of water and handed it to him. Half-supporting him, she held the cup and helped him drink.

Gu Shaoting practically downed half the glass of water in one breath. His parched throat finally felt a bit relieved.

Shu Pan placed the blanket back on the cabinet beside the bed and then asked him, "Are you hungry? I bought some congee just now, and it's still a bit warm."

Gu Shaoting shook his head. He had no appetite at the moment. Lying on the bed, he was drowsy and closed his eyes again.

Images of Shu Pan bustling around kept flashing in his mind. The way she had taken care of him and shown concern for his illness made him feel something unusual in his heart, especially considering the way he had been treating her

recently..

Chapter 48: Hospitalized (2)

The next day, Gu Shaoting woke up in a daze, faintly hearing Shu Pan on the phone with Sister Zhang. She asked Sister Zhang to buy some fresh lean meat and make congee, and she said she would pick it up later.

By the time he fully woke up, she had already hung up and returned to his bedside. Seeing him awake, she told him that she would pick up the congee for him later.

Gu Shaoting looked at her for a while before nodding. "Go back and cook it. Make the same congee as before."

He was indeed hungry. At his grandfather's birthday banquet the day before, he hadn't consumed much alcohol, but he had hardly eaten anything. He had drunk on an empty stomach, mixing different types of alcohol altogether. When he sent Tong Fei back, he felt a little uncomfortable. Although the driver was driving, the car was bumpy, so his stomach felt even worse.

He knew it was a recurrence of his gastric ulcer, but he had insisted on having his driver take him home, thinking that a few pills would solve the issue. However, even the heavens seemed to be against him. The medicine bottle was empty. He had taken all the medicine long ago, but because he hadn't been socializing much and hadn't been drinking heavily, he had forgotten to restock his medicine at home.

While Shu Pan went home to get the congee, Gu Shaoting called his secretary to inform him that he wouldn't be coming to the office today. If there were any urgent contracts, he could send them directly to the hospital.

Secretary Zhang was startled by Gu Shaoting's hoarse voice and hastily asked what had happened. Gu Shaoting explained the situation, but before he could finish, Secretary Zhang asked for the address and said he would come over.

Shu Pan arrived with the congee from home and also prepared a few light dishes for him.

A nurse came to take his temperature. Fortunately, he didn't have a high fever, but he still needed to continue receiving IV fluids. The nurse reminded him to be cautious with his diet during this time, especially avoiding spicy food and alcohol. Shu Pan noted down all the instructions.

Gu Shaoting received a call from He Ming when Secretary Zhang arrived. At that moment, Gu Shaoting and Secretary Zhang were discussing work matters. The phone was nearby, and when it rang, Gu Shaoting glanced at it and picked it up.

"What's up?" Gu Shaoting couldn't help but roll his eyes. It was early morning, and everyone was calling to check on him.

"Hey, what are you doing? Still lost in sweet dreams?" He Ming's teasing voice sounded from the other end of the line.

"I had a gastric ulcer attack last night. The doctor says I need to stay in the hospital for a few days." Gu Shaoting didn't want to say much.

"You mixed several types of alcohol again, didn't you? You're prone to illness when you drink like that," He Ming muttered.

He had already suffered from drinking like that in the past. There was one time it got really serious, and he ended up vomiting blood due to severe gastric bleeding, which frightened everyone. He had probably drunk too much the previous night.

"Which hospital are you in? I'll come to see you." Gu Shaoting gave He Ming the hospital's name and address before hanging up. He thought he could rest peacefully and recover, but it seemed like one by one, people were coming to visit. There was no chance for a quiet recovery.

After that, he finished talking with Secretary Zhang. Secretary Zhang looked at

Shu Pan and nodded with a smile. Then he turned to Gu Shaoting and said, "Mr. Gu, take care of yourself. I'll go back to the company and make sure everything you've assigned gets taken care of."

Gu Shaoting nodded without objection.

As Secretary Zhang left, Shu Pan got up to see him off. When she returned, Gu Shaoting was leaning against the bedside. Although his complexion was a little worn, it didn't diminish his handsomeness and charm. Despite the morning rounds, IV, and medication, every time a different nurse attended to him. Even when there wasn't much to do, nurses would often come to check the medical records at the bedside. It was clear how many people were captivated by his charm..

Chapter 49: Mother-in-law's Scolding

After Secretary Zhang left, the room fell silent. As Shu Pan was about to tidy up the desk, the phone rang again. Gu Shaoting picked it up and glanced at it. It was Song Can. He handed the phone to Shu Pan, signaling her to answer it.

Shu Pan took the phone with confusion, looking at the display showing “Mom.” She hesitated for a moment before putting it to her ear.

Before Shu Pan could even greet her mother, Song Can had already started talking about her conversation with Tong Fei last night. She mentioned that Tong Fei still liked Gu Shaoting and was trying to please her. Shu Pan listened quietly, unable to interject. Once Song Can finished speaking, she noticed that Gu Shaoting hadn’t responded. She tried tentatively, “Shaoting, are you listening? React, please.”

This gave Shu Pan a chance to speak. She explained, “Um, Mom, it’s Shu Pan. Last night, Shaoting wasn’t feeling well due to stomach issues, and he’s currently under observation at the hospital. It’s not very convenient for him to answer calls.”

There seemed to be a hint of surprise from the other end of the line, but it only took a few seconds for Song Can to grasp the situation. She realized that it was Shu Pan who picked up the phone, and she didn’t find it awkward at all. She didn’t take what she had just said on the call seriously.

“What? Hospitalized? Is he alright?” Song Can asked excitedly. She hadn’t expected that someone who was fine last night would end up in the hospital today.

Although it wasn’t a major issue, the fact that he needed to stay in the hospital for observation did warrant an explanation to Song Can.

“He has a gastric ulcer and needs to stay in the hospital for observation,” Shu Pan replied truthfully.

“Ah! How did this happen? He’s okay, right?” Song Can’s voice raised a pitch in surprise.

“Last night, I think he drank too much,” Shu Pan explained.

“Shu Pan, honestly, I don’t expect you to help with company matters, but you should at least take care of him. Look at what kind of life you two are leading! You’ve even ended up in the hospital!” Song Can’s voice was filled with reproach.

Shu Pan couldn’t argue. It was true. The current situation was less than ideal. She had always known that Song Can didn’t like her. In comparison, Tong Fei seemed more like the daughter-in-law she desired.

“Mom, I’ll pay more attention from now on,” Shu Pan’s eyes suddenly welled up with tears. As she had her back to Gu Shaoting, he didn’t see the expression on her face.

“As a wife, you should always care about your husband’s health,” Song Can scolded while asking, “Where is he now? I’ll come over.”

Shu Pan provided the name and address of the hospital, and then Song Can hung up the phone.

Shu Pan adjusted her emotions and turned to Gu Shaoting, informing him, “Mom knows about your illness. She’ll come over later.”

Gu Shaoting furrowed his brows slightly, “Why did you tell her about this?

She’s bound to nag.”

Shu Pan poured a glass of warm water for Gu Shaoting. After talking for a while, his throat had become quite dry. He didn’t refuse and took the glass, drinking a sip.

After a moment of silence, Shu Pan said, “Since your stomach isn’t well, try to drink less in the future.”

She wasn’t sure about his recent binge drinking. Could it be for Tong Fei?

Gu Shaoting remained silent, staring at her intently. He reached out and held her hand. His hand was a bit warm, and the tight grip made his hand slightly sweaty. She didn't pull her hand away, afraid of disturbing the needle in his hand.

In truth, she had been genuinely scared last night. Anyone would have been startled, considering how he looked when she saw him—pale, clutching his stomach in silence. Luckily, he was fine now..

Chapter 50: Leave Quietly

Only to see that Gu Shaoting was still holding her hand, Shu Pan felt a bit awkward, not knowing whether to retract it or not. She also noticed that he was lightly rubbing the palm of her hand with his thumb, causing a sudden electric sensation that seemed to go straight to her brain.

Seeing him in this dazed state, not speaking, she thought he might not have heard her. After a while, she whispered again, "You should still drink less in the future."

At this moment, Gu Shaoting really appeared as if he had taken off his usual armor, his entire demeanor gentle and harmless.

Feeling a bit embarrassed by his gaze, her face slightly reddened. She then pulled her hand back and said, excusing herself to the restroom.

In truth, Shu Pan had no intention of going to the restroom. She had used that as an excuse to escape the awkward situation. As she walked down the hallway, she was just about to turn back when she realized she did actually need to use the restroom. So, she headed in that direction.

As she returned and was about to open the door, she suddenly heard Song Can's voice from the single-patient room where Gu Shaoting was, "Shaoting, what's going on? You were fine last night. Where's Shu Pan? Where did she run off to? Is this how a wife should behave?"

Her mother-in-law's string of reproachful words shot out like bullets from a machine gun.

Shu Pan's hand on the doorknob paused for a moment, hesitating whether to open it or not.

"She just stepped out for a moment, everything's fine. I'll be more careful in the future," Gu Shaoting responded to Song Can's questions. Somehow, he felt a bit uncomfortable after hearing Song Can's words.

"Shaoting, you scared me to death. When Auntie told me, I couldn't believe it. You shouldn't scare people like that in the future," a tender and sweet voice followed, obviously belonging to Tong Fei. She held Gu Shaoting's hand and shook it. Since she was facing the door, she vaguely saw a figure outside. Could it be Shu Pan?

"Shaoting, look, Feifei is genuinely concerned about you. She was going to call me to go shopping, but when I told her you weren't feeling well, she immediately came over. Don't you feel her genuine care for you?" Song Can's words felt like needles piercing into Shu Pan's heart, stinging and painful.

Standing by the door, witnessing the scene inside, her eyes slightly dimmed, and a trace of bitterness spread from her heart to her throat.

It turned out that both of them came to visit. Inside that room, they seemed more like a family. Shu Pan snapped back to her senses, but she didn't dare to take another step forward.

Gu Shaoting listened to these two women, their words volleying back and forth, and his head started to throb unusually. He pressed his temples hard, "I'm fine."

Tong Fei's radiant face appeared in his eyes. Despite her worried expression, it seemed like she hadn't triggered any emotions in him.

He quietly withdrew his hand, avoiding contact with Tong Fei. This obvious action made her feel as if a bucket of cold water had been poured over her, stiffening her entire body.

Gu Shaoting didn't notice the figure at the door. He was just wondering where Shu Pan had gone.

Shu Pan quietly released her grip on the doorknob, gently closed the door, her mind in disarray. She walked quickly, her footsteps not stopping.

Before long, Tong Fei saw the door closing and used an excuse to come out as well.

Shu Pan didn't know where she was going, but she could hear a conversation between a man and a woman behind the emergency room door.

Before she could even realize what was happening, a slender, fair finger appeared in front of her. It suddenly grabbed her arm and pulled her over without a word.

"Ah!" Shu Pan exclaimed in surprise.

"Darling, am I that scary?" The lazy voice of a man sounded with a hint of affection.

Startled, Shu Pan's eyes flew open and she saw the man embracing her.

A handsome face, slightly tilted almond eyes, a charming smile, and dressed in a white coat—he was a doctor.

Looking across from him, there was a woman with delicate features, her eyes resembling pear blossoms after the rain—pitiful and helpless..