Divorce Only Makes a Son-in-Law Stronger

Chapter 61. The Su family has risen again!

Wh-what? Su Guang, the man who had disappeared for four whole years, had the nerve to call them? Su Mengqing was stunned for a moment. She shot up in bed and snatched her phone, her eyes instantly turning bloodshot as she stared at the number on the screen.

"Mengqing, answer it! I'm going to curse that bastard to hell and back!" Zhang Meili, who had been hiding her head under a blanket, whipped it off to reveal her tear-streaked, puffy face and shouted viciously.

One second, two seconds, three seconds passed. Finally, under the intense gazes of Yang Tingting and Zhang Meili, Su Mengqing gritted her teeth to steady herself, reached out a trembling finger, and pressed the speakerphone button.

"...Hello, is that you, Mengqing? It's your dad, Su Guang... Bah! I spent a fortune to have a master change my name. I'm called Stubborn Su Gang now!"

A man's cheerful voice came from the phone. It was distant and unfamiliar, yet it was still the same intimate, familiar voice from the depths of her memory. Su Mengqing was lost in a daze and didn't respond for a long time.

Instead, it was Zhang Meili who erupted in a rage, snatching the phone and shrieking through her sobs, "Su Guang! You goddamn bastard! What the hell is this 'Stubborn Su Gang' nonsense? I think you should be called 'Lost It All'! Do you have any idea what a mess you've made of this family in the four years since you ran off?"

"Zhang Meili, who gives a damn about your nagging, you old hag? The name's Stubborn Su Gang, and I'm now the personal Xia Country advisor to the Prince of Sha Country!" the man retorted sarcastically, not intimidated in the least.

Zhang Meili was stunned. Yang Tingting was dumbfounded. Su Mengqing, who had been about to speak, also found her eyes widening, the corners tightening in shock.

Her deadbeat, gambling father had always been weak and spineless; he would never have dared to talk back to Zhang Meili. And now he was the one calling them? Not only did he show no guilt or shame for running off with their money, but he had actually grown a backbone?

A knot of unease formed in their stomachs. Su Mengqing and Zhang Meili looked at each other, their expressions changing.

Could it be that Su Guang... no, Stubborn Su Gang, has actually made it big?

"Su Guang, d-don't try to fool us! With your skills, how could you possibly cozy up to the Prince of Sha Country?" Zhang Meili stuttered, her voice clearly lacking conviction.

"Heh, you think you're something, Zhang Meili? If that old man hadn't forced me to marry you, do you really think I would have ever looked twice at a fat pig like you?" Stubborn Su Gang's tone grew louder. "And I told you, my name is Stubborn Su Gang now!"

"You... you damn gambler! Tell it to the ghosts!" Zhang Meili's face flushed red with rage. She let out a shrill cry and was about to slam the hang-up button.

"Dad, where are you? Are you planning to bring the Prince back to Haicheng?" Su Mengqing reacted quickly, snatching the phone back. She asked in a low voice, her expression complex.

Frankly, she didn't want Su Guang to come home. But if he wasn't lying, if he really had an incredible connection like the Prince of Sha Country, this could be the godsent opportunity for the Su family to rise again!

"Mengqing, my dear, the reason I resolutely set off across the ocean back then was to make something of myself, to show all those people who looked down on the Su family.

"Haha! And now I've finally succeeded, so of course, I'm going to return home in glory!

"By the way, I know you've done well these past four years. You've grown our family's pharmaceutical business and even taken it public.

"The Prince is also very interested in traditional Xia Country medicine. His visit to Haicheng this time is to procure a batch to take back with him."

What? The Prince was going to buy a large quantity of medicine to take back to Sha Country?

As soon as he said that, the hospital room fell silent. Zhang Meili's mouth hung open in shock, while Yang Tingting was both stunned and overjoyed. As for Su Mengqing, she drew a sharp breath and clenched her fists in excitement.

It's like a light at the end of the tunnel! My hunch was actually right!

"Dad, where are you? We have to come and pick you up!" Su Mengqing's face was alight with ecstasy, and her voice became tender.

"Old Su, just bring the Prince to stay at our house! I'll... I'll go to the market right now and cook a feast of all your favorite dishes!" Zhang Meili chimed in shamelessly, smiling at the phone.

"We're close; we'll be there soon. Yuan Ruohai, Second Master Yuan, is returning with us as well.

"I have some things to take care of, so I'll contact you when I'm done. That's all for now."

The man on the other end hummed lazily and hung up, leaving the three women staring at the phone and listening to the dial tone as they exchanged excited glances.

Even a big shot like Yuan Ruohai was with him. That confirmed it. Su Guang—no, Stubborn Su Gang—must have become a big shot too!

"Congratulations, Director Su! Congratulations, Mrs. Zhang! The Su family is going to rise from the ashes and make a comeback!" Yang Tingting said, her face wreathed in joyous smiles.

"Mengqing, it looks like we misunderstood your father. He didn't just run off with the money four years ago; he really went out to make something of himself!" Zhang Meili said, beaming as she eagerly defended Stubborn Su Gang.

"Let's hope so," Su Mengqing replied, clenching her teeth privately as a smile she couldn't suppress spread across her lips. "If Dad can really bring the Prince of Sha Country here and open up the international pharmaceutical market, who in all of Haicheng will dare to look down on Su Pharmaceutical then?"

Lin Fan, Yuan Youwei... compared to the Prince of Sha Country, they're nothing! I could even use my looks to my advantage. Maybe I could enchant the Prince, marry into a royal family overseas, and become the admired Princess of Sha Country!

The more she thought about it, the more excited and feverish she became. Unable to contain herself, Su Mengqing pressed the call button by her bed to summon the nurse on duty.

"Increase my dosage! I want to be discharged this afternoon!"

「Meanwhile, at the Haicheng International Dock」

A rundown, battered, eighth-hand fishing boat was slowly docking. Inside its rusty, drafty cabin, a tall, skinny, middle-aged man in a colorful short-sleeved shirt and beach shorts was jubilantly putting down his phone.

"Second Master Yuan, I've handled things on the Su family's end. I guarantee there won't be any trouble, heh heh!" he said, looking at the man across from him and cocking an eyebrow proudly.

"Good. I'll handle things on the Yuan family's side quickly, then we'll grab the money and run," Yuan Ruohai replied, his expression cold as he nodded curtly. The smile on his face didn't reach his eyes.

A few days ago, Mr. Yuan Sr. had ordered him onto a ship, sending him penniless to the southern seas. Who would have thought the cargo ship would encounter a storm and nearly capsize? Yuan Ruohai got lucky and was rescued by a small passing fishing boat. That was how he met Stubborn Su Gang, another native of Haicheng.

"Xiao Jie, it's all up to you now. Don't drop the ball," Yuan Ruohai said, pulling himself from his thoughts and turning to the young man standing behind Stubborn Su Gang.

The man also had East Asian features, though his skin was slightly darker and his eyes were brown, giving him the distinct appearance of someone from Sha Country.

"That's right! With Second Master Yuan as a guarantor, who would dare doubt your identity?" Stubborn Su Gang said with a laugh, casually slinging an arm around the young man's neck. "Once we score big, we'll split it three ways! Then we can live the good life, eating and drinking our fill. No more sleeping under some damn bridge!"

He had met this man on an island in South Asia after gambling away all his money. At the time, they had nearly come to blows over a spot to sleep for the night under a bridge. Later, the man boasted that he was a displaced Prince of Sha Country, spinning a tale so convincing that Stubborn Su Gang was completely fooled.

Stubborn Su Gang had a flash of inspiration and immediately concocted a get-rich-quick scheme. Ever since he ran off with the money four years ago, he had been too ashamed to contact his family. To his surprise, however, Su Pharmaceutical had thrived under his daughter, Su Mengqing, and was now a successful company worth billions. He had long been looking for a chance to sneak back to Haicheng and live comfortably off his family's success.

His original plan was just to bring along the man who called himself Abdullah Bulger to bluff his family. However, running into Yuan Ruohai on the way and learning that the Su family was on the verge of collapse changed everything. The two of them put their heads together and decided to go all in, planning to use Xiao Jie's fake identity to scam their respective families out of a pile of money and then disappear.

Chapter 62. Good medicine turns into poison

"Why don’t you all believe me? I really am a prince, I’m just a bit down on my luck right now."

Under the watchful eyes of Yuan Ruohai and Stubborn Su Gang, the young man from Sha Country known as Xiao Jie shook his head with a look of resignation, speaking broken Xia language with a heavy northern accent.

"Right, right, just maintain that state. Brilliant, absolutely brilliant!" Stubborn Su Gang clapped his hands in delight, his eyes gleaming with cunning satisfaction.

"Indeed, not bad. To deceive others, you first have to deceive yourself," Yuan Ruohai nodded in agreement, tossing a white cloth to Xiao Jie, whose lips were twitching. "We’ll be in Haicheng soon, so don’t show any cracks in the facade. First, we’re heading to the Yuandao Furniture woodworking factory. I need to rush-produce a batch of high-end furniture."

He turned his head to look at the crowds on the distant shore, a fierce light flickering in his eyes.

The act had to be complete, just as a good horse needs a good saddle. To play up the nobility of the Prince of Sha Country, they naturally had to provide him with the right attire and furnish a royal chamber. Although these worldly possessions could be quickly acquired with money, the three of them were currently as poor as church mice.

The fare for their return trip had been paid for by Yuan Ruohai, who had to pry out one of his own gold teeth. Fortunately, he had secretly stashed away a lot of precious wood at the factory. Plus, his son, Yuan Tao, was the factory manager assigned by the family. Even without Old Man Yuan’s approval, would Yuan Tao dare not help obediently when his own father asked?

"Let’s go to the bus stop!"

After disembarking and walking out of the dock, Yuan Ruohai gazed at the bustling streets on either side, his spirits soaring. Following behind him, Stubborn Su Gang walked with his chest puffed out, looking radiant. Only Xiao Jie looked around curiously. He inwardly marveled at the rapid development of Xia Country over the years.

A few moments later, a bus arrived. Yuan Ruohai quickly pulled out a few crumpled bills and stuffed them into the fare box.

"Please board, Your Highness!" Ignoring the strange glances from others, his old face burned as he and Stubborn Su Gang flanked the door, bowing to invite Xiao Jie aboard.

"Okay, thank you." Xiao Jie simply nodded and squeezed on, utterly disregarding the scornful looks from those around.

Thus, the two men and their so-called Prince of Sha Country began a journey of repeated bus transfers, heading all the way to the Yuandao Furniture woodworking factory, located beyond the Third Ring Road in the Southern City.

「At that moment.」

Inside a small private room in the cafeteria of the Yuandao Furniture woodworking factory.

"Lin Fan, what on earth are you up to? It’s one thing for you to mess around, but don’t drag us down with you!" Across the dining table, Mrs. Xue slammed her chopsticks down and glared at Lin Fan.

"Mrs. Xue, don’t be angry. Just think of it as getting out for a change of scenery. I think it’s quite nice," Yuan Youwei said soothingly, taking a small sip of her soup. She then turned her head, her beautiful eyes full of tender affection as she gazed dreamily at Lin Fan, who was focused on his meal.

It had to be said, this man wasn’t just handsome; he became more appealing the longer she looked. That, combined with his extraordinary calm, made him completely incomparable to the wealthy young masters she’d met before.

"My dear girl, you... you’re completely besotted..." Mrs. Xue’s face darkened, and she turned away, fuming.

"Can you get full just by looking at me?" Just then, Lin Fan put down his chopsticks and bowl, then began to leisurely wipe his mouth with a napkin.

"Of course. Just watching you eat is enough to make me full," Yuan Youwei teased with a smile, propping her fair cheeks in her hands.

"..." Mrs. Xue’s mouth twitched, her face turning green. She wished she could just cover her ears.

Lin Fan flinched, pretending he hadn’t heard her. He pushed the long box on the table toward them. "...What do you two make of this red sandalwood box?"

"It’s just a box for medicine. So what if it’s made of expensive material? What’s so special about it?" Mrs. Xue rolled her eyes and shook her head dismissively.

Yuan Youwei gasped, her playful mood vanishing as a thought struck her. "You didn’t tamper with the prescriptions, did you?" she murmured.

"The prescriptions are correct. I didn’t tamper with anything." Lin Fan tapped his fingers on the box’s lid, a cold smirk playing on his lips. "However, preserving the medicinal efficacy for a long time requires a special container for storage."

He lowered his gaze to the exquisitely carved patterns on the lid, a sharp gleam flashing deep within his eyes. He had already given the nine pharmaceutical giants their chance. How they chose to act was their problem. If they came to him seeking cooperation, there would be no issues. But if they wanted a freebie? Lin Fan didn't mind teaching them a harsh lesson in four days and making them pay a much steeper price!

"Take this White Dragon Grass, for instance. The reason it has retained its medicinal value is largely thanks to this specially made red sandalwood box."

His quiet explanation wasn't loud, but to Yuan Youwei and Mrs. Xue, it was like a clap of thunder. They exchanged shocked glances. Who would have thought that Lin Fan's trump card was merely the medicine box itself? It had to be said, this move was both brilliant and ruthless. It was impossible to guard against!

"Hmph, that's a clever plan you've got, but Mr. Wang Sr. is no pushover. You think he won't notice?" Mrs. Xue asked skeptically, recovering from her shock.

"I'm afraid they never even considered it." Before Lin Fan could speak, Yuan Youwei picked up her buzzing phone. She glanced at the screen, then shook her head with a wry smile. "The Medical Association just released an announcement. The nine major pharmaceutical companies in Haicheng have simultaneously declared the successful development of their new drug and have already obtained the registration patent from the Association!"

Her red lips curled into a smile as she stared deeply at Lin Fan, her heart filled with emotion. "Moreover, each company is preparing to hold a new drug launch at the pharmaceutical purchasing conference four days from now!"

"So... you deliberately gave the prescriptions to Mr. Wang Sr. and the others?" Finishing her sentence with a grin, Yuan Youwei was absolutely ecstatic, secretly celebrating that she'd found a real treasure.

To think that you, Su Mengqing, would scorn such a man and throw him out! Humph. Your loss is my gain, Yuan Youwei!

"I didn't originally plan to be so ruthless," Lin Fan said calmly, putting away the red sandalwood box. "But I changed my mind when they covered for the Wang family and told blatant lies."

"Then... what will happen at the new drug launch in four days when those nine companies discover something is wrong with their new drug?" Mrs. Xue asked tentatively, her voice filled with apprehension.

"Without my unique medicinal box for preservation, the drug's efficacy will vanish within a day." Lin Fan looked toward the door of the private room and added nonchalantly, "A few days after that, a potent medicine becomes a potent poison."

Hearing this, Mrs. Xue trembled and drew a sharp, cold breath.

Yuan Youwei’s eyes lit up, and she couldn’t help but laugh.

"You’re so wicked... but I like it," she chuckled.

"I’m not as wicked as they are." Lin Fan stood up and walked toward Yuan Tao, who was just arriving at the door. "When the time comes, they’ll be selling medicine, and I’ll be selling medicine boxes... and no one will be able to refuse!"

Chapter 63, Grow bigger and stronger!

"Second Sister, Brother Fan, what brings you here?" Yuan Tao asked, scratching his messy hair. His eyes, rimmed with dark circles, betrayed his confusion.

He hadn’t been having an easy time these past few days. Ever since he sold out his own father, Yuan Ruohai, in the name of justice, his family hadn’t said much to his face, but they’d given him plenty of trouble behind his back. Even his mother had been so furious that she’d beaten him and chased him out of the house.

Yuan Tao didn’t really care. He hardly ever went home anyway. This was just a good opportunity to continue his carefree life outside, partying day and night.

"I need your help with something," Lin Fan said with a nod. He had Yuan Tao summon the deputy factory manager, the man who actually ran the place, and briefly explained his request.

"Mr. Lin, your request is simple enough. Making a few medicine boxes presents no difficulty," the deputy factory manager, a portly, pale-faced old man, said before his expression grew troubled.

"What my Brother Fan says is what I say. Can’t our factory even handle a few damn boxes?" Yuan Tao’s face darkened as he complained loudly.

"Young Master Yuan, Mr. Lin probably intends to make a large batch in the future," the deputy factory manager said with a wry smile, shaking his head. "Our factory isn’t doing well financially. We can’t risk opening a new production line. Besides, they require high-grade wood, and then there’s the matter of cost..."

"If you hadn’t mentioned it, I would’ve forgotten... What about the piles of Huanghuali rosewood and small-leaf red sandalwood my dad secretly acquired? They’re still in the warehouse, right?" Yuan Tao slapped his forehead. "Oh, and there are also two logs of Golden-silk Nanmu!"

At his words, Lin Fan couldn’t help but look intrigued. Yuan Youwei and Mrs. Xue, who were standing nearby, were also surprised.

This woodworking factory was merely an ancillary business of the Yuandao Group, intended as a training ground for the family’s younger generation. As long as it didn’t go bankrupt, the demands on its performance weren’t strict.

Who would have thought that Yuan Ruohai had a trick up his sleeve, secretly collecting so many fine materials? If there was a significant quantity of this high-grade timber, its value alone might exceed that of the entire factory!

"Young Master Yuan, those are the Second Master’s prized possessions! They absolutely cannot be touched!" The deputy manager’s face turned green as he waved his hands frantically, trying to dissuade him.

"Perhaps I can sell medicine boxes made from high-grade wood for a sky-high price and make this factory flourish," Lin Fan said, glancing at the deputy manager before turning to nod at Yuan Tao. "First, take me to see the wood. If the quality satisfies me, I don’t mind lending you a hand."

"Mr. Lin, you must be joking. Our factory doesn’t have any special features. How could we possibly strike it rich just by producing some medicine boxes?"

Hearing this, Yuan Tao’s eyes lit up, but before he could speak, the deputy manager shot him a subtle look and shook his head, pre-empting him. "Using high-grade wood for medicine boxes is a good idea, but whether they’ll even sell is a big question... Besides, how high could a ’sky-high price’ really be?"

"The first batch will sell for at least one hundred million per box, and it will go to the highest bidder," Lin Fan stated calmly, raising a finger and wagging it slightly. "Once this is done, your factory’s orders for wooden medicine boxes will be in such high demand you won’t be able to keep up."

The room fell silent. Even Yuan Youwei and Mrs. Xue, who had been mentally prepared, were quite astonished.

So Lin Fan wasn’t joking. Was he really planning to earn four billion from the nine major pharmaceutical companies just by selling medicine boxes?

"Brother Fan, that’s... a bit of an exaggeration, don’t you think?" Yuan Tao said after a pause, rubbing his cheeks and letting out a dry, skeptical laugh.

"Mr. Lin, please stop joking. I have work to do, so if you’ll excuse yourselves," the deputy manager said, his face darkening and his tone becoming brusque. He assumed Lin Fan was just spouting nonsense. It was only out of respect for Yuan Tao and Yuan Youwei that he didn’t lose his temper on the spot.

"This card has over eight hundred million in it. That should be enough to cover any potential losses for the woodworking factory," Lin Fan said after a moment of silence, pulling out a bank card. "If I fail, I'll compensate you tenfold for your losses."

The deputy factory manager was stunned into silence, his gaze flicking toward Yuan Tao. This was getting out of hand. Over eight hundred million in cash? The man was just making it up as he went along!

Unexpectedly, Yuan Tao, his face filled with envy, spoke up in Lin Fan's defense. "Old Zhou, Brother Fan isn't bragging. He really has that much money in his account..."

"That's right. I, Yuan Youwei, am also willing to vouch for Lin Fan. If he fails, I will compensate for all the losses," Yuan Youwei added with a smile.

Taking a sharp breath, the deputy factory manager, Old Zhou, was completely dumbfounded. "Alright then... You said it yourselves. When the Second Master returns, don't you go blaming me." As unbelievable as it was, what reason would people of Yuan Tao and Yuan Youwei's status have to cover for Lin Fan's lies?

Staring at the bank card in Lin Fan's hand, Old Zhou swallowed hard before finally gritting his teeth and nodding. He immediately led the group out of the factory canteen and into a large warehouse at the back.

"Excellent. I'll take all of this timber," Lin Fan said with a satisfied nod after stepping inside and running his hand over the piles of high-grade wood. "Additionally, after the boxes are made, they will require further processing. Here are the specific instructions."

Lin Fan requested a pen and paper, quickly scribbled down a set of procedures, and handed the sheet to Yuan Tao.

Pharmacy is a profound science, and storing medicine properly is just as complex. Common methods were merely sealed containers or traditional wax seals. However, a miraculous medicine like the Divine Dragon Detox Powder, with its heaven-defying efficacy, required extremely stringent preservation methods. The secret technique for processing these medicine boxes was, by itself, an unparalleled skill that countless Pharmacists could only dream of obtaining.

"Keep this safe, don't let it leak, and supervise the process personally," Lin Fan instructed solemnly, seeing Yuan Tao's baffled expression as he clutched the paper, reading it over and over. He had a decent impression of the young man, and entrusting him with this responsibility was also a way to let him share in the glory.

"Okay! Brother Fan, don't worry, I swear I'll get it done! Even if it's not for you and Second Sister, I have to do this for myself and earn some respect!" For some reason, Yuan Tao felt deeply moved, and his nose began to tingle.

Everyone in his family thought he was just a good-for-nothing playboy living off their wealth. But who could truly understand the sorrow in my heart? If I can use Lin Fan’s help to revitalize the factory and make it thrive, who in the Yuan family, or even all of Haicheng, will dare to look down on me, Yuan Tao, ever again?!

"Work hard. I trust Lin Fan won’t let you down. He always does what he says he will," Yuan Youwei said with an encouraging smile.

"Work my ass off? I’d like to see who the hell dares touch my timber!"

Before Yuan Tao could respond, a furious bellow erupted from outside the warehouse.

Lin Fan frowned silently and turned toward the sound, his expression shifting. Three figures were striding hastily through the doorway. Besides Yuan Ruohai, whom he hadn’t seen in several days, there was a familiar face.

Su Guang! It was Su Mengqing’s degenerate gambler of a father, who had been missing for four years!

As his gaze swept past the two men, it landed on a young foreign man with a white cloth wrapped around his head. Lin Fan’s body shook, and his pupils contracted almost imperceptibly.

After seven long years, he never imagined he would see this man again.

It was the youngest son of the old emperor of Sha Country.

Abdullah Bulger.

Chapter 64, brother-in-law, save me!

"Dad, you... weren’t you sent overseas to the south? How dare you sneak back!"

Yuan Tao stood there in a daze. His expression changed drastically as he stepped forward to question the dust-covered Yuan Ruohai. "Uncle, are you disregarding Grandfather’s orders?"

Yuan Youwei also came to her senses, and her expression turned cold. Mrs. Xue, standing to the side, remained silent, but a hint of wariness appeared in her eyes.

He had only left Haicheng a few days ago, yet now he had returned. Could it be... he’s planning to join forces with Yuan Ruoshan to challenge Lin Fan for control of Yuandao Pharmaceuticals?

"Hmph, of course I wouldn't dare disobey the old man's orders." Yuan Ruohai's face was grim. He turned and cursed at the dumbfounded deputy factory manager, "Old Zhou! Who the hell gave you the authority to bring outsiders here to mess with my lumber?"

"This... this... It was only after Young Master Yuan and Miss Youwei vouched for him that I dared to bring Mr. Lin over..." Old Zhou offered a forced, subservient laugh, looking desperately at Yuan Tao and Yuan Youwei for support.

"Uncle, don't take your anger out on him," Yuan Youwei said, her expression icy as she pulled Yuan Tao over to her side. "These materials were purchased in the name of the woodworking factory, so of course the factory can do with them as it sees fit! Taozi is the factory manager personally appointed by Grandfather. He is willing to cooperate with Lin Fan, and you have no right to stop him!"

"Is that so? I'm still Taozi's father. Does he dare to disobey me?" Yuan Ruohai laughed in anger, glaring fiercely at his son.

"Dad, my sister is right. I... I am the factory manager! I get the final say on how to handle these materials!" Yuan Tao flinched but then mustered his courage and met Yuan Ruohai's glare.

"Good! Very good! I've raised a fine son, indeed!" Yuan Ruohai's face turned beet red, and he looked like he might faint from rage. He had just sworn to Stubborn Su Gang and Xiao Jie that he could handle the Yuan family. And now, he couldn't even protect a batch of lumber?

"You ungrateful brat! Have you decided to side with a troublemaker like Lin Fan and go against your own father?" Yuan Ruohai shouted. He then turned and pointed at Lin Fan, his eyes red with fury. If it weren't for this bastard, would I have ended up in this predicament? He was filled with the urge to strangle Lin Fan to death!

"Second Master, don't waste your breath on them. I'll help you vent this anger!" At that moment, Stubborn Su Gang, who had been eyeing Lin Fan all this time, stepped forward, his face just as livid. "It's you, you little turd, who's nearly caused my Su Family to collapse! Hmph, today I'm going to teach you a severe lesson!"

"Damn it, where's my knife? Where did my knife go?" He fumbled at his lower back a few times, then his eyes landed on a few bricks in the corner. He immediately went and picked one up.

"Lin Fan! I was kind to you and your mother back then, is this how you repay me?" Stubborn Su Gang lifted the brick and puffed out his skinny chest, trying his best to look menacing.

"You have the nerve to bring that up?" Lin Fan found it incredibly amusing, though his eyes grew colder. "Did you forget the time you harassed my mom and I kicked you out the

door? You snuck back here to deceive Su Mengqing and the others again, didn't you? Planning to embezzle funds and run off again?"

"You... you... you shut your mouth!" Stubborn Su Gang's face turned bright red, so embarrassed he wished he could find a hole to crawl into.

When Lin Suxin first arrived in Haicheng, he had been completely captivated by her beauty, even considering a divorce from Zhang Meili. The attempt, however, only brought him disgrace. Not only did he fail to charm Lin Suxin, but he also became the laughingstock of the Su family. Even Mr. Su Sr., disappointed in his son's pathetic efforts, stripped him of his position as vice president of the company. From then on, Stubborn Su Gang became even more addicted to gambling, placing larger and larger bets.

It was as if the heavens were playing a cruel joke on him. Despite a name that was supposed to be lucky, he seemed cursed to lose every gamble, wiping out everything he had. Eventually, hounded by loan sharks, he knew there was no turning back. He decisively absconded with company funds, leaving his family to deal with the mess and turning a deaf ear to their plight. Even when he later learned that his father had died of anger, Stubborn Su Gang merely smoked a sullen cigarette in some overseas casino and brooded for a moment. He then excitedly returned to the gambling table to take on all comers.

"Lin Fan! Open your damn eyes and look! Do you know who this is?"

Lin Fan saw through his little trick in an instant. Feeling a pang of insecurity, Stubborn Su Gang held up the brick while pulling Xiao Jie over. "This gentleman here is none other than the esteemed Prince of Sha Country! And I, Stubborn Su Gang, am his personal advisor from Xia Country! I struck out on my own back in the day and made something of myself! It had nothing to do with running off with money!"

As soon as he said this, everyone fell silent.

Yuan Youwei and Mrs. Xue exchanged glances, barely suppressing their snickers. Yuan Tao and Old Zhou just stared, looking at Stubborn Su Gang and Xiao Jie as if they were fools. The young foreigner before them was dressed in a ratty T-shirt and jeans, with an unhealthy, sallow complexion. The only thing about him that was remotely princely was, perhaps, the old, yellowed white cloth wrapped around his head.

"What are you laughing at? What's so damn funny? You people are just too blind to recognize greatness!"

Seeing their reactions, Stubborn Su Gang's face flushed red again. His lack of confidence was obvious, and he didn't dare say anything more.

Yuan Ruohai's face was as foul as if he'd swallowed a fly. He stepped up to stand by Xiao Jie's side. "Yuan Youwei, Taozi, let me tell you the truth. I invited the Prince here to

Haicheng to bring a tremendous fortune to the Yuan family! The old man will surely not blame me once he knows. Everything I've done is for the good of the entire Yuan family!"

Seeing that the crowd clearly didn't believe him and was now laughing even harder, Yuan Ruohai's face burned with humiliation. He couldn't help but suddenly raise his voice. "What are you all standing around for? Prostrate yourselves before the Prince at once! And you, Lin Fan, how dare you keep staring at the Prince?"

He pointed at Lin Fan and shouted sternly, "Kneel! If the Prince is displeased and feels insulted, it will become a serious diplomatic incident! The entire city of Haicheng will be implicated, not just you! Even ten of you wouldn't be enough to make amends!"

His commanding voice echoed through the workshop.

Yuan Youwei and Mrs. Xue's laughter subsided, replaced by expressions of surprise. Yuan Tao and Old Zhou also hurriedly averted their gazes, looking at each other with doubt. No one there was a fool. For Yuan Ruohai to be so confident, there had to be a reason. Could this young man truly be the Prince of Sha Country, come all this way?

"Hmph, scared now, are you?" Stubborn Su Gang quietly breathed a sigh of relief and let the brick clatter to the ground. This brick really isn't the best weapon. That kick Lin Fan gave me back in the day was incredibly powerful! Seeing that everyone was stunned into silence by his bluff, he straightened his back again, feeling triumphant.

"Lin Fan! Hurry up and kneel to apologize! If you're too late, not even we will be able to withstand the Prince's wrath!" Stubborn Su Gang swept his gaze over the crowd, his eyes finally landing on Lin Fan as he shouted.

The next moment, Xiao Jie, who had been staring intently at Lin Fan, suddenly cried out, "Ah! You... You're..."

"I'm not. My name is Lin Fan," Lin Fan interrupted with a grave voice and a complicated expression before Xiao Jie could finish.

Xiao Jie froze in confusion for a second, then clenched his teeth.

THUMP!

He dropped straight to his knees before Lin Fan and yelled desperately, "Brother-in-law, save me! Brother-in-law, you have to save me! I'm being hunted! I can't survive like this!"

Chapter 65, Difficult Brothers

What the hell! What was going on?

The man who was supposed to be the Prince of Sha Country was actually kneeling before Lin Fan? And he was calling him "brother-in-law" over and over, begging for his life!

The sudden turn of events bewildered everyone.

Yuan Tao and Old Zhou's eyes widened, their jaws nearly dropping to the floor in shock.

Yuan Youwei and Mrs. Xue's expressions changed slightly as they both turned to look at Lin Fan.

I have to admit, this guy hides his secrets deep... He even has a foreign brother-in-law?

Yuan Youwei bit her red lip, a stifling sensation tightening in her chest.

Could it be that Lin Fan has been married twice? And here I was thinking he was an honest man. Hmph. On the surface, he seems decent, but in reality, he's just a huge playboy!

"Your Highness, you... you must have the wrong person! Please, get up quickly!"

Stubborn Su Gang and Yuan Ruohai, who were still dazed, both shuddered, their faces turning green. After all their careful planning, who could have possibly predicted that Xiao Jie already knew Lin Fan? And it seemed they were relatives!

Damn it, doesn't this just hand all the leverage to Lin Fan? How can we possibly continue with the plan... unless we can shut him up for good!

The two exchanged a look before rushing forward. They scrambled to pull Xiao Jie to his feet.

However, Xiao Jie violently shrugged them off. Instead, he scrambled over to Lin Fan's feet and clung desperately to his pant leg.

"Brother-in-law, you're the only one who can save me! For us to meet in this backwater place, it must be fate ordained by the heavens!"

Lin Fan's eye twitched. "I told you, you have the wrong person. My name is Lin Fan." He took a step back to get away from Xiao Jie.

"No, it can't be! I absolutely have the right person!" Xiao Jie persisted, crawling to Lin Fan's feet once more. He was sobbing, snot and tears streaming down his face, looking utterly wronged and terrified.

"Brother-in-law, that melancholic look in your eyes, that rugged stubble, and that deep, magnetic voice of yours... they all give you away!"

A shiver ran down Lin Fan’s spine, his scalp tingling from the relentless flattery. Unable to stand it any longer, he switched to the language of Sha Country, frowning as he rebuked Xiao Jie in a low voice, "Shut up! Stop calling me brother-in-law. Your sister Adele and I are innocent; absolutely nothing happened between us!"

Hearing this, Xiao Jie’s eyes lit up. "Right, right, I won’t expose your current identity. Are you on another secret mission?"

He quickly wiped away his tears, brushed himself off, and scrambled to his feet. He also switched to the Sha Country language, explaining rapidly in a hushed tone.

"My older brother sided with our Second Uncle Emperor and colluded with an evil organization called the Holy Poison Sect. They drugged my father and imprisoned him.

"My sister was studying abroad, and now she’s missing... They captured me and took me to a Prison Island in Domatra. I barely escaped with my life!

"They’ve been hunting me ever since. You’re my only hope of survival... I mean... Lin Fan, for my sister’s sake, please, save me!"

After rushing through his explanation in one breath, Xiao Jie fell silent, just staring at Lin Fan with pleading eyes.

Lin Fan was silent for a moment before nodding. "Alright. For your sister’s sake, you can stay with me. I’ll make sure you stay alive."

So the Holy Poison Sect has already extended its reach all the way to Sha Country? Keeping Xiao Jie around could be a good way to lure them out and investigate what happened seven years ago.

"As for anything else, I can’t help you," Lin Fan added. "Remember, I’m Lin Fan now. Don’t let it slip."

"I get it, I get it! As long as I’m safe for now, I’ll do whatever you say, brother-in-law!" Xiao Jie was flushed with excitement, nodding his head like a chicken pecking at rice. He was completely oblivious to the fact that everyone else was utterly dumbfounded.

"Miss, what foreign language are they speaking? I can’t understand a single word," Mrs. Xue whispered to Yuan Youwei, looking quite astonished.

"It must be the language of Sha Country... I can’t understand it either, though I could catch a few words." Yuan Youwei shook her head slowly, her expression complex. She had excelled while studying abroad and was proficient in two or three less common languages herself, but her skills paled in comparison to Lin Fan’s fluency in the Sha Country tongue.

Gazing at the man before her, Yuan Youwei felt like she understood him less and less. He was supposedly so broke he couldn't even afford his clinic's rent. Yet, the extraordinary things about him seemed to be endless!

"Ahem, Your Highness, you've definitely mistaken him for someone else. Please don't associate too closely with someone like him, to avoid being deceived!"

Yuan Ruohai and Stubborn Su Gang exchanged another dumbfounded look. Neither of them understood a word of the gibberish Lin Fan and Xiao Jie had spoken. But judging by their reactions, it looked for all the world like a tearful reunion of long-lost compatriots!

Shock and suspicion churned within them, and they grew terrified that Lin Fan would expose their scheme. Yuan Ruohai's heart leaped into his throat. He had no choice but to bite the bullet and try to persuade Xiao Jie.

Stubborn Su Gang shot Lin Fan a fierce, warning glare.

"My apologies, I was indeed mistaken. His name is Lin Fan, not the person I knew," Xiao Jie said the next moment, nodding happily as his expression relaxed.

This made Yuan Ruohai and Stubborn Su Gang secretly breathe a sigh of relief.

But before they could even celebrate, Xiao Jie's tone shifted as he pointed at Lin Fan. "I've decided to appoint Lin Fan as my Chief Security Advisor!"

Yuan Ruohai was stunned. What the hell is he trying to pull now?

Stubborn Su Gang, utterly dumbfounded, shook his head frantically. "No! Absolutely not!"

"Why not?" Lin Fan glanced at him and retorted. "Didn't you say you work for the Prince? Do you dare make decisions for your boss?"

"This... this... Anyway, the answer is no!" Stubborn Su Gang's face flushed red, so flustered he nearly choked.

I'm the one who brought him here! How can I let Lin Fan piggyback on this? Besides, it's still not clear if he and Xiao Jie actually know each other. What if Lin Fan exposes us at a critical moment? We'd be finished!

Just then, Yuan Tao could no longer hold back. "Dad, what on earth are you doing?" he asked skeptically. "This guy looks like a homeless bum. How could he possibly be the Prince of Sha Country?"

Yuan Youwei, Mrs. Xue, and Old Zhou all turned to look at Yuan Ruohai.

Yuan Ruohai’s face darkened. "You don’t know anything," he snapped. "His Highness’s private plane crashed at sea. He was the sole survivor, and that’s how we met."

He wasn’t panicked in the least, having clearly anticipated this line of questioning. Following a look from Yuan Ruohai, Stubborn Su Gang took out his phone and pulled up a photo from his gallery.

"Open your damn eyes and look closely! This is a photo from seven years ago, during the Xia Country military parade. Members of the Sha Country Royal Family were there to observe!"

On the screen was a long-distance photo taken from a city tower. A group of men and women from Sha Country, dressed in white robes with white headscarves, were looking down and admiring the military formations below.

"See that?" Stubborn Su Gang pointed to one of the men in the photo with a smug expression as everyone gathered around to look. "This is His Highness the Prince seven years ago. He looks exactly the same today!"

This was the key piece of evidence in their plan, and the part Su Gang was most proud of. Even Yuan Ruohai had slapped his thigh and cheered when he first heard about it. After all, Stubborn Su Gang had personally gone to the Imperial Capital to watch the ceremony seven years prior. He had a very strong impression of those obscenely wealthy members of the Sha Country Royal Family. So, when he met Xiao Jie, a quick comparison with the photo on his phone revealed a perfect match. This was what made their whole scam plausible.

"Holy crap, he really does look identical! Dad, you’ve pulled off something amazing this time!" Yuan Tao exclaimed, his eyes wide.

"Second Master is incredible! To think you could even get the Prince of Sha Country to come. Your connections are out of this world!" Old Zhou added, equally impressed.

Yuan Youwei and Mrs. Xue said nothing, but the way they looked at Yuan Ruohai had completely changed. A photo like that would be difficult to fake. After all, a quick search online would probably pull up similar images.

"Hmph. So you finally believe me now?" Seeing their reactions, Stubborn Su Gang puffed out his chest, his confidence restored.

He noticed Lin Fan was also staring intently at the photo, seemingly lost in thought, and was about to make a sarcastic remark. But when he followed Lin Fan’s line of sight, his heart suddenly lurched.

In the photo, standing not far behind the Prince of Sha Country, was an inconspicuous but upright figure. He had a crew cut and wore a black suit, with large sunglasses covering half his face.

Isn’t that... Damn it... he looks a little bit like Lin Fan?

Chapter 66. Each harboring their own schemes

"Have you had your fill of staring? This man is the genuine Prince of Sha Country!"

Stubborn Su Gang suppressed the suspicion in his heart and quickly put his phone away. Yet, he couldn’t help but steal a few more glances at Lin Fan.

Perhaps I’m just overthinking this? Who else could appear at such a major state event if not someone of immense status? Not to mention, that man was clearly a personal bodyguard for a member of the Sha Country Royal Family. Lin Fan? What qualifications could he possibly have for a job like that!

"Yuan Youwei, Taozi, surely you believe me now? My return this time is genuinely for the good of the Yuan family."

Seeing that everyone was stunned, their expressions turning a little unnatural, Yuan Ruohai relaxed and softened his tone. "Our Yuan family may be known as the most powerful family in Haicheng, but we’ve hit a bottleneck. If we want to break out of the Southwest provinces and stand on equal footing with those super-families in the Imperial Capital, we need a massive opportunity!"

He glanced at the silent Yuan Youwei and let out a humorless chuckle. "Youwei, I know you’re still worried that I, your dear second uncle, will snatch your position as the heir. But you can rest easy this time. My sights are set on Sha Country. Those people truly own mines—they’re disgustingly rich!"

At these words, everyone’s expression shifted.

Just imagine, if the Yuan family managed to build a connection with the Sha Country Royal Family... wouldn’t any future collaboration make them an absolute fortune?

Yuan Youwei bit her red lip and suddenly turned to Lin Fan. "Lin Fan, you’re the only one I trust. Tell me... is he really the Prince of Sha Country?"

"...He did mistake me for someone else, but his identity as a prince is real," Lin Fan admitted after a moment of silence.

He didn’t want to reveal his own identity, but he didn’t want to lie to Yuan Youwei either. The photograph had dredged up memories of the past.

Seven years ago, Lin Fan was ordered to return to the Imperial Capital from the frontline in the Northern Territory to participate in a military parade. Due to the large number of foreign dignitaries in attendance, he was temporarily assigned to be the Captain of the Guard for a member of the Sha Country Royal Family. It was during this time that he met Xiao Jie and his sister, Abdullah Adele, eventually becoming close friends with Adele.

But fate is a cruel mistress. Shortly after the ceremony, a heaven-shattering catastrophe struck. The beasts from the Ying family framed his mother, Lin Suxin, forcing her to fake her death to escape. As for Lin Fan himself, he was poisoned by a mysterious individual with the Seven-Core Deadly Lotus. From then on, he changed his name and hid his identity, vanishing from the world...

The tides of time had washed over his memories, leaving them blurred. Looking at the photo of his seven-year-younger self, a heavy weight settled in his heart, and for a moment, he felt like he was looking at a complete stranger.

That’s right. I might as well consider the person I once was to have died seven years ago.

Seeing Lin Fan momentarily lost in a daze before falling silent, Yuan Youwei gritted her teeth and nodded. "Alright. You say he’s real, so I’ll believe you."

"Miss, this is a very serious matter. We still have to—" Mrs. Xue started to say, but a look from Yuan Youwei silenced her.

"Now you have nothing left to say, do you? Lin Fan is constantly at odds with us, yet even he has to admit the Prince’s identity is real!"

Yuan Ruohai and Stubborn Su Gang exchanged a surprised glance.

Why would Lin Fan say that? Well, who cares? As long as Xiao Jie’s identity as a prince is confirmed, everything else will fall into place!

"I’m not interested in this batch of lumber anymore. You can do whatever you want with it," Yuan Ruohai said, waving his hand magnanimously toward the pile of high-quality wood in the warehouse. He was done butting heads with Lin Fan. The pressing matter was to get home and convince the old man to cough up the money!

Just then, Stubborn Su Gang checked his phone, his face lighting up with excitement. "Your Highness, my family has already booked a table at the Hilton International Hotel. They’re inviting us to join them for dinner!"

Yuan Ruohai was taken aback for a second. After his expression flickered through several changes, he nodded in agreement. "Old Su, you take His Highness there. I need to head home."

Turning his head, he gave Yuan Youwei and her group a humorless smile. "Youwei, Taozi, you're both coming back with me. The old man will need you as witnesses."

"Great! Dad, you've rendered a great service this time. Grandpa will definitely let you stay now!" Yuan Tao said, a wave of relief washing over him.

"What about you? Are you coming back with us?" Yuan Youwei didn't answer her brother, instead looking hopefully at Lin Fan.

The funeral is over, so he has no reason to stay at the Yuan residence anymore. What excuse can I find to keep spending time with this jerk?

"I'm the Prince's Chief Security Advisor. I have to stay by his side." Meeting her beautiful eyes, which were filled with silent reproach and sorrow, Lin Fan steeled his heart and looked away.

I can't just abandon Xiao Jie to please Yuan Youwei, can I?

"No way! Absolutely not! Who the hell do you think you are, Lin Fan? How dare you show your face to Mengqing and the others!"

Before the crestfallen Yuan Youwei could even speak, it was Stubborn Su Gang who exploded, pointing at Lin Fan and furiously berating him, spittle flying.

"If Lin Fan isn't going, then I'm not going either."

Lin Fan didn't reply, simply glancing at Xiao Jie. The boy stiffened, instantly understood, and shook his head vehemently at Stubborn Su Gang.

"But... but... Your Highness, Lin Fan is no good! It's better not to keep him around!" Stubborn Su Gang panicked, desperately trying to signal Xiao Jie with his eyes. However, the boy's face was set with determination. He staunchly refused to yield, making him seem even closer to Lin Fan.

So, they really do know each other! That whole string of gibberish earlier must have been them reaching some kind of agreement! On the surface, they pretended to have mistaken each other and acted like strangers, but it was all part of a larger scheme!

At this, Stubborn Su Gang's and Yuan Ruohai's hearts sank, their faces twisting as if they'd just swallowed a fly.

No wonder Lin Fan acted so out of character to protect Xiao Jie. He was covering for an old acquaintance! This is a real pain... We both know Xiao Jie's true identity. But if we anger Lin Fan and he exposes everything on the spot, it's all over!

The two men secretly sucked in a sharp breath and exchanged a quick look.

There's no other way. For the sake of the money, we'll just have to hold our noses and accept Lin Fan's absurd claim of being the Chief Security Advisor!

"Fine, then. Since His Highness insists, I have nothing more to say," Stubborn Su Gang finally agreed with a sullen nod.

With that, the group left the lumber warehouse and parted ways at the wood mill's entrance. Yuan Ruohai got into Yuan Tao's car with Yuan Youwei, and they drove toward the Yuan family estate. This left Stubborn Su Gang to lead Xiao Jie and Lin Fan toward the bus stop across the street.

"...This is how you treat His Highness?" Lin Fan asked, completely fed up. He looked speechlessly at Stubborn Su Gang, whose ears were beet-red as he stood by the bus stop.

"Hmph, His Highness is just temporarily down on his luck. What's the big deal?" Stubborn Su Gang grumbled, before his eyes suddenly lit up. "Your Highness, the bus is here!"

He called out to Xiao Jie with a beaming smile, but then he seemed to remember something. His expression shifted as he glared at Lin Fan. "You were the one who insisted on shamelessly tagging along. So you can be the one to pay the six-yuan bus fare!"

"Are you so broke you've gone mad? You can't even afford a bus ticket?" Lin Fan's mouth twitched as he boarded the bus and scanned his phone to pay the fare.

He couldn't care less about what happened to Stubborn Su Gang. However, it seemed the man didn't actually know Xiao Jie's true identity and was just treating him as a look-alike. Lin Fan's interest was piqued.

I'm curious to see how Stubborn Su Gang will torment Su Mengqing and her family this time. Letting them tear each other apart like a pack of dogs... Now that would be a satisfying spectacle!

Chapter 67: Don't even think about taking advantage of my Su family's prestige!

Dusk settled and the lights were just beginning to twinkle in the resplendent Hilton International Hotel.

In a private room on the second floor, Su Mengqing's group of four sat waiting with excited yet tense anticipation.

"Sis, do you think when Dad comes and sees us like this, he'll immediately go and settle the score with Lin Fan and the Wang family?" Su Gang asked from his wheelchair, his body wrapped in thick white bandages. He looked just like a large mummy fresh out of its sarcophagus, his bloodshot eyes betraying a twisted sense of pleasure.

"Of course. Dad has really made a name for himself now. He's working with the Prince of Sha Country, so no one in Haicheng dares to look down on him!" Zhang Meili's fat face, caked with makeup, beamed with pride.

Her skin was thick, so even after being whipped a few times at the Wang family estate that morning, she was largely unharmed. In contrast, Su Mengqing and Yang Tingting, seated across the table, both appeared pale and still looked ill.

"Director Su, Lin Fan thinks he can do whatever he wants to us just because he has the Yuan family's backing. If he knew our Su Family now has connections with the Prince of Sha Country, wouldn't his legs give out from fear?" Yang Tingting said, her face contorted with hate as she sneered through clenched teeth. "We must pay Lin Fan back for this morning's whipping!"

"Not just pay him back. We'll make Lin Fan beg for forgiveness in front of every business tycoon in Haicheng!" Su Mengqing nodded, her eyes filled with venom.

With her father, Stubborn Su Gang, as a stepping stone, what is a mere Haicheng Pharmaceutical Procurement Conference in comparison? Hmph, you won't let Su Pharmaceutical enter? Big deal. We'll just go abroad and open up international market channels in Sha Country! By the time the Su Family makes a fortune, all of you snobs will be crying with regret, scrambling to curry favor when it's already too late!

As this grand vision of being the center of attention filled her mind, Su Mengqing felt her confidence swell. Even the searing pain of the lashes on her back seemed to lessen considerably.

Just then, a knock on the door interrupted her delightful daydream.

The four people in the private room lit up with joy.

"I'll get it! I'll get it!" Su Gang chirped, gleefully wheeling himself to the door and pulling it open. "Dad! I've missed you so much— Lin Fan? What the hell are you doing here!"

Three figures stood outside the door. Leading them was an indifferent-looking Lin Fan.

Su Gang's smile froze, his face twisting in rage.

"Who are you calling 'Dad'? I wouldn't have a worthless piece of trash like you as a son," Lin Fan said, glancing past Su Gang and into the private room.

As his eyes met theirs, a dead silence fell over the room.

Zhang Meili and Yang Tingting's smiles stiffened. Su Mengqing's eye twitched and her expression turned grim. I can't believe it. We just saw him this morning, and now we run into him again? And he's clearly here with Dad... what exactly is he planning?

"Lin Fan! How dare you show your face here? There's no place for you!" Zhang Meili's face sank as she pointed at Lin Fan and began to curse.

"This is hilarious. Some people have no shame. The second you hear the Su Family is on the rise again, you come rushing over to flatter us?" Yang Tingting added, crossing her arms and lifting her pointed chin in a continuous scoff.

"Lin Fan, you never cease to amaze me," Su Mengqing stared coldly at him, her gaze a mixture of disgust and arrogance. "I don't know how you convinced my dad to bring you here... but I can still tell you to get lost right now!"

The four of them glared at Lin Fan, all of them convinced that he was shamelessly trying to ride their coattails.

"Prince, they don't welcome us here. Let's go," Lin Fan said, finding the situation amusing and paying them no mind. He turned to the bewildered Xiao Jie, spoke briefly, and immediately walked away.

"Oh, okay. I'll go with you," Xiao Jie nodded. He glanced at Stubborn Su Gang, shrugged, and followed Lin Fan.

"Wait! Please wait, Prince!" Stubborn Su Gang's throat bobbed, his expression turning uglier than if he had swallowed a dead fly.

Clearly, the relationship between Xiao Jie and Lin Fan is far closer and more trusting than my own. If the Prince leaves with Lin Fan, how am I supposed to get money for the Su family?

"Zhang Meili! Are you blind? The Prince personally appointed Lin Fan as his Chief Security Consultant! That means he's his personal bodyguard!" Seeing Lin Fan and the Prince about to reach the end of the corridor, Stubborn Su Gang panicked and viciously slapped Zhang Meili across her plump face!

SMACK!

The crisp sound echoed throughout the private room. Su Gang froze, completely dumbfounded. Su Mengqing and Yang Tingting's eyes went wide, as if they had seen a ghost.

"Su Guang! You dare hit me the moment you get back? Did you grow the heart of a bear and the gall of a leopard?!" Zhang Meili shrieked, stunned. A look of disbelief filled her eyes as she clutched the fresh red handprint on her face, her scream hysterical.

"Hmph, you got off lightly with just a slap! If you dare to disrespect Lin Fan and the Prince again, believe me, I'll divorce you on the spot and kick you out of the Su family!" Stubborn Su Gang roared back fiercely, spitting as he yelled. "And let me say this again, my name is Stubborn Su Gang now!"

Su Gang and Yang Tingting gasped in shock. Su Mengqing was so shocked and furious that her vision went black. The sky is falling! I thought that when Dad came back, he would help me get even, that he would get revenge on Lin Fan for me. But the moment they meet, he's completely on Lin Fan's side? He even dared to slap Mom for Lin Fan!

"Now! All of you, go and apologize to Lin Fan and the Prince, immediately!" Stubborn Su Gang commanded sternly, pointing toward the door.

What? We have to go apologize to Lin Fan? Are you kidding me? Whose side are you on?!

Zhang Meili trembled with rage, her small eyes welling up with tears of grievance and resentment.

Su Mengqing and Su Gang looked at each other but said nothing.

"Fine. So my words mean nothing to you, is that it?" Stubborn Su Gang rolled his eyes and immediately turned to leave, muttering as he went. "Hmph. I came back thinking I could pull the Su family out of this mess... Useless. You're completely unleadable!"

"Dad, don't go! We'll do it! We're willing to apologize to Lin Fan and the Prince!" Su Mengqing couldn't hold back any longer. Gritting her teeth, she hurried after Stubborn Su Gang and clutched his arm.

Su Gang and Yang Tingting glanced at Zhang Meili, then all three followed with their heads hung low.

"That's more like it. What do you have to be so proud of right now? Getting on good terms with the Prince is how you make a fortune. Don't you understand?" Stubborn Su Gang nodded in satisfaction.

He then jogged over to the elevator, blocking Lin Fan and Xiao Jie just as they were about to step inside.

"Lin Fan, Prince, I've already disciplined my family. I guarantee they won't act out of line again!" he said, forcing a smile. He bowed deeply, his tone utterly obsequious.

"..."

Seeing this, Zhang Meili and the others lowered their heads even further. Su Mengqing clenched her jaw, her face burning with shame. An awful feeling churned in her stomach. I thought Lin Fan came here to leech off the Su Family's glory, to fawn and flatter us. Who would have thought it would be Dad deliberately sucking up to Lin Fan! What in the world is going on? I thought the Prince of Sha Country had just arrived from far away. How did Lin Fan manage to get on his good side so quickly?!

Chapter 68, Who allowed you to come to the table?

Just as Su Mengqing and her group were feeling frustrated and bewildered, they saw Lin Fan glance in their direction, nod, and then casually lead Xiao Jie back.

"Ahem! What are you all still standing there gawking for? Apologize! Admit you were wrong!" Stubborn Su Gang shouted at Su Mengqing's group as he trotted up behind Lin Fan and Xiao Jie, not even waiting to get close.

"We... we're sorry! Lin Fan, Prince, we were rude and offensive just now!" Su Mengqing's face turned crimson as she bit down hard. After several seconds of silence, she finally forced the words out through clenched teeth.

"Sorry, we... we were wrong too..." Su Gang and Yang Tingting muttered, so ashamed they nearly buried their heads in their laps.

"Lin... Lin Fan, let's just let bygones be bygones. Please don't be angry, hehe," Zhang Meili stammered, her plump face flushing red. Her smile was even uglier than if she were crying.

She had no other choice. Su Guang... no, Stubborn Su Gang was actually standing his ground now. She was genuinely worried. What if he got angry and decided to divorce her, kicking her to the curb? What if he then went and found some young, beautiful vixen? For now, she could only swallow her pride and obey Stubborn Su Gang's orders. She would just have to wait for a chance to get her revenge on Lin Fan later!

"You may be over it, but I'm not," Lin Fan said, not sparing the four of them so much as a glance as he swaggered straight into the private room.

Xiao Jie and Stubborn Su Gang hurried to follow, leaving the four of them standing rigidly outside the door, staring at each other in stunned disbelief.

What the hell is going on? Why does Lin Fan seem more like the Prince than the actual Prince? Wasn't he supposed to be just a bodyguard? Since when does a bodyguard dare to be more domineering and imposing than his own boss!

"...Never mind. Let's just endure it for now," Su Mengqing said in a low, grim voice after taking a deep breath.

Though looking unwilling, Zhang Meili nodded, as did Su Gang and Yang Tingting.

Back in the private room, Lin Fan had already taken a seat nonchalantly at the head of the dining table, and shockingly, the Prince didn't seem to mind at all. He even chose to sit obediently in the seat just below Lin Fan's!

Stubborn Su Gang stood behind them like a servant, a broad smile plastered on his face as he pointed at Su Mengqing's group. Taking the initiative, Su Mengqing stepped forward and bowed along with the other three. "Prince, I am Su Mengqing. These are my mother, Zhang Meili; my brother, Su Gang; and my personal secretary, Yang Tingting."

"Alright, that's enough of the formalities. Get the menu. The Prince wants to order," Lin Fan raised a hand to stop them, frowning. He noticed Xiao Jie staring at the fruit platter on the table, secretly gulping down saliva. He must be starving. Lin Fan didn't say anything more about it and spoke directly to Su Mengqing's group.

"Lin Fan, you're just a bodyguard! What right do you have to make decisions for the Prince?" Su Mengqing couldn't hold back any longer and glared at him.

"That's right! The Prince hasn't even spoken. What's your hurry? The eunuch is more anxious than the emperor!" Su Gang also erupted in anger, smacking the armrests of his wheelchair so hard they rattled.

Yang Tingting and Zhang Meili didn't speak, but their expressions had also soured considerably.

"Oh? Then I'll leave?" Lin Fan asked nonchalantly, making a show of starting to stand up.

"All of you, shut up!" Stubborn Su Gang exclaimed, hurriedly pressing Lin Fan back into his seat with an apologetic smile. Turning back to his family, his expression hardened. "The Prince has complete trust in Lin Fan! His words represent the Prince's will!"

"...Fine. I'll call the waiter," Su Mengqing clenched her fists, her teeth grinding audibly.

Su Gang and the others didn't dare make another peep, simply lowering their heads to sulk.

A moment later, a waiter arrived with a tablet menu and handed it to Lin Fan.

Lin Fan simply pointed at the screen. "This one... this one... and these two down here."

The four of them watched him with disdain.

Hmph. Some people just have no class. He’s so timid even when ordering food!

"Lin Fan, if you don’t know how to order, just give the menu to the Prince," Su Mengqing said coldly. "I know you’ve rarely been to a high-end place like this. Don’t pretend you know what you’re doing."

"Lin Fan, would it kill you to order a few more? Are you deliberately trying to make the Prince look down on our Su Family?" Su Gang shouted, his eyes wide.

"Exactly! If word gets out that the Su Family’s banquet for the Prince only had four measly dishes, we’d become a laughingstock! Or perhaps you only recognize those four dishes on the menu, Lin Fan?" Zhang Meili chimed in, her tone dripping with sarcasm.

"Mrs. Zhang, I think we shouldn’t give him such a hard time," Yang Tingting said with false sincerity, her eyes glinting with ridicule. "After all, he’s never seen much of the world."

"You’re right. I haven’t seen much of the world," Lin Fan said, a self-deprecating smile on his lips as he ignored the frozen expressions on their faces. "So... let’s cancel those four dishes I just picked. We’ll have one of everything else on the menu instead."

He handed the tablet back to the waitress.

"S-Sir, are you sure?" the attractive young waitress asked, her eyes lighting up with excitement.

"I’m not the one paying, anyway," Lin Fan said with a nod, deliberately glancing toward the Su Family.

"..."

Su Mengqing clenched her teeth but remained silent. Su Gang and the other two looked at each other, their faces turning green. The Su Family was no longer the wealthy powerhouse it once was. Ordering nearly the entire menu would cost over a million!

If we had known, we never would have provoked this country bumpkin. He’s obviously doing this on purpose to bleed us dry! A pang of regret struck them.

With a dark expression, Su Mengqing silently watched as a seemingly endless stream of expensive dishes was brought to the table.

"We can skip the drinks," Lin Fan said, nodding with seeming reluctance as he surveyed the mountain of food.

The corners of their mouths twitched as they silently cursed him for putting on an act.

"Prince, please try this Sweet and Sour Mandarin Fish. It's one of the hotel's signature dishes," Su Mengqing said, standing up. She picked up a piece of fish with her chopsticks, smiling as she went to place it in Xiao Jie's bowl.

SMACK!

A pair of chopsticks suddenly shot out, knocking Su Mengqing's away.

"Lin Fan! Don't you dare push your luck! I've had enough of you!" Su Mengqing shrieked, her breathing rapid as she glared furiously at him.

"I am the Prince's chief security advisor. It's my responsibility to ensure the safety of his meals," Lin Fan stated expressionlessly, gesturing with his chin toward a corner of the room. "Besides the Prince and myself, the five of you are not to sit at this table."

Wh-what? You damn dog, abusing your borrowed power! This is our Su Family's banquet! How dare you... you... you forbid the hosts from sitting at their own table?

At his words, Su Mengqing's face contorted, and she nearly went mad with rage. Unable to contain themselves, Zhang Meili and Yang Tingting shot to their feet. Even Su Gang was so furious his lungs nearly burst; he almost pushed himself up from his wheelchair!

"I... I'm an exception, right? I've been through thick and thin with the Prince, after all!" Stubborn Su Gang said, his expression one of extreme embarrassment as he flashed a fawning smile at Lin Fan.

"If this is too difficult for you, I'll take the Prince and leave right now," Lin Fan said indifferently, shaking his head. "It's just a simple dinner. We can just as easily eat at a roadside stall."

Holy hell! You ordered a million-dollar meal and call it 'simple'? You bastard, you really don't think of the Su Family's money as real money, do you!

Su Mengqing gripped the edge of the tablecloth fiercely, teetering on the verge of losing control. Zhang Meili and the others were so choked with indignation they felt they might explode.

Before the four of them could erupt, Stubborn Su Gang cut them off with a fierce glare. "Fine, fine, it's all for the Prince's safety. We understand. Of course, we understand."

Turning back, his smile was more painful than a grimace. He gritted his teeth, nodded, then voluntarily picked up his bowl and chopsticks and went to squat in the corner.

"..."

Seeing this, Su Mengqing and the other three could only swallow their broken pride. They each picked up their bowls and chopsticks and went to join him, squatting in the corner.

They could only watch with bitter eyes as Lin Fan and Xiao Jie leisurely picked at the lavish feast spread across the table, eating to their hearts' content.

Chapter 69, send money and appoint you to a high office!

"Dad, have you been in Sha Country for the past four years? This Prince... why does he seem so unreliable?" Su Gang asked, his voice a mixture of surprise and doubt as he held his bowl and chopsticks from his wheelchair in the corner of the private room.

Zhang Meili and Yang Tingting both turned to look at Stubborn Su Gang.

"Dad, why is the Prince so close to Lin Fan? You... you haven't been deceived by him, have you?" Su Mengqing asked, her expression souring as she couldn't resist another glance toward the main table.

The man they called a prince was currently eating with incredible enthusiasm. He was practically wolfing down his food! Su Mengqing exchanged a look with Su Gang and Zhang Meili; all three of them were filled with suspicion. Those table manners... he looks like he hasn't eaten in days. What kind of damn prince is this? He's more like a beggar!

"Stop talking nonsense. The Prince's identity is beyond doubt. Don't you even trust me?" Stubborn Su Gang shot back. He swallowed hard and miserably chewed on the white rice in his bowl. Damn you, Lin Fan!

Forcing himself to remain calm, he put on a stern face and shook his head at Su Mengqing and the others. "The Prince was on a trip when his plane crashed into the sea. He was the sole survivor and had to escape on his own. That's when he ran into me and Second Master Yuan."

Stubborn Su Gang explained in a low voice, pulling out his phone to show them a photo. "See this? This is a group photo from seven years ago when the Prince attended a military parade in the Imperial Capital! Would I dare bring him here without proof? If Second Master Yuan hadn't told me that our Su Family's stock price had plummeted and we were in big trouble, I never would have begged the Prince to come to Haicheng. I would have already gone back with him to Sha Country to enjoy a life of wealth and luxury!"

Hearing this, everyone's expression changed. Stubborn Su Gang's story was surprisingly plausible.

"Dad, then what's the deal with Lin Fan and the Prince?" Su Gang and Zhang Meili nodded eagerly. Amid his excitement, he couldn't help but ask again.

"Who knows? Maybe it's because Lin Fan knows a little of the Sha Country language, and it made the Prince feel like he'd met a fellow countryman," Stubborn Su Gang said, rubbing his nose as he grudgingly recounted what had happened at the woodworking shop. Of course, he deliberately omitted the part where Xiao Jie knelt to beg Lin Fan for help.

"Lin Fan can speak the language of Sha Country?" Su Mengqing asked skeptically, her brow deeply furrowed. "Dad, what is this Prince's name? As far as I know, the Sha Country Royal Family is large and has many princes."

As she spoke, she secretly shot a look at Yang Tingting. Understanding the signal, Yang Tingting turned away and pulled out her phone to start searching online.

"Abdullah Bulger. He's a direct descendant of the royal family, not from one of those messy collateral branches!" Stubborn Su Gang declared confidently, a proud look on his face.

"It's true, Director Su!" Just then, Yang Tingting let out a low gasp. She turned around excitedly and handed over her phone. "There really is a direct-line prince in Sha Country named Abdullah Bulger! He's the youngest son of the current old emperor!"

On the screen was a photo from the previous year, showing the old emperor of Sha Country's family attending a national event. In the corner of the picture was a young man in a white robe. He looked exactly like Xiao Jie, the man currently wolfing down food at their table! The black mole on his right cheek was in the exact same spot!

"It... it really is the Prince!" Su Gang grew even more excited, his hands gripping the armrests of his wheelchair.

Zhang Meili's chubby face beamed with joy. "Director Su, we've really latched onto someone powerful this time!"

Yang Tingting shed tears of joy.

"But... why didn't the Prince contact Sha Country first?" Su Mengqing asked, biting her red lip. Amidst the elation, she still held onto a sliver of caution. I can't help it... Dad almost ruined our whole family before. A leopard can't change its spots, so I can't just blindly trust him.

"For security reasons, of course!" Stubborn Su Gang snorted, looking annoyed. "Do you think the Prince's plane crash was an accident? Obviously, someone was trying to harm him!"

He had already prepared his story, so the words flowed smoothly. "His enemies probably think he's dead. If our Su Family puts up the money and manpower to help the Prince return home safely, we'll be his saviors! When the old emperor of Sha Country kicks the bucket, Xiao Jie will be the new emperor, and the Su Family will be hailed as founding supporters. When that time comes, with a single word from him, we could all become high-ranking officials in Sha Country!"

As he finished speaking, the other four were left stunned. They never imagined such a secret plot was at play. If this was true, the Su Family had truly hit the jackpot!

"Dad, just tell us. How much does the Prince need? Our family will cover it all!" Su Gang declared gallantly, his face flushed with excitement. Zhang Meili and Yang Tingting nodded vigorously in agreement.

"Dad, if it's possible, I hope the Prince can help Su Pharmaceutical break into the medical market in Sha Country." Su Mengqing took a deep breath, finally casting aside her last shred of doubt. She grew cheerful and pleaded with Stubborn Su Gang.

"As for the money, the more the better, naturally." Under their four pairs of intense eyes, Stubborn Su Gang secretly gulped. The plan is going unexpectedly smoothly! This is the crucial moment. I have to convince Su Mengqing to cough up a huge sum!

"I already mentioned our pharmaceutical company to the Prince. It's not that he won't help," Stubborn Su Gang said with a dry cough, raising one finger. "But it takes money to grease the wheels over in Sha Country. We can't expect the Prince to pay out of his own pocket, can we?"

"Ten million? Isn't that a little expensive?" Zhang Meili's eyes went dull, clearly feeling the sting.

"You bumpkin! Not ten million, one billion!" Stubborn Su Gang snapped, rolling his eyes.

HISS!

The three gasped, their eyes nearly popping out of their sockets.

Su Mengqing bit her lip hard, her heart sinking. Back in the day, she could have scraped that much money together. But now, even if she sold off Su Pharmaceutical entirely, she wouldn't have that much capital!

"Dad, I don't have that much... Could you please have a word with the Prince and ask him to reduce the amount?" Su Mengqing forced a smile, her tone low and submissive.

"How could I do that? You have no idea how much the Prince is worth! Before this incident, he wouldn't have even glanced at such a paltry sum!" Stubborn Su Gang was ecstatic inside, but on the surface, he shook his head with a stern expression, his tone leaving no room for negotiation.

"Dad, if we hadn't been ruined by Lin Fan, we wouldn't be in a position where we can't come up with the money," Su Gang said with a pained expression. "This is the Su Family's only chance for a comeback. No matter what, you have to help us out!"

"That's right, Old Su," Zhang Meili chimed in with a fawning smile. "Right now, the company accounts have less than six hundred million. Where are we supposed to get the other four hundred million? You can't just stand by and watch us fail, can you?"

"I don't care about that. Do you think this one billion is just for show? Over on Second Master Yuan's side, they might be able to raise tens of billions!" Stubborn Su Gang was about to pass out from happiness, but he fought to keep his lips from grinning. Six hundred million! A full six hundred million! I thought the Su Family was on the verge of collapse, but they still have this much? If I can get my hands on all of it, I could live out the rest of my days in leisure!

"Don't say I never looked out for the Su Family. The one thing Sha Country has no shortage of is oil and gas fields. As long as the Prince is happy, he could give you a few oil wells with a single word, and the Su Family wouldn't have to worry about money for the rest of your lives!"

BOOM!

His words sent a tremor through the four of them, leaving them so shocked they couldn't close their mouths. Our ambitions really were too small. We were only thinking about breaking into Sha Country's medical market. We never dared to dream of their thousands of oil and gas properties!

"Mengqing! Don't hesitate! Listen to your father and support the Prince with everything we have!" Zhang Meili urged, her eyes burning with excitement.

"She's right, Sis! This is a godsend! We've stumbled into some insane luck!" Su Gang was getting anxious, terrified of missing out on this heaven-sent fortune.

"Director Su, if we can really get the mineral rights, we'll be set for life!" Yang Tingting's breath hitched as she added her plea.

"I..."

Under their anxious gazes, Su Mengqing's scalp tingled with indecision. Bet everything we have to support this fallen prince from Sha Country? This is nothing less than a massive gamble!

"Su Mengqing! Your Su Family scammed us out of our life savings, and you have the nerve to come to a fancy hotel for a feast?"

BANG!

The next moment, the door to the private room was violently shoved open, and a group of furious people stormed in.

Su Mengqing looked toward the commotion, her face instantly turning pale. They were all relatives and friends of the Su Family, clearly here to cause trouble over the recent stock market crash.

Chapter 70: Do you need evidence to prove that you like something?

"Su Kun, Su Ji, Su Lan! What do you think you're doing?!" Su Gang and Yang Tingting's faces paled at the sight.

Zhang Meili planted her hands on her hips, putting on a brave front as she yelled at the newcomers, "Security, where's the hotel security? What are you paid for, letting any Tom, Dick, or Harry in!" She cursed at the several hotel security guards behind the crowd, her chubby face clouded with anger.

"Director Su, they said they were your relatives. We really couldn't stop them..." the hotel manager explained awkwardly, having squeezed through the crowd to reach Su Mengqing.

Su Mengqing took a deep breath, her fists clenched tightly. "...Fine, you all can go. I'll handle this." What's fated to happen will happen. There's no escaping it. As long as I remain in Haicheng, I can never avoid this confrontation.

"Su Mengqing! Your family ruined us, and you're just hiding in here, feasting and drinking? Don't you even have an explanation for us?"

The hotel manager left with the security guards.

CLANG!

The private room door slammed shut, leaving only a few dozen people squeezed together, blocking the exit completely.

A middle-aged man immediately stormed forward, his anger palpable as he pointed at Su Mengqing and demanded sharply, "That's right! We went to your company every day, and your house was empty. Later, we found out you've been hiding in the hospital all this time!"

Another woman, caked in makeup with a thick waist, strutted forward, scornfully sweeping her gaze over Su Mengqing's family. "Hmph, keep pretending! Keep faking sick! You're even in a wheelchair, huh? Absolutely shameless!"

"Stop wasting words with them! Pay up! You must compensate us for our stock losses!"

"My family even lost our house! Don't you have a conscience?!"

In no time, more people were shouting, turning the room into a chaotic marketplace.

"That's ridiculous. The stock market always has risks. Why should our family have to compensate you for your losses?" Su Mengqing gritted her teeth, her expression grim.

Before she could continue, Zhang Meili stepped forward, pointing at the crowd. "So according to you, just because you bought the Su Family's stock, you were guaranteed to make a huge profit? When you were all making money before, how come none of you thought to share any of it with our family!"

"My mom's right! Whether you lose money is none of our damn business!" Su Gang found some courage, sticking his neck out and shouting.

"Go on, sue us if you have the guts! Don't think you're right just because there are more of you! Who made you buy the Su Family's stock? It's not like Director Su held a knife to your throats!" Yang Tingting added with a sneer, her sharp chin held high.

"You animals! You're all animals!"

"This is outrageous, truly outrageous!"

"Your family is utterly shameless! If you hadn't led the charge with a massive sell-off to cash out, would we be in this mess?!"

Seeing that the family felt no shame or remorse whatsoever, the crowd grew livid and erupted in furious curses. Many began rolling up their sleeves, ready for a fight.

Over at the dining table, Lin Fan frowned and wiped his mouth with a napkin. "Have you had enough to eat? If so, let's go. This place is about to get messy." He had no intention of getting involved in the Su Family's disaster. These people brought this on themselves. It's a classic case of dog-eat-dog, and they deserve it!

"Yeah, that was great. I'm finally full..." Xiao Jie let out a satisfied burp and nodded. He stood up and glanced hesitantly toward the noisy crowd in the corner. "Should we take Old Su with us? I mean, I only got to be here because of him."

"He probably can’t leave," Lin Fan said, shaking his head. "When he embezzled funds and fled four years ago, he also scammed many Su Family relatives. A lot of those victims are in this room right now."

"Oh, alright then. As long as Old Su doesn’t get beaten to death, I’ll find a chance to repay him later," Xiao Jie shrugged, no longer insisting. He started to follow Lin Fan toward the door.

"You all want compensation? The main culprit who drove you to bankruptcy is right over there!"

In the next moment, Su Mengqing, who was surrounded by the mob, suddenly pointed directly at Lin Fan.

The shouting stopped abruptly. Every eye in the room swiveled to Lin Fan and Xiao Jie.

"Hmph, I’ll tell you the truth! If it wasn’t for this scoundrel Lin Fan holding a grudge and deliberately leaking our Injury Ointment formula, the stock price would never have fallen!" Zhang Meili shouted, her chubby face dark with anger.

"My mom’s right! This is all Lin Fan’s doing! If you want to cause trouble, you should be going after him!" Su Gang yelled, joining in.

At these words, everyone’s expression changed. No wonder the Su Family suddenly went crazy and started a massive sell-off to cash out. It was all because of that worthless Lin Fan!

"I did hear a rumor that the Su Family’s formula was leaked. I thought it was just gossip, but it turns out it was true?"

"If that’s the case, then Lin Fan has to compensate us too!"

"We can’t let a single one of them get away! If we’re going down, we’re all going down together!"

BOOM!

The realization made everyone furious. One by one, they left Su Mengqing’s family and surged toward Lin Fan, surrounding him completely.

"Lin Fan! What do you have to say for yourself?"

"You bastard! My girlfriend broke up with me because of what you did!"

"You’re not leaving today until you give us an explanation!"

A tidal wave of vicious shouts echoed through the room, rising and falling relentlessly.

Facing the dozens of hate-filled eyes, a mocking smile touched Lin Fan's lips. He found the situation utterly ridiculous. It was clearly the Su Family's own reckless moves that caused the stock price to collapse. And now they're trying to sling all the mud onto me?

"Fine. Since you believe what Su Gang and the others are saying, then show me the evidence that I leaked the formula!" Lin Fan said, turning to look at Su Mengqing, emphasizing every word. "As long as you produce the evidence, I'll compensate all of you on behalf of the Su Family!"

The room fell into a dead silence. All eyes snapped back to Su Mengqing and her family.

"Alright! Tingting, bring out the evidence! Let this son of a bitch finally admit defeat!" Zhang Meili's face hardened, a malicious sneer forming on her lips.

One second, two seconds, three seconds... a full five seconds passed, but there was no movement from behind her.

"Yang Tingting, what are you doing? Hurry up and get the evidence!" Zhang Meili said, growing impatient as she spun around to glare at Yang Tingting.

"Yeah, Tingting! Didn't Lin Fan post on that National Medicine Forum? Just find it, and let's see what this bastard has to say then!" Su Gang urged desperately.

Under their intense stares, Yang Tingting looked uncomfortable, glancing pleadingly at Su Mengqing.

"Mom, did you forget? Those two posts... Tingting already had the forum administrator delete them..." Su Mengqing's face turned pale. She glanced at Lin Fan before gritting her teeth and giving the reluctant reminder in a low voice.

What? They were deleted? Did that mean they had nothing on Lin Fan and could only watch him act so smug?

As reality sank in, Su Gang's eyes went wide, completely dumbfounded. Zhang Meili was even more furious.

SLAP!

She lunged forward and slapped Yang Tingting hard across the face. "You're useless! Who told you to have them deleted? You're a good-for-nothing who only messes things up!"

"Mrs. Zhang, you can't say that! You were the one who praised me when I did it!" Yang Tingting cried, clutching her stinging cheek, her eyes welling up with tears of indignation.

"Hey, and you think you're in the right? Did it not occur to you to take a screenshot to save the evidence? Do I have to teach you how to do every little thing? The Su Family really wasted four years raising you!" Zhang Meili's face flushed red with rage as she raised her hand again.

"I... how was I supposed to know Lin Fan would be so shameless about it?!" Yang Tingting sobbed, hiding behind Su Gang's wheelchair.

"Stop your pathetic theatrics," Lin Fan's cold voice cut in, pressing them. "The evidence. I want the evidence."

"..."

Su Mengqing's face burned with humiliation. She bit her lip and remained silent. Su Gang and Yang Tingting exchanged a glance, their earlier arrogance gone as they shrank back without a word.

"Lin Fan! Are you just going to shamelessly deny everything?!" Zhang Meili's face was beet red, her nose practically crooked with fury.

She had pulled strings to get the National Medicine Forum's administrator to delete Lin Fan's posts. But now, that very act had ended up helping him! Dammit! The frustration was enough to make a person explode!