

**The Lady of the Prestigious Family is a Big Boss
#Chapter 22 - 022, Master Jiu climbs over the wall at
midnight - Read The Lady of the Prestigious Family is a
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wall at midnight**

Chapter 22: 022, Master Jiu climbs over the wall at midnight

"Master."

Aren called softly.

Miss Jiuliang clearly had no affection for the Ye Family, which made the task of transcribing the family rules only more likely to provoke her displeasure.

"No need for further words, send someone to keep an eye on the entrance to Jing Pavilion," said Ye Jiuliang's grandfather with a cold face, knowing what Aren was about to say.

"And don't forget to send her meals along later."

Aren, "Yes."

Off to the side, Ye Yan and the others listened, feeling somewhat dissatisfied.

Every youngster in the family had been punished, but the old master had never had meals sent to any of them.

It was truly the height of favoritism.

They just didn't understand what made Ye Jiuliang, that profligate, superior to them.

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Jing Pavilion

Ye Jiuliang sat in a chair, legs crossed on the table, looking utterly relaxed.

"What a ridiculous set of family rules, so boring," she muttered, casually flipping through the yellowed pages of the book in her hand.

Closing the book and tossing it onto the table, she turned her head to look at the bright moon hanging in the night sky, the corners of her lips curving up.

"Open the door." She looked at the locked door and curled her lips.

The heavy wooden door was pushed open, revealing two tall and muscular guards outside.

"Miss Jiuliang, the old master said you have to finish copying the family rules before you can leave," said one of the guards, with an expressionless face.

Ye Jiuliang crossed her arms and looked at them with a mocking smile, "Is that so?"

"Miss Jiuliang, please don't make things difficult for us," the other guard said respectfully.

Ye Jiuliang pinched her fingertips and snapped her fingers; the two guards looked up at her, confused.

"Miss Jiuliang, you..."

The man had just started speaking when his eyes suddenly became vacant.

"You haven't seen anything, Ye Jiuliang has been inside copying the family rules the whole time, and that is the answer for anyone who asks, understand?" Ye Jiuliang's eyes, clear like colored glass, sparkled with fragments of light, and her cold voice came as if from a great distance, bewitching the mind.

"Yes," the two guards nodded with blank expressions.

Ye Jiuliang curved her lips, stepping past them, "Keep the door closed tightly."

"Yes."

As if they were puppets on strings, the guards obediently closed the door.

The night was still, and the stars twinkled with a faint light.

After dinner, the old master of the Li Family gathered everyone in the living room to discuss the marriage alliance between the Li and Ye families.

"Jingjie, what do you think about the engagement?" the old master of the Li Family asked Li Jingjie warmly.

A quick flash of sharpness crossed Li Jingjie's eyes, and he smiled slightly, "Xinxin and I have agreed that the engagement date can be discussed by grandfather and Master Ye; we have no objections."

Hearing this, the elder Mr. Li's eyes held a newfound appreciation as he stroked his silver-white beard, "Good, I'll go talk to Mr. Ye about this in the next few days."

"Dad, since our two families are about to be united by marriage, it's time to invite the Ye family over for a meal. What do you think?" The woman seated next to Li Jingjie suddenly spoke up.

The woman, named Weng Lan, was dressed in a purple gown, her black hair elegantly done up in a bun secured with a white jade pin. A touch of makeup couldn't conceal the fine lines at the corners of her eyes, but her movements still carried the grace of a noble lady from a distinguished family.

The elder Mr. Li nodded, "I was thinking the same. Once we're done with Mohan's birthday banquet preparations, it should be about time for us to have a meal together with the Ye family."

When the birthday banquet was mentioned, Li Jingjie and the others glanced at Li Mochan, who was sitting not far away.

Dressed in black, his aura was cool and noble. As his gaze lifted slightly, the younger members of the family, including Li Jingxuan, quickly diverted their eyes, not daring to meet his stare.

"Mohan, what's with the injury on your hand?" The elder Mr. Li turned to his youngest son, his words filled with affection and gentleness.

Li Mochan replied indifferently, "It's nothing serious, just a scratch."

Accustomed to his icy tone, the elder Mr. Li didn't mind, "Mohan, would you like to take a look at the invitations for your birthday banquet?"

"No need, you can handle it," Li Mochan said, his gaze drifting over his injured finger, a beaming smile involuntarily coming to mind.

It would be quite interesting if that little rascal could come to the birthday party.

"Grandfather, maybe you should send individual invitations to the Ye family to avoid having that annoying Ye Jiuliang tag along," Li Jingxuan, still holding a grudge from the cafeteria incident, suggested.

Before she had finished speaking, a chill swept over everyone as if they had been plunged into an ice cellar.

Without needing to think, they knew the source of this sudden coldness.

Li Mochan's eyes narrowed slightly, frost gathering at the corners as he spoke with piercing precision, "Among the younger Ye family members, Ye Jiuliang is the most favored by Mr. Ye. Are you implying that you want Mr. Ye to form a biased opinion against the Li family and have our alliance through marriage fall through?"

No one had expected Li Mochan to challenge her so suddenly, making the atmosphere so oppressive it was hard to breathe.

Although Li Mochan was not much younger than Li Jingjie, his word was absolute authority in the Li family, and usually even the elder Mr. Li mostly agreed with him.

This kind of deterrence was something not even Li Shaohui, the eldest of the Li family, possessed. People in their circle were well aware that within the Li family, Li Mochan's position was above his older brother Li Shaohui, and even though Li Shaohui controlled more than half of the Li family's assets, he still had to give Li Mochan his due respect.

Li Jingxuan's face turned ashen, her lips trembling, "Uncle, I didn't mean it that way, I..." Her voice was hoarse, and she was almost about to cry.

"Mohan, Xuan'er is still young and didn't think before she spoke. I'll make sure to discipline her more in the future. You're her elder, so don't hold it against her," Weng Lan said with a gentle smile, trying to smooth things over.

Li Mochan's brows furrowed slightly, his cool gaze sweeping over Li Jingqi and Li Jingxuan, "In the future, don't intentionally cause trouble or provoke others in Beisen. I don't have the patience to clean up your messes. If it happens again, you'll leave Beisen."

Li Jingqi and Li Jingxuan had both clashed with Ye Jiuliang, and the Li family was well aware of it—however, they hadn't expected Li Mochan to suddenly issue them a warning.

Immediately, Weng Lan tugged at Li Jingxuan's sleeve. Understanding the cue, Li Jingxuan quickly stood up and stuttered, "Understood, Uncle, I won't dare to do it again."

At the other end, Li Jingqi also got up and promised, "I understand too, Uncle, it won't happen again."

Li Mochan shifted his gaze away indifferently, and both Li Jingxuan and Li Jingqi sighed in relief, their resentment towards Ye Jiuliang deepening.

"By the way, Sister-in-law, when will Big Brother be back? Jingjie's engagement is a significant event, and he can't be absent," Fang Hui asked with a cheerful smile.

Mentioning Li Shaohui, tenderness filled Weng Lan's eyes, "I spoke to him a few days ago, he should be back in a couple of days."

Fang Hui found the happy smile on her face somewhat irritating.

Uninterested in Li Jingjie's marriage matters, Li Mochan stood up and left first.

The evening breeze blew by, filling the air with the fragrance of flowers.

"The Li family's grounds are quite nice." Ye Jiuliang leapt down from atop the wall, using the vast peach grove to conceal his presence.

Chapter 23: 023, Aren't you afraid that I will poison you?

The evening breeze swept through, filling the air with the scent of flowers.

"The Li Family's environment is not bad indeed." Ye Jiuliang leaped down from the top of the wall, using the vast peach grove for cover.

On the way there, from the front courtyard to the back, various flowers could be seen everywhere.

The architectural style of the Li Family was completely different from that of the Ye Family. If one were to say that the Ye Family exuded luxury everywhere, then every corner of the Li Family's great mansion brimmed with an ancient aura.

The octagonal pavilion, the small bridge over flowing water, the standalone residences, and countless types of flowers, bathed in the moonlight of the evening, looked like a fairyland.

"Finding this place really isn't easy." Ye Jiuliang stepped on the trunk of a tree, pushed off forcefully, and leapt onto the roof. She held a cloth bag at her waist with one hand and used the other to steady herself on the roof tiles.

With a flip through the air, she landed steadily on the roof.

I'm dead tired.

Before she could catch her breath, a writing brush shot through the paper of the window lattice from the side.

Damn.

This way of treating guests is a bit too much.

Leaning backward, Ye Jiuliang's slender fingers caught the writing brush.

The next second, the carved window opened.

The mingling of silvery moonlight and specks of lamplight fell on the man's delicate features.

"Why is it you?"

Seeing the figure sitting on the roof clearly, Li Mochan's eyes instantly deepened.

So daring to climb roofs so late at night, not afraid of falling to your death.

"Hi, Lord Li the Fifth, good evening," Ye Jiuliang placed the brush beside her and waved cheerfully without any harm.

His voice, cool and detached, held a hint of resignation, "What are you doing here so late?"

"Hey, it's easy to attract attention, talking at such a distance. Wait a moment, let me move a bit closer." As she spoke, Ye Jiuliang made to stand up.

"Don't move."

Seeing the slender figure of the girl start to move, Li Mochan spoke up to stop her.

"Stay there, I'll come over."

Ye Jiuliang grinned and continued sitting cross-legged.

Li Mochan broke through the window and out, leaping onto the roof to come sit beside her. Seeing she was still wearing her school uniform, he frowned.

"You didn't go home?"

"I did, just sneaked out," she replied.

"Why did you sneak out?"

Propping her head with one hand, her eyes curved into a smile, "To find you."

"Find me?" Li Mochan was slightly surprised.

Ye Jiuliang took out a small bottle of liquor from the cloth bag, then passed one to him, "Here."

Li Mochan caught it and weighed it, "What is this?"

"Liquor."

Although the toxicity of Poisonous Python Grass wasn't strong, it was extremely troublesome; if not completely cleared, it would sooner or later spread throughout the body. Wei Nan's hemostatic medicine had a detoxifying effect, but its potency still wasn't enough.

This liquor was brewed from various medicinal herbs, and it had many benefits, like nourishing health and detoxifying. Since she couldn't overtly remove the toxins for Li Mochan, this method would have to do.

Li Mochan furrowed his brow, "You climbed up to the roof in the middle of the night just to bring me liquor?"

Ye Jiuliang chuckled, removed the cork from the bottle, and the rich aroma of the liquor filled the air.

"Consider it a thank-you gift for the hidden dart," she said, tilting her head back for a swig, contentedly curving her lips.

Strong.

Exhilarating.

Seeing her drink, Li Mochan's eyes darkened.

"How did you get in?"

Sneaking into the Li Family without anyone noticing wasn't so easy.

Ye Jiuliang answered, "Over the wall. There are no surveillance cameras in that part of the back yard. I have done plenty of wall-climbing and roof-walking at the Ye Family since I was a kid. Plus, the roofs of the Li Family aren't particularly high. It's not that hard to climb up."

"Why didn't you come through the main gate?"

As he spoke, he was met with the girl's peculiar gaze.

Ye Jiuliang took another sip of wine and then spat out two words, "Trouble."

"Hm?" The man's face showed puzzlement.

"Who in the entire capital doesn't know you, Lord Li the Fifth? Coming to find you this late at night, I expect there'll be a lot of gossip circulating about me. I've always disliked trouble, so let's just forget it," Ye Jiuliang explained.

This explanation was worse than no explanation at all; to Li Mochan's ears, it sounded as though she feared being associated with him.

His brows and eyes turned cold, a hint of displeasure emerging.

"Hey, why aren't you drinking, ah? This wine is really good," Ye Jiuliang noticed that Li Mochan hadn't taken a single sip and cocked her head to look at him.

Suddenly thinking of something, she smiled slyly, "You're not afraid I poisoned the wine, are you?"

Li Mochan remained silent.

It was that same frosty, expressionless face again, so boring. Ye Jiuliang pursed her lips, "Forget it, if you're not going to drink, give it back to me."

No sooner had she spoken than she reached out to take back the wine bottle from his hand.

Li Mochan's hand withdrew, and she grasped at air.

"Didn't you say you weren't drinking?" Ye Jiuliang pulled her hand back and smirked, "Not afraid I'll poison you anymore?"

Li Mochan pulled out the cork; the rich aroma of wine rushed to the nostrils.

"Doesn't it smell wonderful?" The girl's voice, laced with laughter, rang out once again.

Li Mochan looked up, and under the hazy moonlight, the girl's bright eyes were slightly narrowed, her lips curled into a mischievous smile.

For no reason at all, three words suddenly popped into his mind.

— Little wolf cub!

"Li Mochan, if you don't drink now, watch out. I might finish it all myself and not leave you a single drop," she said, taking another sip.

The small bottle, which wasn't much to start with, was almost empty after a few gulps.

Suddenly, a large hand, white as jade porcelain, pressed down on her wrist, "Drink less."

Realizing the concern in his words, Ye Jiuliang shook the wine bottle and smiled, "Don't worry, this wine is only good for the body. Try it if you don't believe me."

Meeting her urging gaze, Li Mochan took his first sip. The mellow wine went down his throat with a hint of spiciness.

A moment later, a gentle warmth spread through his body.

An indescribable comfort.

His eyes flickered slightly as he looked at Ye Jiuliang, his gaze carrying a bit more inquiry.

"What are you looking at? Is there something on my face?" Having finished the last sip of wine, Ye Jiuliang smacked her lips, feeling somewhat unsatisfied.

All the fault of Ji Mingqian, that guy! To think he dared to steal her wine, truly deserved a beating.

Li Mochan's eyes lowered slightly, landing on the empty wine bottle in her hand, "Do you always drink like this on regular days?"

The man's voice was very pleasant, deep and low. In this dark night, it was even more magnetically alluring.

Ye Jiuliang nodded. In fact, sometimes she drank much more fiercely than this.

Li Mochan stared at her delicate profile, his thin lips parted slightly, but in the end, he said nothing.

"The wine is finished now; I should leave." Ye Jiuliang stood up and stretched her legs, which felt a bit numb from sitting for too long.

"Oh, by the way, I won't be going back to Beisen for the next two days."

Instantly, the man's inquisitive gaze came upon her, "Hmm?"

"Ahem." Ye Jiuliang touched her nose, somewhat embarrassed, "I've been grounded. I can't go out until I've copied the family rules."

Upon hearing this, Li Mochan's lips curved up in a meaningful arc, "Then tonight?"

The little wolf cub, truly quite mischievous.

"Snuck out," Ye Jiuliang revealed with a flashed smile.

Li Mochan let out a laugh. Before he could react further, the girl leapt down. His heart suddenly tightened.

Looking down, he saw the girl land steadily.

Li Mochan's brows relaxed as he watched her slender figure disappear into the night. It took him a long while to come back to his senses.

He withdrew his gaze to look at the wine bottle in his hand; after a while, a low chuckle escaped his lips.

"Little."

"Wolf."

"Cub."

A very soft murmur, upon closer listening, carried a few indiscernible notes of indulgence.

Chapter 25: 025, Fighting while walking the dog is still okay.

Whether by design or coincidence, Ye Jiuliang reached the classroom door just as the bell rang for the end of class.

She hooked her lips into a small smile and turned to head to the cafeteria.

She hadn't taken two steps before someone walking towards her blocked her path.

She looked up and met Wei Bei's smiling eyes.

"Miss Ye."

Ye Jiuliang tugged at the corner of her mouth, "Is something the matter?"

"Miss Ye, are you heading to the cafeteria?" Wei Bei asked with a smile, internally remarking that his master's predictions were indeed spot-on.

She truly had timed her return to school perfectly.

She asked, "Is there an issue?"

Wei Bei said, "It's like this, my master heard Miss Ye had returned to class and asked me to invite you over."

Instinctively feeling that it was nothing good, Ye Jiuliang rejected, "I'm going to have lunch now, I don't have time." She walked around him and left.

Arriving at the cafeteria in high spirits, Ye Jiuliang made a beeline for the takoyaki window.

"Auntie Lin, one serving of takoyaki, please."

She had often come here for takoyaki, and over time became quite familiar with Auntie Lin.

Recognizing her, Auntie Lin at the window said cheerfully, "Young lady, you're late today, the takoyaki has already sold out."

"Sold out?" Ye Jiuliang was slightly surprised.

Usually, at this time, there were still plenty left.

"Yes, I don't know what happened today, but Li Mohan bought all the takoyaki and distributed a serving to every student in the school," Auntie Lin said with a laugh.

Li Mohan?

Ye Jiuliang bared her teeth.

So it was Li Mochan playing tricks again, wasn't it?

Remembering the bottle of wine from last night, she suddenly regretted it.

...

The spacious office was filled with the subtle scent of sandalwood.

The pen scratched on the paper, occasionally making a faint sound.

Li Mohan closed the file, his eyes shimmering with a faint luster, "Do you plan to stand outside the whole time?"

At his words, the ajar door opened.

Li Mohan leaned back, looked up, and met the girl's black eyes, dark as the night; his thin lips suppressed a smile.

"Have you finished copying the house rules?" he teased heavily.

Ye Jiuliang casually pulled over a chair and sat across from him, "I should also thank Li Mohan for that, otherwise, I might still be grounded at home."

"Thank me?" he raised an eyebrow.

Still playing dumb, Ye Jiuliang hummed lightly.

She rested her clasped hands on the desk, leaned forward, and stared at him with a mock-serious smile, "I heard Li Mohan had a whim today and gave out takoyaki to every student in school?"

Li Mohan said, "You're quite well-informed."

"I heard that every student got one, so I assume Li Mohan wouldn't exclude me from this act of generosity, right?" Ye Jiuliang smiled playfully.

He countered lightly, "What do you think?"

"If Li Mohan didn't save one for me, it's no big deal. Sometimes a change of taste is not a bad idea," Ye Jiuliang said to herself.

"I think the fish in the Beisen Ornamental Fish Pond would taste quite good if grilled."

Li Mohan, "..."

This little wolf cub surely had a wealth of sly ideas.

A smile he hadn't noticed crossed his eyes, and he gestured with his gaze towards the coffee table behind her, "The last one."

Ye Jiuliang turned her head, following his gaze, and her eyes landed on a package on the coffee table, making her burst into joy.

With a whoosh, she had already settled herself on the sofa.

Li Mohan stood up and sat opposite her.

"Is it really that delicious?" Watching the girl eat with relish, Li Mohan asked offhandedly.

Ye Jiuliang looked up with a light chuckle, "Want a taste?"

Li Mohan shook his head, and Ye Jiuliang didn't insist, to each their own.

Suddenly, a twisted-open bottle of juice was handed to her face.

"Take it slow."

Ye Jiuliang took it and thanked him.

After taking a sip of juice, she looked up at him, "I heard Beisen just issued a new regulation, saying anyone who flunks the upcoming exam will have to leave Beisen?"

Li Mochan gave her a deep look, his thin lips parted slightly, "I remember someone also said that they'd make sure to pass the next exam."

"..."

Was she just outmaneuvered?

How frustrating.

After finishing a box of little round rice cakes, Ye Jiuliang wiped her mouth and prepared to slip away.

"Thank you for the lunch, I won't disturb your work anymore."

"Wait a minute."

Li Mochan called out to her.

Her movement to stand halted, and from the corner of her eye, she saw the test papers in his hand, her mouth twitching.

Was he a devil?

"Do the test paper." With that, he handed her a set of questions and a pen.

Ye Jiuliang slipped down smoothly, settling onto the soft carpet, her face clearly showing "resistance."

"Can I not write it?"

Li Mochan gave her a glance, then neatly placed the test paper and the pen on the table, "Stay here and write, or go to the classroom for lessons, choose one."

The man's voice was low and magnetic, and Ye Jiuliang, fighting the urge to tear up the test paper, picked up the pen, "I'll write, okay?"

Going to the classroom to listen to "sermons," she'd rather stay here for some peace and quiet.

Li Mochan hooked his lips in satisfaction.

...

Even with an extra person, the office remained quiet.

Neither of them were talkative, each busy with their own work, quite enjoying the solitude.

Having nearly finished the test paper, Ye Jiuliang dropped the pen, glanced sideways, and her lips lightly curled.

She grabbed the test paper and stood up.

The faint sound of her footsteps reached his ears clearly, Li Mochan's hand holding the pen paused slightly, his eyes sparkling with light.

"I'm done, can I leave now?"

Li Mochan lifted his eyelids to meet the girl's clear and bright eyes, "Where to?"

Standing was tiring, so Ye Jiuliang plopped herself down comfortably, "Just wandering around, I don't have class this afternoon."

"What about your elective courses?"

"Boring, didn't choose any."

Hearing this, Li Mochan put down his pen, his gaze sweeping over the test paper on the table, his tone light, "Then what's not boring?"

Ye Jiuliang cracked a smile, "Playing games, racing motorcycles."

It would be perfect if she could annoy him; maybe then he would stop keeping an eye on her.

Remembering the speed she raced her motorcycle last time, Li Mochan frowned, "Is that all?"

Ye Jiuliang nodded with a grin, then self-deprecatingly added, "I can't do music, chess, calligraphy, painting, but I can fight and walk dogs."

The upright and distinguished Master Li should despise her kind of profligate, surely he'll let her go soon.

After a while, the man suddenly said, "Want a challenge?"

Her thoughts racing, Ye Jiuliang was taken aback, "Huh?"

"Playing games." He explained, "Choose any type of game you like."

Coming to her senses, she chuckled, resting her chin in her hands as she looked at him, not forgetting to secure a benefit for herself first, "What do I get if I win?"

"If you win, whether you come to Beisen or take exams is up to you, and you'll get your diploma either way." Li Mochan rhythmically tapped his fingertips on the table, speaking at an even pace, "If I win, you'll come here for tutoring every afternoon, excluding holidays, and you're not allowed to miss it."

Ye Jiuliang's voice was tinged with amusement, "The first part of what you said sounds better to me."

Let's have the challenge, who's afraid of who.

Ye Jiuliang took the iPad he handed over, remembering the horror game Ji Mingqian had mentioned a few days earlier, and she immediately started downloading it.

Before long, the sounds of game combat filled the office.

Chapter 26: 026, Fifth Master: She, smarter than you

It wasn't long before the office was filled with the sound effects of gaming combat.

The ghastly wails and howls were enough to send shivers down one's spine.

Ye Jiuliang focused on the screen, the casual smile at the corner of her mouth gradually fading away.

Her fingertips danced across the keyboard, narrowly dodging an attack.

She glanced at the man opposite her and a twitch crossed her brow.

He really did have some skills.

The man suddenly looked up, his eyebrows arching slightly, "Think I can win?"

"Li Mochan is so good-looking, taking a few more glances might bless me with a victory." Ye Jiuliang teased with ease.

"After all, someone as handsome as Li Mochan is a rare sight to behold." She placed extra emphasis on the word "handsome."

Describing a man with the word "handsome" would probably displease anyone who heard it, and Li Mochan was no exception.

He furrowed his brows, finding the comment oddly familiar.

"Li Mochan, it seems like you're the one who's not focusing," the girl's cool voice came, interrupting his thoughts.

Li Mochan's gaze moved back to the screen, concentrating his mind.

A game that Ji Mingqian took seriously would undoubtedly be challenging, not to mention there was a bet involved; both parties had no choice but to play earnestly.

Moments later, a mechanical voice echoed from the screen.

"Game over!"

Li Mochan pulled back his hands, his deep eyes twinkling with a hint of amusement, "Care for another round?"

"..."

Ye Jiuliang's red lips pursed lightly, her crystal-clear eyes revealing no emotion.

She put down the iPad, "No need."

Defeat was defeat.

Li Mochan glanced at the test paper she had just finished, pushed it back in front of her, and said calmly, "Fill in the blank questions first."

Having lost the game, Ye Jiuliang was unusually compliant.

Completing a test paper was definitely one of the most tedious things in the world.

Ye Jiuliang twirled her pen absentmindedly, and when she looked up, the man's handsome features came into view.

The faint light pouring through the floor-to-ceiling window bathed the side of his face, softening the typically sharp lines of his jaw.

Her fingertips paused, and suddenly, the scene she had witnessed in the car that day sprang to mind.

The ruthless Li Mochan, with a hint of blush on his ear tips.

Caught off-guard, the man's cool voice sounded, "Why have you stopped writing?"

Ye Jiuliang came back to her senses, met his gaze head-on with confidence, and shrugged, "I don't know the answers."

Li Mochan fixed his gaze on her for a moment, a deep chuckle escaping his lips, his voice husky, "You really don't know?"

His radiant smile, brighter than the most splendid blooms, made Ye Jiuliang suddenly understand the saying that was famous throughout the capital.

One smile from Li Mochan could captivate an entire city!

She smiled and pursed her lips, "Maybe Li Mochan can teach me?"

"Knock knock knock—"

The knocking came at an inopportune time.

Li Mochan frowned slightly, "Come in."

The door opened, and Ye Jiuliang turned her head to look.

Feng Yi entered through the door, and upon seeing the two sitting opposite each other, his expression instantly turned odd.

It's all about timing, isn't it?

"Am I interrupting?" He asked with a slight smile, his gaze flitting between Li Mochan and Ye Jiuliang with a hint of curiosity.

Finally, his eyes settled on Ye Jiuliang, "Miss Ye, we meet again. Hello, my name is Feng Yi, Li Mochan's buddy."

His tone was relaxed and his smile amiable, giving the impression of a friendly guy-next-door.

But as the president of Feng Group, known for his deceptive charm, this was something Ye Jiuliang had also heard a thing or two about.

The tip of her left eyebrow raised slightly, "Have we met before?"

"That day in the cafeteria, Miss Ye splashed a whole glass of water on Ahan, just by coincidence, I also happened to be there," Feng Yi said with a smile.

"..."

If anything can go wrong, it will.

Ye Jiuliang coughed lightly and turned to look at Li Mochan, "You guys chat, I'm leaving."

As she stood up, Feng Yi was about to speak when a beam of cold light suddenly swept over him, making him sheepishly close his mouth.

He couldn't afford to mess with the big shot.

As soon as Ye Jiuliang left, Feng Yi immediately revealed his gossip-loving nature.

"Is Lord Li the Fifth hiding a beauty in the golden house?" he said with a sleazy smile, "Bringing her here so quickly, a single man and a single woman alone in the same room, come on, tell me, how far have you gone?"

Before the words were out of his mouth, a book as thick as a brick flew at him.

Feng Yi caught it with his hand and kept dancing on the edge of courting disaster, "Even Lord Li the Fifth has a spring in his step today, a miracle indeed."

Li Mochan gave him a cold look, "Shut up."

He's heard these two words all his life; Feng Yi was not scared in the slightest. He plunked the book on the desk, pulled out a chair, and sat down.

"I hear the Ye Family's little girl is not someone to be trifled with. Are you really taking a shine to her?" he asked with genuine interest.

Li Mochan's eyelids lifted slightly as he looked at him with disdain, "Do you wish to be renamed Feng Gossip?"

Upon hearing this, Feng Yi laughed and, seeing the exam papers at hand, suddenly remembered that this was where Ye Jiuliang had been sitting.

Without a doubt, she was the owner of these papers.

He reached out, picked one up, and clicked his tongue, "It seems that Miss Ye's academic achievement is a bit of a sticky situation."

He paused, looked up at Li Mochan with a barely suppressed chuckle, "Ahan, so you like the not-so-smart type, huh?"

Li Mochan reached out to snatch back the exam paper from his hand and glanced at him indifferently, "She's smarter than you."

"???"

Was there something wrong with his ears?

Feng Yi dug at his ear, disbelieving.

Li Mochan was actually praising someone, and what's more, it was a woman?

Could this be a mistake?

"Li Mochan, have you really fallen for her?" he asked, leaning forward with excitement.

That excessive decibel level earned him a cold glare, "Shut up."

Feng Yi ignored it and continued to ask, "It can't be, Li Mochan, don't you dislike women?"

So much for being a lifelong singleton.

Why had his insulating quality utterly failed in front of Ye Jiuliang?

"Feng Yi!" Li Mochan called out sternly.

Meeting his cool, ink-like eyes, Feng Yi cooled down a bit, "Cough, I'm just excited for you."

He was certain that if this news were to get out, it would blow up all over Beijing; and most importantly, it would also cause an explosion over in the States.

"Ahan, so do you really take the Ye Family's little girl seriously?" he asked tentatively.

Li Mochan neatly folded the exam paper and put it in the drawer, then swept him with a faint glance, "You seem to be very interested in her?"

"No, no, I'm absolutely not interested in her." Feng Yi grinned obsequiously, almost ready to raise three fingers and swear to heaven.

"By the way, how did you two meet? I've never seen you take such an interest in anyone before. What's so special about that Ye Jiuliang..."

He stopped mid-sentence when he met Li Mochan's narrowing eyes, and he shrunk back as a chill crept up his spine.

Was it necessary to look at him with such a deadly stare just for gossiping a bit?

He awkwardly changed the subject, "Asheng is coming back today; let's get together."

Li Mochan hummed in response.

Feng Yi looked at his lukewarm attitude and felt his heart ache.

Such are the woes of picking the wrong friends.

Chapter 24: 024, if you don't leave, I'll slap you.

Back and forth, by the time she returned to the Ye Family, the night was deep and people were quiet.

After taking a bath, she groped her way back to Jing Pavilion in the dark.

Not caring that her hair was still wet, she lay down on the soft couch and fell asleep as soon as her head touched the pillow.

The next day, dawn broke.

It was rare for Ye Jiuliang to be punished, so Ye Miao and Ye Xin came over early in the morning, tacitly looking forward to seeing Ye Jiuliang's embarrassment.

They hadn't expected to be stopped by the guards outside the entrance just as they approached.

"Miss Xin, Young Master Miao, please go back. Mr. Ye has given the order that no one is allowed to enter," one of the guards said.

"When was this a rule? Even a gatekeeper dares to stop us, do you not want to stay with the Ye Family anymore?" Ye Miao snorted coldly, losing his temper like a privileged young master.

Ye Xin looked at them with disdain and commanded, "We are just going in to have a look, nothing more. You'd better move aside quickly."

Their noisy voices carried into the room.

Ye Jiuliang frowned, not sleeping well, as the noise continued unabated, and at last, she was woken up by the disturbance.

She sat up slowly, her eyes and brows revealing an unruly temperament.

God damn it.

Who the hell is it, disturbing someone's sweet dreams early in the morning?

"Are you going to move or not?" Seeing that the guard still wouldn't step aside, Ye Miao lost his patience and snapped angrily.

At that moment, the heavy wooden door was kicked open from the inside.

"Bang—"

The sudden loud noise scared birds perching on the branches into flight.

Ye Xin jumped in fright and when she looked up and saw the person who kicked the door, her expression shifted slightly.

"Ye Jiuliang, it looks like you spent last night quite comfortably here," observed Ye Miao, noticing her slightly disheveled hair and his words tinged with Schadenfreude.

Ye Jiuliang looked impatient, "Scram."

With other guards watching, Ye Miao's face darkened instantly, "Ye Jiuliang, what do you mean by this? You dare tell me to scram, you..."

"You what you, did you come here early in the morning looking for a beating?" Master Jiu, in a bad mood upon waking up, was akin to a fire-breathing dragon.

"Jiuliang, no matter what, Aren is older than you. How can you speak with this attitude?" Ye Xin put on airs, trying to use seniority to pressure her.

Ye Jiuliang's eyes narrowed dangerously, "Not leaving, is that it?"

"Ye Jiuliang, you are being grounded here to copy the family rules, what are you still so smug about..."

Ye Miao started to bluster, but Ye Jiuliang ignored him and turned to walk back inside.

Ye Xin was taken aback and the next second, she saw Ye Jiuliang holding a feather duster and turning back, causing a chill in her heart.

"Jiuliang, what are you going to do?"

Ye Jiuliang sneered with a crooked smile, tapping the door frame with the feather duster, "You have three seconds to leave. If you don't, don't blame me for being harsh."

"Ye Jiuliang, you wouldn't dare!" Ye Miao's confidence was shaken.

"Amiao, it's getting late, let's not waste time here with her," urged Ye Xin, steadily retreating as she tugged on his sleeve.

Humbled by this, Ye Miao was not ready to give in, clenching his fist and carelessly swinging it towards Ye Jiuliang.

"Asking for it," Ye Jiuliang sneered.

With a swift flick of her wrist, she struck his arm.

"Slap—"

Instantly, a red welt appeared.

Looking at the whip mark on his arm, Ye Miao bellowed furiously, "Ye Jiuliang, did you really hit me?"

Ye Jiuliang's voice was icy, "If you don't scam, I'll whip you again. Try me if you don't believe it."

"You..."

"Amiao, stop arguing, let's go," Ye Xin, startled, caught a glimpse of Aren approaching in the distance and forcefully pulled him away.

"Uncle Aren is coming this way."

Upon hearing this, Ye Miao's face darkened.

Damn it.

He glared at Ye Jiuliang with a malicious look, "You just wait."

Ye Jiuliang scoffed coldly, threw down the feather duster, and swung the door shut.

"Bang—"

"Don't let word of this get out, or you'll see what happens," Ye Xin warned the two guards before leaving with Ye Miao.

With the commotion caused by Ye Xin and the others, Ye Jiuliang was no longer in the mood to sleep.

Lying on the couch, she pinched the bridge of her nose.

Suddenly, she sort of missed the days in Country Y.

...

After breakfast, the Ye Family members left the house one after another.

What remained was silence.

Suddenly, a series of urgent footsteps sounded.

"Master."

Aren hurried into the study.

Seeing his anxious expression, the old Master Ye's first thought was of Ye Jiuliang, "Has Jiuliang caused some trouble again?"

"No," Aren said, "but it does have to do with Miss Jiuliang."

Master Ye, "Make it clear."

"A teacher from Beisen called, saying that exams are coming up soon. Jiuliang has just transferred there and keeps skipping classes. They're afraid it will affect her exam results," Aren said.

"I heard that Master Li has just decreed that anyone who fails this time will have to leave Beisen, so Principal Jin suggests that Miss Jiuliang should return to class immediately, lest when the time comes..."

He didn't finish the sentence, but Master Ye understood his meaning.

He frowned and after a moment, asked in a grave tone, "What's the situation at Jing Pavilion?"

Aren replied, "The guards at the door said that it has been very quiet inside."

"Have Jiuliang come to me."

"Yes."

Half an hour later, Ye Jiuliang walked into the study.

"Grandfather." She called out indifferently.

Master Ye looked up and saw her usual nonchalant demeanor. He couldn't help feeling angry, "Have you finished copying the family rules?"

She said, "No."

"Which page did you get to?"

After thinking for a bit, she said uncertainly, "I should be on the first page."

"..."

Master Ye's face turned an ashen shade, and he felt like he was about to faint.

"Ye Jiuliang."

He stood up abruptly, his trembling finger pointing at her.

"You you you..."

"Are you trying to anger me to death?"

Ye Jiuliang remained composed and silent.

"Master, please don't get worked up. Let's talk this out," Aren stepped forward, trying to console him.

Master Ye pressed his temple, still seething with anger, "Forget it. You don't have to stay at Jing Pavilion anymore. Go back to school and attend class immediately."

Ye Jiuliang, "What about the punishment of copying the family rules?"

As soon as she finished, Master Ye shot her a glare, "The punishment is one additional copy of the family rules, bring it to me in three days."

"Then never mind, I'd rather stay at Jing Pavilion and copy the family rules," Ye Jiuliang said calmly.

Her sudden decision to go back to class must have involved some trickery.

Hearing this, Master Ye's breathing became a bit more rapid.

This obstinate child.

She was truly born to be his bane.

"Miss Jiuliang, you'd better go back to school. Beisen said that anyone who fails the upcoming exam will have to leave," Aren supported Master Ye and looked at Ye Jiuliang, trying to persuade her.

So that's how it is.

Ye Jiuliang raised an eyebrow, a hint of intrigue flashing in her eyes.

Failing an exam could get her out of Beisen?

This was indeed a good plan.

Knowing Ye Jiuliang's stubbornness all too well, Master Ye blamed Aren for speaking too quickly. Now that she knew about it, getting her to stay put would be harder than reaching the heavens.

"Jiuliang, don't get any wrong ideas. If you dare to cause trouble in Beisen again, I'll have a teacher come over and tutor you at home," he warned.

Ye Jiuliang replied half-heartedly, "Understood."

"Now hurry up and change into your school uniform and go to class," Master Ye demanded, irritated by her response and feeling a heavy fog in his head.

Ye Jiuliang curled her lips and slowly made her way out.

Finally, there was no need to be grounded anymore.

What a relief.

Chapter 27: 027, speak plainly, don't turn my stomach.

The city lights were just coming on, and the bustling streets were full of endless streams of people.

A black Bentley veered off the traffic flow, turned a corner, and finally came to a slow stop in front of the VI Club.

Inside the car, a man's distinctly jointed hand rested on the steering wheel, his high nose-bridge hidden behind dark glasses, thin lips holding a cigarette, smoke swirling, blurring his sharply defined profile.

He glanced at his wristwatch, looked up to the outside, people coming and going at the entrance of the club, when a flash of white caught his eye.

The man curved his lips into a smile, quickly extinguishing the cigarette butt and at the same time rolling down the window a bit.

The cold wind rushed in, taking away the faint smell of smoke.

With a clunk, the car door opened and then closed.

"Ji Mingqian, how many times have I told you not to let me smell smoke? Are you asking for a beating?"

Ye Jiuliang sat in the back seat, wrinkling her nose at the lingering smell in the car, and with a raise of her hand, she dealt a violent nutcracker to the person in the driver's seat.

"Having not seen you for so many days, I was hoping you'd become a bit more ladylike, but it seems I was expecting too much," Ji Mingqian dodged her violent attack by turning his head, teasing, "With the way you are, I guess you'll never get married in this lifetime."

Ye Jiuliang shot back, "Don't worry. You and I are evenly matched; you won't be able to get a wife either."

"Who says so? I have a lot of girlfriend fans, okay?" Ji Mingqian retorted.

Ye Jiuliang scoffed, "Bullshit."

"By the way, I've investigated the surprise attack you encountered mid-route, and it has nothing to do with the Mei Organization. They've been busy with infighting and are in a real mess lately," Ji Mingqian circled back to the serious topic.

"I'll keep looking into it on my side, and you be careful too."

Hearing that, Ye Jiuliang fell into thought.

If it wasn't someone from the Mei Organization, then who could it be?

When there was no more sound behind him, Ji Mingqian looked up at the rearview mirror, saw her with her head lowered in silence, and didn't disturb her.

After a long while, Ye Jiuliang leaned back, "Why did you suddenly think to come here?"

Ji Mingqian said, "I haven't been filming for half a year now, found a decent script, so just came out for a stroll since I was bored anyway."

Upon hearing this, Ye Jiuliang couldn't help but laugh, "If Achen hears that, he's probably going to strangle you to death."

Ji Mingqian clearly had loads of work with the Mei Organization that kept him too busy to manage; he had shoved all his duties onto Achen and sneaked off himself, yet he dared to make such nonchalant comments.

"So you have to keep it a secret for me, otherwise you'll have to trouble yourself to burn incense for me next Qingming Festival," Ji Mingqian smiled with a teasing bend of his lips.

Ye Jiuliang, "Get lost."

Jiangyue Restaurant, located in the prime district of the capital, emerged abruptly three years ago. With aggressive tactics and delectable cuisine, it secured its place in the capital and became a frequent haunt for the noble and wealthy.

As for the mysterious owner behind Jiangyue Restaurant, many were curious indeed, but strangely, no one had uncovered the force behind it, even after three years. This also made troublemakers wary.

There were always exceptions though; a couple of years ago, several groups caused disturbances and fights here, and each time the outcome was a severe beating without exception.

Since then, no one dared to cause trouble in Jiangyue Restaurant.

Amidst laughter, the car entered the parking lot and found an empty spot to park.

Ye Jiuliang got out of the car, busy replying to a message on her phone.

"What are you dawdling for? Hurry up and get inside, I'm starving." Ji Mingqian closed the car door and seeing her standing still, hurried her along.

Ye Jiuliang rolled her eyes inelegantly, put away her phone, "Anuo sent a message saying that when Achen saw the note you left, he was so mad, he said you're on your own."

Walking side by side, Ji Mingqian had a playful smile on his face, "Master Jiu, I need protection, I really don't want to die yet."

"Speak like a human, don't ruin my appetite," Ye Jiuliang gave him a look of disgust.

A handsome man and a beautiful woman walking together always attracted attention, and although Ji Mingqian was fully disguised with dark glasses and a mask, Ye Jiuliang wasn't. Under the lighting, her stunningly ethereal beauty drew glances from all around.

"Ajiu, do you know those few people over there?" Ji Mingqian bumped her shoulder and asked in a hushed tone.

Ye Jiuliang's eyes swept over quickly and she let out a cold laugh, "Don't bother with them."

Upon hearing this, Ji Mingqian didn't ask further, and the two of them entered the elevator together.

Not far away, Ye Xin pulled back her gaze, looking at the person beside her with astonishment, "Amiao, that person was Ye Jiuliang, right?"

"Except for her calamitous star, who else could it be?" Whenever Ye Miao mentioned Ye Jiuliang, it was with a gritting of teeth.

Ye Xin frowned, "Who's the man standing next to her?"

"That wretched girl has been living abroad for years, her private life is probably a mess; I can't be bothered with her," said Ye Miao disdainfully.

Upon hearing this, Ye Xin came up with a plan, egging on, "Why don't we check it out, lest she messes around outside and brings shame to our Ye Family?"

Recalling that old master Ye always favored Ye Jiuliang, Ye Miao was about to agree when Li Jingqi suddenly spoke up, "You go on your own; we won't join."

"Jingqi, last time Ye Jiuliang hurt you, can you really swallow that?" Ye Miao looked at him puzzled and asked.

Li Jingqi's face slightly darkened, "I will settle this score sooner or later, but don't forget this is Jiangyue Restaurant, we can't afford to cause trouble and fight here, and..."

He stopped mid-sentence.

Ye Miao urged him, "And what?"

"My fifth uncle is also here today, if he finds out, won't I be asking for trouble?" Li Jingqi said, frustrated.

He might act on impulse, but he wasn't foolish; if he happened to run into his fifth uncle, he'd be unable to escape the consequences.

Hearing that Li Mochan was also there, Ye Miao and the others were all taken aback.

Ye Xin turned to look at Li Jingxuan, "Is Uncle Li five here?"

"Mhm, we saw my fifth uncle's car when we just arrived," Li Jingxuan replied, nodding reluctantly.

After pondering for a moment, Ye Miao waved his hand dismissively, "Forget it, let's not talk about that wretched girl anymore. Let's eat."

As long as Ye Jiuliang was in the capital, he wasn't worried about lacking opportunities to deal with her.

Ye Xin, upon hearing this, could only give up as well.

...

"Asheng, it's rare that we get together, won't you have a drink?" Feng Yi swirled his glass, teasing the man sitting diagonally from him with a familiar tone.

The man's skin was sickly pale, his eyebrows delicate as willow leaves, lips faintly colored like water, in his pale green eyes laughter lurked, and every smile and frown radiated ultimate gentleness and elegance.

Jiang Yisheng picked up the tea cup at hand, his voice as smooth as jade, "Yi, I just got over a cold; you should go easy on me."

Hearing this, Feng Yi seriously replied, "You caught a cold again, is it because the recent tour was too exhausting, and you didn't rest well?"

Meeting his concerned gaze, Jiang Yisheng smiled softly, "No, probably didn't dress warmly enough when I went to see the snow, caught a cold inadvertently."

"Winter is for staying home, what were you doing out looking at snow." Feng Yi saw his face was slightly pale and couldn't help but nag.

The smile on Jiang Yisheng's lips deepened, "Since it's a rare gathering, stop nagging me. I will definitely be more careful next time."

Feng Yi rolled his eyes at him, not believing a word.

Watching the man leisurely sipping tea, Feng Yi suddenly remembered something and with a sly grin, asked, "How was the blind date event?"

"..."

Jiang Yisheng put down the tea cup, shook his head and chuckled lightly.

Then he uttered two words without much emphasis, "Nightmare."

"Hahahaha."

Feng Yi laughed unkindly, nearly unable to steady his glass.

Jiang Yisheng, helpless, his eyes filled with a grievance, glanced at the silent man across from him.

All thanks to his cousin who was a pitiful troublemaker.

Chapter 28: 028, beat him up so badly even his parents can't recognize him.

"Asheng, I'll tell you something really interesting," Feng Yi said as he moved his chair beside Jiang Yisheng.

Seeing his mysterious expression, Jiang Yisheng looked puzzled, "What interesting thing?"

"It's about Ahan, he..."

Feng Yi was excited to start, but a cold voice interrupted him.

"Eat your meal quietly."

Jiang Yisheng raised an eyebrow and glanced at Li Mochan with curiosity.

Is there a story?

He cast an inquiring look at Feng Yi, who shrugged and picked up his wine glass, "Your cousin won't let me tell, you should ask him yourself."

Seems like there really is a story.

Jiang Yisheng turned his eyes to Li Mochan, his face revealing an intriguing smile.

Li Mochan's fingertips holding the chopsticks paused, he looked up at him, "Want to go back to M country?"

Jiang Yisheng was taken aback, looking innocent.

He hadn't said anything yet, had he?

"I don't," he said.

"Then don't gossip like Feng Yi," Li Mochan said.

Jiang Yisheng nodded obediently.

Feng Yi touched his forehead, lamenting that Asheng hadn't cultivated enough street smarts.

...

In another private room

"Ye Jiuliang, I don't eat wasabi, so don't put it in my bowl," Ji Mingqian said, looking at the green clump in his bowl and speaking frantically.

Ye Jiuliang glanced at him and snorted lightly, "That's for taking my drink."

Facing the undeniable fact, Ji Mingqian laughed apologetically. "I'm just worried that you'll harm yourself drinking too much, so I thought I'd help you out by drinking some. Achen, too, had his share."

"Stop dragging Achen into it every time," Ye Jiuliang exposed his lie.

"This wine isn't bad; you take your time drinking it, I'm going to the restroom," Ji Mingqian said as he stood up and poured her a glass of wine with great care.

Ye Jiuliang didn't forget to make a biting remark, "Don't fall into the latrine."

Ji Mingqian's lips twitched slightly as he walked out the door.

*

"Looks like luck is on this young master's side tonight, to encounter such a top-notch beauty," a voice said.

"Scram."

"Do you know who I am? How dare you tell me to scram? You should be grateful I'm even considering you," the man said with an air of entitlement.

"Scram."

The unchanging word was delivered with a tone as cold as jade.

Ji Mingqian turned off the faucet, grabbed a paper towel to dry his hands, and followed the sound out of the restroom.

The deserted corridor was softly lit by evenly spaced wall lamps.

"Not knowing your place? Then don't blame this young master for not being gentle," the man slurred his words with a drunken arrogance that grated on the ears.

Jiang Yisheng's handsome face was slightly cold; just going to the restroom he had stumbled upon this annoying incident, which really left him speechless.

His green eyes misted with a hint of chill as he slowly rolled up his sleeves, "Last chance, get out of my way."

"A pretty boy dares to be so bold here? Ridiculous," the man said, eyes gleaming with perverse anticipation at the thought of having Jiang Yisheng under him.

"Come with me and I'll make sure you want for nothing," he said, foolishly stepping forward and reaching out to grab Jiang Yisheng's hand.

Jiang Yisheng's brows chilled, and his iron-like fist promptly greeted the man's regrettable face.

"Bang—"

The man's slight drunkenness sobered up a bit with the punch.

He held his right cheek and couldn't help inhaling sharply.

"Hiss—"

Jiang Yisheng withdrew his hand, a tickle in his throat compelling a soft cough.

"Cough cough cough."

"Oh, turns out you're a sickly beauty. I thought you had some real guts," the man spat, accidentally pulling at the wound on his mouth corner and letting a glint of cruelty pass through his eyes as he reached out again toward Jiang Yisheng.

Jiang Yisheng sidestepped, and his coughing intensified, as if he was about to cough out his lungs.

"Cough cough--"

The man sneered in contempt and took the opportunity to try to grab Jiang Yisheng, "Come with me obediently..."

"I told you to get lost already, can't you understand human speech?"

A cold voice suddenly rang out, like a demonic chant from hell.

In the blink of an eye, before the man could see the owner of the voice, he was kicked and sent flying.

"Aah--"

A pitiful scream echoed through the corridor.

Jiang Yisheng looked up at the figure standing in front of him, his eyes slightly moved, and a few tinges of redness climbed on his porcelain-white neck due to coughing.

Upon closer inspection, the blue veins on his skin were very clear.

Sensing his gaze, Ji Mingqian turned around to meet those light green eyes, his thin lips lightly curved.

He was indeed "beautiful," gender hard to discern, Ji Mingqian muttered to himself sarcastically.

Suppressing the discomfort in his throat, Jiang Yisheng spoke lightly, "Thank you."

Ji Mingqian, hands in his pockets, smiled nonchalantly, "It was nothing."

Not far away, the man lay on the ground with a burning chest, feeling as if all his organs were displaced, and his mouth still oozed with blood.

Struggling to open his eyes, he saw a pair of shiny boots enter his view.

As his gaze moved upward, unexpectedly clashing with the man's deep, dark pupils, he couldn't help but gasp, "You you you..."

Ji Mingqian curved his lips in a cold smile, bent down, and easily pulled him up with his distinct-knuckled hand.

"Quite audacious."

The overpowering aura made it hard for the man to breathe, and he stuttered, "You, you'd better let me go, or else..."

Tired of his babbling, Ji Mingqian swung a punch to his abdomen.

"Bang--"

In an instant, the man's features twisted in agony, unable to make a sound.

But this was only the beginning.

Ji Mingqian, one hand gripping his collar, the other balled into a fist, continuously swung at his face, each punch crueler than the last.

"Aargh aargh aargh--"

The man screamed miserably as he was beaten, truly sobering up, nearly passing out.

"Cough cough, that's enough," Jiang Yisheng said as he glanced at the man's unrecognizable face, the corners of his lips slightly raised.

At that, Ji Mingqian released his grip.

"Thud--"

The man fell back to the ground, curling into a shrimp-like shape, moaning softly in pain.

The commotion was not small, quickly drawing bystanders.

Doors of adjacent private rooms opened one after another, with people peeking out to check what had happened.

"What's going on?"

"Come on, someone's making trouble at Jiangyue Restaurant? That's some serious guts."

"Isn't that the young master of the Yao Family lying there? Looks like he's bitten off more than he can chew, all bruised and swollen—I bet his own family couldn't recognize him now."

"That's Jiang Yisheng, wow, he's so handsome, even more so in person than in photos."

The whispers around grew louder, and many recognized Jiang Yisheng; some young girls rushed over to surround him for autographs.

Jiang Yisheng pinched the bridge of his nose as more people crowded around, the air became stuffy, and his head felt dizzy.

"Excuse me, please make way."

A deep voice reached his ears, and a slightly cool hand touched his wrist; Jiang Yisheng paused for a moment.

Before he could react, a forceful strength pulled him over, shielding him behind.

At this point, the restaurant manager arrived with security.

"Make way, don't block here any longer."

"Since you're here at Jiangyue Restaurant, please enjoy your meal properly. Don't let these incidents spoil everyone's mood, I ask you all to return to your private rooms to dine," the middle-aged manager said, his face wearing a polite smile, but a fleeting sharpness in his eyes revealed he was not to be trifled with.

Hearing this, the crowd eager for a spectacle dispersed one by one.

What a joke, Jiangyue Restaurant was not a place for spectating; they didn't want to invite trouble for nothing.

The girls yearning for Jiang Yisheng's signature reluctantly glanced at their idol one more time before leaving, looking back with every step they took.

Chapter 29: 029、 Is he a movie emperor (Best Actor)?

For a moment, the corridor returned to quiet.

Only the intermittent sounds of coughing could be heard.

"Cough cough cough..."

Ji Mingqian turned his head to look at the person behind him, his eyes slightly lifting at the corners, "Are you okay?"

Jiang Yisheng shook his head, his coughing so severe that his face turned pale.

"Cough cough... I'm fine."

The eyes concealed behind Ji Mingqian's sunglasses narrowed slightly, finding it amusing that Jiang Yisheng could still claim to be fine despite coughing like that.

But it wasn't his concern.

The lobby manager, having instructed the security to drag away the man sprawled on the floor, then came over.

He first looked at Jiang Yisheng, "Young Master Jiang, are you okay?"

Jiang Yisheng managed to stop coughing and was about to speak when a voice from Feng Yi came from behind him.

"Asheng, are you alright?"

He turned around to see that both Li Mochan and Feng Yi had arrived.

"Cousin, Yi."

"Did that bastard from the Yao Family hurt you?" After hearing a bit about the situation, Feng Yi's face grew dark, his eyebrows failing to hide his anger.

It seemed some people really didn't bring their brains with them when they left home and were asking for trouble.

Jiang Yisheng said, "No, he's the one who got beaten up."

"That's good then." After carefully inspecting him and ensuring he was alright, Feng Yi finally relaxed.

To the side, Ji Mingqian was silently assessing Li Mochan, and the admiration in his eyes was blocked by the sunglasses.

As a man himself, he had to admit he was outmatched in terms of looks.

Suddenly, those eyes, deep as a cold abyss, gazed over, and Ji Mingqian tugged at his lips, smoothly shifting his gaze away.

One look was enough to know you don't mess with the man in charge of Dark Hall.

It was all the fault of Ajiu, that little ancestor, for making him feel oddly guilty every time he saw Li Mochan now.

"He helped you?" Feng Yi's inquisitive gaze fell upon Ji Mingqian, noticing his "fully armed" appearance, a twitch forming at the corner of his mouth.

Sunglasses, face mask, not a piece missing.

Was he here to dine or to hide from enemies?

Suppressing a smile, Jiang Yisheng nodded.

Li Mochan's intense gaze had a powerful penetration, and Ji Mingqian thought it best to make a quick exit. He said, "Since there's no problem, I'll head back to eat."

"Wait, what's your name?" Jiang Yisheng asked as he saw him leave.

Ji Mingqian waved his hand, "No need for names with a chance encounter."

Suddenly, the door of the private room diagonally opposite opened.

A long and straight leg stepped out.

Black trousers, white shirt, the badge of Beisen Academy adorned on the lapel was unmistakable—it was the uniform of a Beisen Academy student.

Seeing that Ji Mingqian hadn't returned, Ye Jiuliang had to come out and look for him.

She had barely taken a step when she sensed an unusual atmosphere.

Her eyelids lifted slightly, her gaze sweeping over Ji Mingqian and the others, finally resting on that lean figure.

The air grew tense, and one could hear a pin drop.

Li Mochan looked at the girl standing across from him, his gaze suddenly deepening, the aura emanating from him turning colder.

In the end, it was Feng Yi who broke the silence.

"Miss Ye, what a coincidence to see you again," he said.

Ye Jiuliang smiled awkwardly yet politely, "..."

Coincidence my ass.

Why does she encounter Li Mochan wherever she goes?

"Miss Ye, is this your friend?" Feng Yi had not missed Ji Mingqian's recent attempt to open the door of this private room.

As he spoke, Ji Mingqian felt the weight of an "unfriendly" gaze lingering on him for a few seconds.

All present were wise enough to know that to pretend otherwise was to seek awkwardness.

Ye Jiuliang nodded forthrightly.

As the atmosphere seemed a bit awkward, Feng Yi spoke with a smile, "Your friend here just helped Mohan's cousin, and we were thinking of thanking him, when you conveniently showed up."

"Really?" Ye Jiuliang looked toward Ji Mingqian and said darkly, "When did you become so altruistic?"

Ji Mingqian was a smooth talker, "That's how it has always been."

"He hates it most when people thank him. It's just a small effort, so I won't bother you anymore during your meal," Ye Jiuliang said as she grabbed Ji Mingqian and pushed him inside before making a move to close the door.

"See you later."

"Bang—"

The door shut with a thunderous sound that Feng Yi and Jiang Yisheng didn't expect.

Li Mochan's expression turned frosty as he looked at the closed door, with a hint of coldness creeping into the corners of his eyes.

"Cousin, what's wrong with you?" Jiang Yisheng, who was closest to him, felt the chill emanating from him and asked in confusion.

Feng Yi suppressed a laugh and whispered in his ear, "Asheng, this is the interesting thing I was about to tell you about."

With that, he pointed at the door to Ye Jiuliang's private room.

After a few seconds of being stunned and clarifying the meaning behind Feng Yi's words, Jiang Yisheng looked at Li Mochan with astonishment and blinked.

An eternal iceberg about to melt?

Is that what it means?

He quickly looked back at Feng Yi, and the two exchanged a knowing look. Then Feng Yi stepped forward and knocked on the door.

"Knock knock knock—"

After three knocks, he withdrew his hand.

Shortly after, the door opened.

It was still Ye Jiuliang.

"Is there something else?" She poked her head out, her gaze inadvertently drifting towards Li Mochan.

Feng Yi said, "It's such a coincidence to run into you here tonight, and Miss Ye's friend helped Asheng, so we certainly owe you our thanks. How about we all have dinner together?"

In the end, he added, "Mochan will pay for it.

"Uh..." Ye Jiuliang racked her brain for an excuse to refuse, but before she could speak, she was interrupted by a bout of coughing.

"Cough cough cough—"

She looked up to see a man's well-defined hand covering his lips, coughing until his face turned pale.

"Asheng, are you feeling unwell again?" Feng Yi asked softly, looking at the person beside him who couldn't stop coughing.

Jiang Yisheng waved his hand, "It's nothing."

The usually silent Li Mochan suddenly spoke, "Do you have your medicine with you?"

Jiang Yisheng thought of those bitter pills, his eyes flickered, "I forgot, didn't bring them."

After saying that, he turned to Ye Jiuliang and gave a shallow smile, "Miss Ye, your friend just helped me, so please let us take you out for a meal as a token of our gratitude."

His own cousin was seldom in such a state, and he naturally had to play the role of wingman now. This way, grandma wouldn't be rushed to find them a granddaughter-in-law.

Feng Yi echoed, "Yeah, that's right."

With the conversation having reached this point, Ye Jiuliang's impending refusal got stuck in her throat, and she pulled the door handle open.

"Come on in."

Inside, Ji Mingqian choked on his drink when he heard Ye Jiuliang's words.

"??"

What's going on?

How could Ajiu dare to invite Li Mochan inside?

He grabbed his sunglasses and put them back on, his gaze questioning as he looked at Ye Jiuliang, only to receive a glare from her.

Ji Mingqian touched his nose, unaware that a simple act of helping someone could be connected to Li Mochan.

"Thanks for what you did just now."

A gentle voice filled the room. Ji Mingqian looked up to meet those clear, dust-free green eyes and tugged at the corner of his mouth, "It's a trivial matter."

Off to the side, Feng Yi looked at the man wearing sunglasses with suspicion and uncertainly called out, "Ji Mingqian?"

Even with sunglasses on, that half of his face visible under the light was still quite recognizable; he shouldn't have mistaken him.

At the mention of his name, Jiang Yisheng's face relaxed a bit.

Although he focused on the music scene, he was somewhat aware of other entertainment industry news.

Ji Mingqian, who had debuted four years ago, was a box office guarantee, and with his solid acting skills, he sat firmly at the top of the entertainment industry as the leading actor.

He had seen one of his films before, and the person in front of him did resemble the actor a bit. But with the sunglasses on, it was hard to be sure.

Having been recognized, Ji Mingqian didn't hurry to deny it and lifted his hand to remove his sunglasses, revealing his handsome face.

He shook the sunglasses in his hand, a mischievous smirk crossing his lips, "You really can't escape the discerning eyes of President Feng."

Chapter 30: 030, I am her boyfriend

Feng Yi raised an eyebrow, "I've long heard of your reputation."

Ji Mingqian gave a light chuckle, "It seems like that's something I should be saying."

The two men subtly tested each other, much to the exhaustion of Ye Jiuliang, who tapped the table lightly, producing a muted sound.

"Aren't we here to eat?"

"Let's talk while we eat." Ji Mingqian, always comfortable with taking the initiative, pulled out a chair and sat down next to Ye Jiuliang.

Feng Yi glanced at Li Mochan, noticing the darkening of his eyes and the corner of his lips curling into a meaningful smile.

Now there was an interesting show to watch.

Unbeknownst to them, the atmosphere had become somewhat eerie.

Li Mochan and Ji Mingqian were seated on either side of Ye Jiuliang, while Feng Yi and Jiang Yisheng sat facing each other.

Soon, a new round of dishes was brought to the table.

Ji Mingqian sipped his wine and his eyes brightened. He looked up at Feng Yi and said, "Good wine."

"That's one of Yi's treasured collections." Jiang Yisheng said in a warm voice.

Ji Mingqian noticed the juice next to him and casually asked, "You don't drink?"

Jiang Yisheng replied, "Not really."

With his constitution, it was best to steer clear of alcohol.

On the other hand, Ye Jiuliang was on pins and needles.

A certain gentleman had been staring at her since they entered the door. She couldn't even enjoy a drink without feeling goosebumps all over.

She put down her glass and looked sideways, meeting the man's narrow, deep eyes head-on, and out came the question, "Do I look nice?"

As soon as she finished speaking, the surrounding area fell quiet.

Three pairs of eyes turned simultaneously toward Ye Jiuliang and Li Mochan.

Li Mochan withdrew his gaze indifferently, "Ugly."

"..."

Ugly, yet he had been staring at her for so long.

Stare at what, exactly?

As if my looks have anything to do with being ugly!

Feng Yi and Jiang Yisheng struggled to suppress their laughter, realizing that some people's single status was not without reason.

Pfft.

Ji Mingqian laughed openly and unreservedly.

It was rare to see Ye Jiuliang at a disadvantage, all thanks to Li Mochan.

Listening to the excessive "brazen" laughter beside her, Ye Jiuliang shot Ji Mingqian a sidelong glance, "Believe it or not, I'll throw you down from here."

Knowing when to stop, Ji Mingqian was well aware of the concept.

He stopped laughing and turned to chat with Feng Yi.

Ye Jiuliang picked up her chopsticks to eat, temporarily blocking out the person next to her who called her ugly.

"It seems that Mr. Ji and Miss Ye are quite familiar. Have you known each other for a long time?" Feng Yi casually inquired.

Ji Mingqian's playful side emerged, "I'm her boyfriend."

Upon his words, Feng Yi and Jiang Yisheng exchanged glances and covertly glanced in Li Mochan's direction.

That face, excessively handsome, remained calm, still calm.

The calm before the storm?

Under the light, the knuckles of Li Mochan covering his wine glass turned white.

Boy, friend?

He frowned slightly, the dark clouds in his deep gaze stirring, only to return to his usual indifference the next moment.

Very well.

Li Mochan looked down at the girl next to him, who was focused on eating, and she showed no intention to clarify Ji Mingqian's statement.

It was as if she tacitly agreed, as if she had acknowledged it.

Feng Yi commented, "Movie star Ji having a girlfriend at such a young age, if this news gets out, I guess your fans' hearts will be totally shattered."

"Having my Ajiu is enough for me," Ji Mingqian said, looking at Ye Jiuliang with a deep and affectionate gaze, with a tenderness that could drown someone.

The title of movie star wasn't just for show.

The smile on Feng Yi's face froze, unsure of how to continue the conversation.

A chill rose from the soles of his feet, making him uncomfortably uneasy.

Jiang Yisheng sipped his juice and kept silent.

We know nothing, and we dare not ask anything.

At this moment, Ye Jiuliang put down her chopsticks and wiped her mouth.

Then, she reached out to pick up the dish mixed with bitter melon and placed it in front of Ji Mingqian, "Eat more."

Ji Mingqian looked disgusted and pushed the plate of bitter melon forward with a finger, "Can I just shut up instead?"

Others might get carsick or drunk, but he got sick from bitter melon. Just the smell of it was enough to make him nauseous.

Ye Jiuliang scoffed, unmanageable without a bit of discipline.

She took a sip from her wine glass, her eyes narrowing contentedly into crescent moons.

The wine was not bad.

Feng Yi watched Ye Jiuliang down two glasses and teased, "Miss Ye, you seem to have a good tolerance for liquor."

The alcohol content of this wine was quite high, and it packed quite an after punch. The Ye family's young girl was unaffected, even after two glasses, her expression unchanged.

"She's a little drunkard," Ji Mingqian murmured a complaint under his breath.

With good wine to drink, Ye Jiuliang had no interest in squabbling with him.

Feeling the gaze from the side, she propped her chin with one hand and turned her eyes to meet the man's dark gaze, which was tinged with icy shards.

She hadn't provoked him, had she?

"Mister Li, you keep staring at me. Aren't you afraid I'll be too ugly for you?"

Li Mochan remained silent, his gaze fixating on the glass in her hand, his memory drifting back to the night they drank on the rooftop.

Seeing that he remained silent, Ye Jiuliang pursed her lips and turned her head toward Feng Yi, "It's about time. We'll be leaving first."

Upon her words, Ji Mingqian stood up to follow.

Jiang Yisheng instinctively looked over to Li Mochan, who had his eyes and brows lowered, the line of his jaw slightly tense.

Over there, Ye Jiuliang was about to step out the door with her company. Jiang Yisheng turned to Feng Yi, who shook his head, signaling him not to interfere.

"Bang—"

As the door closed, the atmosphere in the private room abruptly turned cold.

Like a bitter wind sweeping through, it left an icy stillness in its wake.

After a moment, Li Mochan stood up, walked to the window, and pushed it open, allowing the cool breeze to brush across his cheeks.

Looking down, he saw the slim figure of the girl in the night, still striking. He didn't know what the person beside her was whispering, but she raised her hand to pat Ji Mingqian's shoulder. The two of them chatted and laughed harmoniously.

Watching their retreating backs walking shoulder to shoulder, an inexplicable irritation welled up in his heart.

"Like her but too stubborn to admit it. If you care, then chase after her," came Feng Yi's teasing voice from behind.

Li Mochan slowly turned around and gave him a cold glare, "Did I ever say I liked her?"

"Fine, fine, you don't like her, I'll like her, okay?" Feng Yi laughed in frustration, unabashed in his mockery.

He wondered how long this proud charade would last.

Jiang Yisheng turned his head away quietly, holding back his laughter.

His cousin really hadn't wised up to love!

...

Having had a few drinks, the effects were slowly taking hold.

Upon settling into the car, Ye Jiuliang leaned back in the rear seat and closed her eyes for a nap.

Driving was still Ji Mingqian.

"Ajiu, are you and Li Mochan getting close?" Ji Mingqian glanced at her in the rearview mirror and asked.

"No."

Her voice was cold, slightly hoarse.

"Then why was Li Mochan staring at you the whole time? Did you provoke him again?" He was not blind; Li Mochan had been staring at her throughout the meal, and he inexplicably felt some hostility from Li Mochan toward him.

"Probably because I'm uniquely ugly," Ye Jiuliang replied nonchalantly.

"So, you do realize you're ugly."

"Ji Mingqian, just drive your car and shut up."

"Being serious, Li Mochan is a dangerous man. It's better to keep your distance."

"Got it."

Another dispassionate three-word reply prompted Ji Mingqian to roll his eyes.

"I've warned you. There are other ways to get the Star of the Sea. Don't get yourself entangled too deeply."

Ye Jiuliang snorted, "Are you doubting my intelligence?"

"Do you even have that thing?"

"We have time. How about we swing by the boxing gym?" In the dim light, Ye Jiuliang suddenly opened her eyes, her dark pupils shining with an intense light.

Ji Mingqian chuckled lightly, "Want to fight?"

"No, I want to crush you one-sidedly."

"Don't talk too big. Just wait and see."

Saying that, Ji Mingqian turned the steering wheel and headed to the boxing gym.