

His Beloved 281

Chapter 281: secretly came back to see her_2

Qin Mu raised her eyes to look at Helian Hao, not expecting that this girl, who usually didn't preach, could be quite frightening when she did; her tender heart was almost scared wilted.

"Think about it carefully! You can disregard anyone else, but you'd better be mentally prepared for Mu Yichen."

Helian Hao added in a low voice before she left.

Qin Mu stood at the door for a moment before entering, and Jian Yan turned to look at her: "Why do you look unhappy after stepping out for a moment?"

Jian Yan asked out of curiosity.

"No, not at all!"

Qin Mu forced a smile for him and sat beside him: "Do you want some water? Warm water?"

"You should go back!"

Just as Qin Mu picked up the cup and was about to pour the water, she subconsciously looked at the person in the hospital bed upon hearing that.

"I am not so incapacitated that I can't move; it's inconvenient for me with you here."

Jian Yan said with a gentle laugh.

"But..."

"No buts, hurry up and go! I won't have peace of mind if you're out late."

Qin Mu nodded her head, still went to pour him a glass of water, and then whispered before leaving: "Drink it when it's cooled down, it's too hot now."

"Alright, be careful on your way!"

He replied easy-going.

Qin Mu, with her heart still heavy, stood outside the door for a moment after closing it before slinging her bag over her shoulder and walking out.

If it were during the New Year period, she would probably have devotedly taken care of Jian Yan, but in just these few months...

She never thought she would become so selfish, so dreadful.

Jian Yan was in his time of greatest need, yet she was already driving on her way back to the Mu Family home.

Frankly, she was somewhat disappointed in herself; she had never anticipated that after so many years, she would one day have so many concerns, even when her mentor was seriously ill, she still had to consider her feelings.

When she got back, the auntie had already prepared some herbal medicine. Seeing her return, she immediately went to fetch the medicine.

Huanhuan ran into her arms from her grandmother's embrace: "Mommy!"

Perhaps her expression wasn't well-concealed, because Huanhuan looked at her with slight concern. Without thinking, Qin Mu smiled when Huanhuan reached out to touch her face: "Were you a good girl at home today? Did you listen to grandma?"

"Huanhuan was very obedient!"

As Huanhuan spoke, she didn't forget to smile at her grandmother, and Feng Fanghua spoke warmly: "My granddaughter, when has she ever been disobedient? She especially adores her grandma, right? Grandma's little treasure."

"Yes!"

Huanhuan nodded vigorously, pressing her elbows into Qin Mu's legs and cocking up her little legs, entirely without restraint.

Qin Mu lifted her hand gently to stroke her hair, her gaze remaining tender, until the auntie brought over the important brew.

"Ew!"

Huanhuan immediately covered her nose and ran. Feng Fanghua also exhibited some deference.

"Young Madam!"

The auntie handed over the medicine to her, and Qin Mu had no choice but to set her bag aside and then take the large bowl of herbal concoction.

Honestly, she might vomit if she continued drinking, even though the dosage had been reduced by the doctor during the past few treatments it was still horribly bitter.

Yet she still held her breath and downed the bowl in a few gulps. While she was drinking the medicine, she suddenly thought, what was this bit of bitterness compared to other things in life?

In this world, there were far too many things more distressing than this.

After finishing her medicine, Qin Mu handed the bowl back to the auntie, who immediately offered a piece of candy. Qin Mu smiled lightly and said, "No need!"

"Isn't it very bitter?" the auntie asked.

"Not bitter at all!"

The auntie was startled, and looking at Feng Fanghua, who was observing her daughter-in-law, recalled her frequent complaints about the medicine's bitterness; yet today she suddenly claimed it wasn't bitter.

"Is it because Yichen isn't home that you don't dare to complain? Do you really think I'm a wicked mother-in-law? With my son away on a trip, would I abuse my daughter-in-law at home?"

Feng Fanghua glanced at her and said.

Qin Mu couldn't help but laugh: "How could that be? I'm very clear about the kind of person you are. It's just that something happened today, and suddenly I feel like this bit of bitterness from the medicine isn't worth complaining about."

She was just toning her body, dealing with some minor ailments.

But Jian Yan...

She was truly afraid. Just as Jian Yan said, his father had died on the operating table...

Though she insisted verbally that he should undergo surgery, the risks involved with surgery weren't something she could determine as a patient's family member; even the surgeon in charge might not know what could happen during the procedure.

"What happened? Your eyes look a bit swollen; did someone have an accident?"

"My mentor—"

Qin Mu didn't see the need to hide it, but speaking out about it also required immense courage. Not to mention whether Feng Fanghua was keen to listen, Qin Mu herself also found it difficult to overcome the barrier inside her heart.

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"Your master? What happened to Jian Yan?" Feng Fanghua instantly remembered what Jing Qing had mentioned upon hearing the word "master".

"He was diagnosed with an aggravated stomach disease, which is rather serious."

She couldn't continue speaking and lowered her head.

Feng Fanghua looked at how she was anxiously rubbing her hands together and became even more puzzled.

"Every time he's reported to be fine in the news... could it be... stomach cancer?"

Feng Fanghua tentatively asked, sounding nervous.

"For now, it's only developing in that direction, but he'll go to Paris for treatment as soon as possible."

Qin Mu didn't want to hear those two words, but in front of Feng Fanghua, she had no choice but to continue to explain patiently.

"This kind of illness can't be delayed, he really needs to get treatment quickly. How come it was only found now? There should've been symptoms in the early stages."

Feng Fanghua had a friend who died of stomach cancer, so she wasn't unfamiliar with it.

"Mom, can I tell you about it later? I'd like to wash my face first."

She really didn't want to talk about it anymore and softly requested leave from Feng Fanghua.

Feng Fanghua saw the mist in her eyes and nodded, lowering her gaze and said, "Go on!"

When Qin Mu stood up to leave, she greeted Feng Fanghua and then went upstairs, leaving Feng Fanghua to sigh helplessly after her departure.

The auntie was still standing by, muttering, "The look on the young madam's face, she must be terribly worried."

"Jian Yan is her master, after all. He taught her so much, it's no wonder she's like this."

Feng Fanghua sighed helplessly after hearing this.

"Indeed, our young madam is a person of strong loyalty."

The auntie agreed, while Feng Fanghua looked up towards the stairs. With such significant news, she suddenly thought she should talk to her son. According to her understanding of Qin Mu, Qin Mu probably hadn't told Mu Yichen yet.

"Bring me my phone!"

Feng Fanghua ordered, and the auntie nodded and immediately went to the room to fetch her phone.

At this time, Qin Mu had just finished washing her face in her room when her phone rang. She immediately went to the bedside and answered the call; it was Mu Yichen.

"Mrs. Mu, your husband is missing you a bit right now!"

Qin Mu sat by the bed on the phone, hearing his voice through the speaker, her nose tingled involuntarily, and she raised her hand, forcefully covering her mouth as tears suddenly welled up.

If only he were here now, he would surely find a solution with her. He would never let her bear it all alone.

It had always been the case; although he was never gentle over the years, every time she encountered a problem, he would be the one to sort it out for her.

Subconsciously looking out the window, Qin Mu thought of the vast ocean between them. He still loved her, didn't he?

He would understand her, she reasoned; even though he was the jealous type, he would know how to prioritize.

"Mu Yichen, master's health has taken a turn for the worse!"

She spoke softly, and as she did, her heart seemed to bleed slowly.

To tell the truth, she was terrified, especially on nights like these; she dreaded losing another loved one—a feeling similar to when she lost her mother. And now, if she were to lose her master too...

"Hmm? What happened?"

Mu Yichen was about to go to work but stopped immediately upon hearing this. On one side was a beautiful large glass screen, sunlight was shining through in front, onto the window, and there was a green golf course downstairs.

The staff walking in front noticed his pause and immediately stopped to wait. Mu Yichen then hung up the phone and called the hospital to understand Jian Yan's specific situation before messaging Qin Mu: Don't be too anxious, I'm contacting the hospital in Paris to book the surgery right away.

Qin Mu was still sitting by the bed, feeling immensely relieved after reading the message from WeChat.

Before going to bed that night, she asked the auntie to prepare some more porridge for the morning. After returning to her room, she lay down in bed with Huanhuan, telling her storybooks until Huanhuan fell asleep, then she called the nurse's station at the hospital to inquire about Jian Yan's current condition.

Early the next morning, she left the house, backpack on and carrying a thermal container.

Standing at the door, she peeked through the small window into the room. In that large ward, he was there alone. She remembered being a child in the hospital, feeling that loneliness and helplessness, that fear and urgency.

Those were feelings others could not understand or experience.

She gently pushed open the door and walked in, being extra careful as she put down the thermal container, cupping it with both hands, afraid to make even a little noise that might disturb his sleep. She had called the nurse's station the previous night, and they'd said his room's lights were off and that he was sleeping, but she guessed he hadn't been asleep.

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Indeed, as expected, after setting down the insulated box, the moment she looked up, she saw the papers laid out on the side, those ordinary sheets of white paper bearing the most valuable things he had ever drawn.

He had just taken a walk by Ghost Gate Pass during the day, so it must have been quite late at night when he worked on these, right?

She quietly sat by his hospital bed, her eyes and brows lowered as she gazed at the drawings he had made, until the sun had risen so high.

When Jian Yan woke up, the first thing he saw upon turning over was Qin Mu sitting there, watching him intently.

The sorrow on her small face was so evident, and her eyes even sadder.

It was as if she were reminiscing about something, or perhaps recalling something.

He made an uncomfortable sound in his throat, and finally, Qin Mu snapped back to reality, "Master, you're awake."

"Hmm, help me raise the bed."

There was a button on the side, and Qin Mu pressed it for him, positioning the pillow from under his head to his waist as he struggled to move. Despite her expressionless face, her mind was very alert at that moment, completely understanding what he needed, and her strength was consistently gentle.

Only after Jian Yan propped himself up against the pillow did she sit back down, her clear eyes locking with his as she realized her expression was a bit stiff. She immediately stretched her mouth into a smile, "I made a special trip here early in the morning. Don't I seem like a good disciple?"

"Yes, indeed, you arrived early just to stare at my back - you truly are a good disciple."

Jian Yan smiled wryly in response.

"I had just spaced out for a moment. Do you now want to get up and wash up, or go to the bathroom?"

Qin Mu got up again, moving the stool to the side as she asked him.

"Yes! But you stay right there, don't move."

He instructed, and then tried to get out of bed, but with his physical condition, getting up on his own was very strenuous.

She didn't know if he had called for the nurse last night when she wasn't there, but now she knew she could not sit by idly.

"Haven't you always said that I call you master all day but don't show the filial piety of a disciple to you? Now it's my turn to show it."

As she spoke, she had already approached, and, bowing her head, she wrapped one of her arms around him, "Quick, get up!"

Jian Yan looked up at her earnest expression, and at that moment, his eyes inexplicably moistened.

But he merely gave a slight smile and then resignedly let her help him up.

"You better not come into the bathroom."

Inside the washroom, Qin Mu called out.

"Just wait a moment."

Qin Mu held him steady with one hand while with the other she opened the bathroom door and then lifted the toilet seat.

"Okay, you come here, I'll step out and wait for you outside."

She was insistent, knowing this would embarrass him, but if she left and he accidentally fell, that would be troublesome.

She leaned against the sink, her head bowed as she looked at the wedding ring on her hand, thinking that if Mu Yichen knew about this, he would probably be so irritated he'd want to hit her. Well, she'd let him vent to his heart's content.

However, she hadn't anticipated that spacing out would help avoid some awkwardness.

When Jian Yan came out from inside, he looked quite pale and weak, supporting himself against the wall.

Qin Mu looked up immediately and went to support him as he displayed that expression, "Tired?"

"I'm alright!"

One of his hands rested on the wall while the other was supported by her, and after a difficult washing up in the washroom, they returned to the bed.

Indeed, he lay in bed panting heavily, while Qin Mu was already preparing his breakfast.

Jian Yan couldn't help but laugh while catching his breath. How could he have imagined that one day, he would be in such a pitiful state, weak enough to receive such care from his beloved disciple?

Perhaps she had never even done as much for Mu Yi, had she?

"The porridge from the Mu family's kitchen tastes even better than what's served in the restaurants. We'll wait a bit more for it to cool down before you eat it."

As Qin Mu spoke, she brought the bowl to the small table by the bed, then sat down beside it: "Master, why are you drawing at this time?"

"When I have ideas in my head, if I don't draw them out, my hands itch and my brain can't endure it."

She believed Jian Yan's answer, remembering how once Mu Yichen was enjoying himself when suddenly she ran off him, and she still recalled just how endearing his expression was back then.

Jian Yan watched her, his gaze soft with a hint of regret, but eventually, he simply smiled and let it pass.

Qin Mu, however, was earnestly looking at the drawing, and after Jian Yan took a few sips of porridge, he told her, "You'll still have to go back to the studio later. You're allowed to visit me in the morning and evening; at other times, focus on your actual work."

"You think I want to come running over here early in the morning? It's only because I'm thinking that in three or five days you'll be off to Paris, and I can break free from you, so that's why I'm showing such dedication."

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Qin Mu's eyes were sharp, dark, and bright. Every time Jian Yan could not help but take an extra look or two, and this time was no different. Even though she had spoken so heartlessly, he still couldn't help but smile.

"You called President Mu, right?"

He asked.

"I did, through the phone. Master, you won't be upset that I told him about your illness, will you?"

Qin Mu suddenly dropped his earlier mischief.

"Of course not! Since you call me master, how could a master be unaware of the difficulties his disciple faces in her marital home? It's just that this might have caused President Mu a little trouble—, but since you are my disciple and he is your husband, it's not too much for him to do something for me, right?"

Jian Yan took another sip of his porridge, his ink-dark eyes lingering on the bowl on the table as he thought for a while before asking her again.

"Of course!"

Qin Mu immediately agreed.

Jian Yan did not speak further. He had a lot on his mind, but he was not someone given to expressing himself, especially not with his most beloved disciple.

"Master, I will fly over during your surgery, I'll bring Huanhuan with me."

Qin Mu saw the coldness and sorrow he was trying hard to conceal on his face—those were born of loneliness, perhaps because she had experienced despair and loneliness herself, she especially wanted to be there for Jian Yan at this time.

Jian Yan didn't say anything, but just smiled and finished his porridge.

Qin Mu then said no more, and the hospital room fell quiet for a moment.

These past few days, he had changed into the hospital's patient robe, which made him look much paler, but also gave him a very serene look.

In fact, he has always been a serene person.

But the quiet in the room didn't last long.

Xiaomei had ordered takeout and brought it over.

She flinched, however, when she pushed the door open and saw Qin Mu cleaning up the small dining table. Hearing Xiaomei's entrance, Qin Mu instinctively turned her head and caught Xiaomei standing there, dazed.

"What are you spacing out for?"

Qin Mu asked curiously. After she had finished speaking, she looked down and saw the takeout in Xiaomei's hand, then unconsciously turned to look at Xiaomei, who smiled awkwardly: It seemed the boss had already eaten.

"I haven't eaten yet. Have you?"

Qin Mu put away the small dining table and placed the food warmer to one side before turning to ask her.

"No!"

Xiaomei struggled to shake her head, her eyes a bit unfocused.

"Then you two go eat over there!"

Jian Yan pointed to the sofa across the room. He didn't look at anyone, simply wiped his hands with a tissue, then took out his cellphone and leaned back, browsing his phone.

Xiaomei took the takeout to eat with Qin Mu, although she couldn't hide her feeling of loss.

"Don't be sad, I won't send it tomorrow!"

Qin Mu tilted her head slightly and whispered to Xiaomei before they started eating.

Xiaomei's eyes moistened. She didn't look at Qin Mu but murmured softly, "Don't, the takeout can't be as nutritious as what you guys make at home."

Qin Mu couldn't help but look at her, and Xiaomei was already bowing her head, eating.

Jian Yan also glanced up at the two girls eating before lowering his gaze again. As for their murmured conversation, he heard it, yet he didn't.

During the day, Xiaomei stayed at the hospital to take care of Jian Yan, while Qin Mu returned to the studio.

This time, two designers from their studio participated in the design competition. After Qin Mu returned, they took their certificates to her office—one was second place, the other fourth place. Their rankings were very good, and naturally, she was also very pleased. She looked up at them and congratulated them gravely, "Let me first congratulate you both on your awards. How about I host a celebration dinner at AM tonight in your honor, on me?"

"Maybe we shouldn't. Jian Yan isn't well, and we're not in the mood to celebrate. We plan to visit him in the hospital together after work this afternoon."

Although spoken in French, there was no barrier in their communication.

The girl from Paris said this earnestly—they all loved Jian Yan, as he had led them to their present position. Even though they weren't officially his disciples, they had all benefited from his guidance.

After hearing this, Qin Mu lowered her gaze and thought for two seconds, "Alright! We'll go together after work!"

She thought Jian Yan might not like such sentimental scenes, but they couldn't just ignore everyone's good intentions.

However, the standout in the competition was not someone who had ranked, but the first-place designer who was a plagiarizer.

When the plagiarized design appeared beside the original on the screen during the judging, all the designers in attendance were shocked; and the media, already inured to such incidents, was there to sensationalize and report, so it didn't take long for the scandal to be exposed. Moreover, the media exposed everything about this newly returned designer.

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Although she was a trainee at a design school, she was definitely not a student from any prestigious institution.

The incident was exposed by the media not long after Qin Mu returned to the studio.

The first-place winner, entangled in plagiarism, was also exposed. The plagiarized drawings surfaced, and the victim's designs were published in the newspapers with dates, sketches, and competition submissions that were almost identical.

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Jing Qing was filming when she received a call from Rongcheng and responded indifferently, "You should look for Qin Mingzhu; she's probably at AM drinking with her friends right now."

The plagiarizing designer, upon hearing this, immediately grabbed her coat and left her apartment in search of Qin Mingzhu.

Qin Mingzhu could never have imagined that Qin Mu would find out about her stealing those designs until Yang Qianxi found her at the drinking place.

When the door to the private room was pushed open, Qin Mingzhu was with two boys and three girls—the same group as before—and they all looked toward the door in shock at the sound of a 'bang.'

Yang Qianxi, not too tall but still quite appealing, walked towards Qin Mingzhu with her brows tightly knitted.

Qin Mingzhu, still holding her glass, was about to drink with one of the girls when she saw Yang Qianxi approaching with a menacing gaze. She slowly set down the glass and asked perplexedly, "What's with the face? Didn't win first place?"

"First place? Yeah, first place—the first place in plagiarism!"

The girl pulled out newspapers and materials from her bag and slammed them onto the table in front of Qin Mingzhu.

Qin Mingzhu jumped up as the papers knocked over the glass, spilling the liquid. She was furious but subconsciously stood there, bent over, picking up the newspapers and materials one by one and looking through them.

"What's going on? I already spoke to the judges."

"Is this what you call having spoken to them? One of the judges exposed the matter in front of so many media and industry people. How exactly did you 'speak' to them?"

Yang Qianxi was on the verge of going crazy, yelling at her, feeling that the girl in front of her was utterly incompetent.

"But, what about Jing Qing? It was the connection she found."

Qin Mingzhu also remained dazed for a while, her large eyes lacking any spirit. It took her a long time to suddenly remember Jing Qing—it was Jing Qing who found the connection.

"Jing Qing? She's the one who sent me to find you! I don't care what's going on between you two, but I've just arrived in Rongcheng and this happens. You have to take responsibility for me."

Yang Qianxi shouted at her, filled with anger.

"I'm responsible for you? Why should I be responsible for you?"

Qin Mingzhu's heart was thudding non-stop, thinking she would not be responsible for anyone.

"You ruined my future. You are the one who sought me out. Who should be responsible for me if not you?"

Yang Qianxi was even more enraged and argued.

"I did seek you out, but didn't you also say it wouldn't be a problem? Didn't you boast about your ability to plagiarize?"

Qin Mingzhu glared at her with wide eyes, then looked down at the comparisons on the newspapers she was holding, and the three girls beside her also came closer to look. They did not understand the situation, but they were experts at picking faults.

Yang Qianxi never anticipated that upon her arrival in Rongcheng, she would be swayed by these two who confidently promised her the seat of Rongcheng's top emerging designer, resulting in this disaster. These two women acted as if nothing in Rongcheng was beyond their capability, and indeed their status was indeed special, but Yang Qianxi hadn't expected their behavior to be so extraordinary as well.

"Moreover, just because Jing Qing told you to find me, you did? She arranged everything, I just gave you the design drafts."

Qin Mingzhu looked at her in frustration, her mind a tangled mess and on the verge of madness. Had Jing Qing really pushed all the blame onto her this way?

No wonder Zhang Rujia said Jing Qing was unreliable. Now she knew it was true—utterly unreliable.

"So it's all about shirking responsibility, is it? While you two enjoy your lives, what about me? My career has been destroyed just as it's beginning."

Yang Qianxi emphasized the last few words heavily, lifting her hands and dropping them forcefully. She was filled with hate but helpless to change the outcome. Anticipating that Qin Mingzhu would shift the blame, and having no one to support her in Rongcheng, she had no choice but to turn around and leave.

"Nuts!"

Qin Mingzhu had just sat down after the other woman left when she realized her skirt was wet and stood up again immediately: "Damn it!"

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"Go change your clothes, and don't worry about us,"

her friends told her. Qin Mingzhu looked down at her own clothes and had no choice but to go change. But as soon as she left, the group began whispering among themselves unanimously.

The weather outside was rather gloomy. After Yang Qianxi took a taxi and left, Qin Mingzhu's car also came out from the underground parking lot.

Qin Mu was working in the office when a colleague from reception came up to her: "Qinqin, there's a Miss who wants to see you, Yang Qianxi."

After hearing this, Qin Mu closed the file she was looking at and turned to look towards the door.

Yang Qianxi had indeed come to find her.

And she looked like she had already had a confrontation with those two women.

Qin Mu's eyes were certainly sharp. She could tell from Yang Qianxi's face what her mood was, but she had anticipated the turn of events not because of that, but because she understood Qin Mingzhu better.

How could she have guessed that this matter also involved Jing Qing, who was out filming, and she had always thought it was Zhang Rujia's idea to encourage Qin Mingzhu to do it, given that the mother and daughter both hated her.

"Qin Mingzhu told me it was Jing Qing who arranged the jury, guaranteed that I would win first place, and moreover, I would be propelled to the prestigious position of Rongcheng's top designer, which is why I got carried away..."

Yang Qianxi started to say but then lowered her head, struggling to continue.

Qin Mu didn't ask her anything further, just listened to her speak. Yang Qianxi never heard Qin Mu say a word, knowing in the end, she might still have to rely on Qin Mu if she wanted to turn the situation around, so she added, "I guess there must be some bad blood between you for things to be this bad, I'm willing to help you against them. All I ask is for you to give me a chance to earn a living."

It wasn't until then that Qin Mu slightly raised her eyes, still sitting in the chair, as composed as ever.

"As soon as I returned to the country, I was branded a plagiarist. If even you won't help me, then I'm truly out of options in this industry."

Yang Qianxi continued, looking at the calm and wise Qin Mu behind the desk, and she almost instantly regretted agreeing to plagiarize for Qin Mingzhu.

"I have a fault: I neither suspect nor employ the suspected,"

Qin Mu lifted her eyes to look at her, her sharp gaze piercing straight into Yang Qianxi, who was standing across from her.

Yang Qianxi was newly established in her career, her aura lacking not just by a little, and she took a sharp breath of nervousness upon hearing Qin Mu's words, "I can work first without taking a salary."

"You've made such a mistake at the start of your career, I really can't accommodate you here."

Qin Mu looked at her anxious demeanor without the slightest discomfort.

She couldn't help thinking she used to believe she'd never become heartless to this extent. Yet, one day, when she became ruthless, there was no hesitation."

Her refusal was so straightforward, and she felt no burden at all, even if this girl would henceforth have nowhere else to go.

Yang Qianxi involuntarily took a deep breath, which she slowly let out after a long time.

The mercilessness of Qin Mu made her laugh helplessly, and after a long while, she took a step back.

"So it turns out you are all the same kind of people, all selfish, only thinking of your own interests. In your world, there is no one else, just your own benefits."

Yang Qianxi raised her hand, laughed in despair, and then looked with desperate eyes at the woman before her, before turning to leave.

"Yang Qianxi!"

Qin Mu's eyes, cold and detached, looked down at the drawing paper before parting her sensual lips.

Yang Qianxi instantly turned around, her eyes filled with tears as she looked at her.

"A plagiarist has no right to feel wronged!"

Qin Mu said, then looked towards the door. Yang Qianxi's tears fell from her eyes in an instant, and at that moment, all her anger was extinguished by her tears.

The warm air in the office felt stifling. Qin Mu stood up from her chair and slowly circled the desk.

"If you really can't find a place to go, I might be able to recommend a job for you."

"Really? Does it have to do with design?"

Qin Mu glanced at her again, her gaze cold, domineering, and filled with an indisputable sharpness.

Upon a closer look, her demeanor bore some resemblance to that of President Mu at times.

"It's related, I suppose. My assistant has been quite busy recently. She's mainly in charge of organizing my files, receiving clients, and helping with various tasks like arranging custom clothes for celebrities. If you can handle this tough job, you can start with that."

Qin Mu told her in a low voice, and immediately Yang Qianxi started crying, covering her mouth, "I really didn't mean to do it. I thought no matter what happened in the past, as long as I could produce good work in the future, all of my past could be erased. I thought that as long as they were there, I'd have no problems."

As she spoke, she lowered her head, almost burying her face in her chest.

"But you forgot, in this world, no one will boost you up for no reason, nor does anyone want to take the fall for you, unless it's someone who loves you."

Yang Qianxi nodded vigorously.

"Your probation period is one month, starting now?"

Qin Mu didn't bother with small talk.

She nodded eagerly, of course hoping to start right away. Qin Mu didn't say anything else but led her out instead.

"Everyone, hold on a second. Starting today, Yang Qianxi will temporarily take over Xiaomei's duties,"

Qin Mu announced to everyone on the first floor after a simple introduction and then left.

Yang Qianxi stood in front of everyone, feeling even more panicked as she faced their unfriendly eyes, certain they all knew her history now. She thought it wasn't going to be easy for her in the coming days.

After work in the evening, Qin Mu took her colleagues to visit Jian Yan, who was a bit taken aback when he saw a group of people with flowers coming to see him. He truly didn't enjoy such sentimental scenes.

He would have preferred that after his death, these people would stand solemnly with flowers in front of his gravestone instead.

Not to cry or show sadness.

Simply to see him off, as though he were just traveling to a distant place.

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A dark, high-end sports car slowly pulled into the hospital's parking lot, and a tall man stepped out, his dark eyes looking towards the hospital.

Chapter 287: General Mu's demanded compensation (1)_1

When Jian Yan tuned the atmosphere to that of a party and everyone couldn't help but laugh, Qin Mu had been standing to the side, silent. As she listened to everyone exchange pleasantries, a distant sound reached her ears and she subconsciously turned her head towards the door.

The knock wasn't very loud, but it felt like it was knocking on her heart.

Her eyes, brimming with water, watched the door being slowly pushed open, revealing a tall man in a suit and leather shoes, although his face could not hide his fatigue.

In that moment, Qin Mu's heart clenched tightly.

When everyone hadn't heard Qin Mu speak for a long time and looked her way, they noticed she was gazing outside. Following her gaze, they saw the tender-eyed President Mu and instantly understood the sorrow and unmistakable longing in Qin Mu's eyes.

Afterward, Xiao Mei escorted all the colleagues away, leaving only Qin Mu, Mu Yichen, and Jian Yan in the ward.

Qin Mu choked up slightly, unable to stop herself from gazing affectionately at the person in front of her. Mu Yichen couldn't take the intensity of her look and leaned in towards her ear, "Stop looking, or Jian Yan's illness will worsen!"

Only then did Qin Mu snap back to reality, immediately withdrawing her gaze overflowing with longing, and looked down. Mu Yichen chuckled softly and then turned to look at the man lying in bed, also watching his wife.

Ah! Jian Yan's gaze spoke volumes!

It was as if he was worrying that his disciple had hopelessly fallen for another man.

"You shouldn't have kept such a big thing from her, do you know how worried she was?"

Mu Yichen rarely spoke such words, but it was because Qin Mu was truly beside herself with worry.

"If I knew my body would be so uncooperative, I wouldn't have left Paris."

Jian Yan said helplessly, his head drooping with a sigh.

"Well, it's a good thing you came!"

Qin Mu lifted her eyes and looked at him with a reproachful gaze, guessing that if Jian Yan hadn't come, he wouldn't have obediently gone to the hospital for treatment.

Jian Yan laughed quietly at her astute voice, realizing his disciple still knew him well.

Mu Yichen wrapped an arm around Qin Mu's shoulder, "Alright, it's getting late, will you keep me company?"

Qin Mu turned her head towards him as he spoke, and suddenly remembered he was supposed to be away for a long time but had returned in just two days. Had he come back so abruptly because of Jian Yan's accident?

"You two hurry up and find a place, don't delay my rest here."

Jian Yan spoke and pressed the button to recline his bed.

Mu Yichen still gave a few more instructions before taking Qin Mu out.

With Helian Hao around, the two found an unoccupied ward, where Qin Mu was immediately pinned against the door and kissed passionately.

Qin Mu panted heavily, her forehead pressed against his, and after a long while, she received his gentle kisses again.

It felt as if they hadn't seen each other in years, always feeling that only in this way could they reach into each other's hearts.

Mu Yichen's hands cradled the back of her head as he looked at her, somewhat shyly kissed, and then gently kissed her eyelashes, "Missed me?"

"You were gone for just two days."

Qin Mu murmured quietly, suddenly unable to meet his eyes.

"Two days? I felt like it had been two years."

Mu Yichen laughed softly, his dark eyes gazing directly at her. In this quiet place, he couldn't help but kiss her lips over and over again.

As Qin Mu was kissed repeatedly, lifting her head, her heart seemed to be kissed as well, until she almost lost her sense of direction.

"Let's go home tonight. We can't stay here with him."

He whispered, his burning gaze on her as his hands gently slid down from her waist.

"What if I want to stay?"

"Then I'll stay with you. If need be, I'll let go of the deal in Australia worth several hundred million just to keep an eye on my wife."

Their voices were very low, with Mu Yichen even beginning to unbutton her clothes, and Qin Mu lifted her eyelashes only to see him suddenly kneeling beside her.

She looked down at the man before her, "Mu Yichen, do you really trust me?"

"I do! I just don't trust him!"

He abruptly lifted his gaze, and as Qin Mu looked down again, she quickly grabbed his hand, "Jian Yan isn't the kind of person you think he is."

"I know, but a man and a woman sharing a room alone is really not a wise decision."

Mu Yichen in this regard was absolutely uncompromising, and Qin Mu sighed helplessly in her heart.

Unwilling to occupy a bed that belonged to someone else, they did it right there at the door.

Afterward, he had to leave, and Qin Mu stood at the hospital entrance to see him off, feeling unconsciously upset as she watched his car drive away.

In fact, she felt a prickling inside; whether he truly trusted her or not was something only he knew deep down.

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But he had come all that distance to merely glance at her and leave, Qin Mu's heart quickly ceased its struggle, for this love was already enough.

She still dared not ask for more and turned her head to go back to the hospital, where Helian Hao was on duty. Seeing the redness around her eyes, she couldn't help but ask, "What's the matter? Can't bear to part?"

"As if you know so much!"

Qin Mu slightly lifted her gaze, saying softly and smiling at her.

"My oh my, both your kids are so grown and yet you're so clingy. Do you know that makes me jealous?"

Helian Hao got up from her chair, stood beside her, and wrapped an arm around her shoulders.

In the vast office, it was just the two of them leaning against the desk, and somehow, they both lowered their heads.

Love is gentle, yet heavy.

To accept it meant knowing you could enjoy the warmth of a bosom, but also withstand the oppression that this warmth brought.

Qin Mu later sighed helplessly, "I need to go back; Huanhuan is waiting to finish dinner with me."

"Alright! Don't worry about your master; I'm on duty tonight and will go keep him company."

Helian Hao winked at her.

Qin Mu shook her head helplessly: Aren't you afraid Jing Feng will get jealous when he finds out?

"He's not that petty!"

Helian Hao remarked and let out a sigh after Qin Mu left, seeing Jing Feng as a man who actually knew how to distinguish things clearly in her eyes.

As Qin Mu drove alone on the way back, the scenic trees in the city were still green. Passing by that stretch of green road, she felt as if she didn't know what time she was in, until she reached a desolate place.

It was like traveling through two seasons, and though her eyes held a hint of melancholy, they were more composed; no matter how many thoughts filled her mind, her resolve would not easily change.

The car slowly entered the Mu Family's mansion, and Huanhuan, hearing the sound of the car, ran out from the living room.

Qin Mu parked the car and walked back, only to see Huanhuan run outside before long, her voice still babyish as she called out, "Mommy..."

It was a habit formed when she was a bit smaller, seemingly hard to break, but Qin Mu felt that Huanhuan calling her "Mommy" was particularly heartwarming.

Once, they had lived abroad together—was that wandering?

Or is it wandering now?

No! How could it be wandering now? Huanhuan's father, mother, grandparents, and all her blood relatives were here.

A leaf drifted slowly from the sky; mother and daughter inevitably both looked up, their eyes following the frost-touched leaf as it gently landed on the ground.

Then they both looked down again, following the leaf to the ground.

Huanhuan let go of her mother, walked over to pick up the leaf, and turned her pretty small hand holding the leaf towards her mother.

Qin Mu didn't know what Huanhuan was thinking, but seeing Huanhuan looking somewhat sad, she got up and went over to pick her up, saying, "Let's go inside!"

"Okay! Mommy! Is it dead?"

Huanhuan's voice was still not quite coherent, and her words were blunt, striking a different chord in Qin Mu's heart.

"No, next year, it will turn green again, just like in the summer."

"Oh!"

Huanhuan agreed, but her eyes stayed on the leaf in her hand.

Qin Mu, seeing Huanhuan's expression, always felt that Huanhuan didn't quite believe what she said and seemed a bit conflicted.

"Mom, I'm back!"

"Hmm!"

Feng Fanghua was drinking tea, and she hummed in response to seeing her come in with Huanhuan in her arms.

"This little girl can't stand the sound of a car anymore; she's bound to run out to see."

Feng Fanghua spoke to Qin Mu while interacting with her granddaughter's gaze.

Qin Mu smiled and walked over to place Huanhuan on the sofa, sitting down beside her.

She remembered when she was a child; she used to rush outside whenever she heard a car, sure that it was her beloved father coming home from work. She recalled that sometimes, when her father went to his job, she would even run behind the car, crying pitifully.

In the blink of an eye, things have changed but people remain the same.

"How is your master doing?"

Feng Fanghua asked again as she picked up her tea.

"He's going to Paris tomorrow; the doctor he had an appointment with has already returned."

"Oh! That's good. He's a true scholar, and heaven will surely take pity on him; he won't come to harm."

Feng Fanghua comforted.

Qin Mu nodded her head.

"There's a charity dinner on Saturday; come with me, bring Huanhuan along. It'll be just the three of us women."

Feng Fanghua spoke again, considering her to be sensible.

"A charity dinner?"

"Yes! In the past, it was always your father who accompanied me, but now that I have you, he was never keen on attending such events anyway. It's mostly women, so you're the most suitable person to go with me."

Chapter 289: General Mu's demanded compensation (1)_3

"But I should be in Paris on Saturday."

"Paris?"

"Yes!"

Upon hearing this, Feng Fanghua couldn't help but frown: On a business trip?

"No, my master needs someone to take care of him for a few days, and I was just about to discuss this with you. After he leaves tomorrow, I'll also follow Huanhuan the day after tomorrow."

Qin Mu knew Feng Fanghua might be unhappy, but it had come to this.

"Although he is your master, he isn't your father after all. Are you sure you want to take care of him? Have you considered how inconvenient this will be, and how it might sound to others?"

Feng Fanghua reminded her.

"Mom, not everything can be perfect, and the one thing I do know is, he nurtured me over these years. He helped me when I was most confused. No matter what others say, I hope you and Dad can understand me."

Qin Mu patiently explained in a gentle voice.

"Absolutely not. Don't you know how famous you are recently? Especially since your master isn't that old. It wouldn't be too bad if he were seventy or eighty, but he's just over forty and much more outstanding than other men. What will people think if they know you're taking care of him personally? The media nowadays dares to report anything; you can't go,"

Feng Fanghua shook her head repeatedly, her expression turning stern as she spoke.

"Mom, I understand your concerns. You think now, as the Mu family's daughter-in-law, I should stay out of trouble, right? I promise you, I won't care for him personally, but I must be there. I'm the only family he has. Huanhuan has also grown up under his watch. How sad would he be if neither of us were there?"

Knowing Feng Fanghua's temperament, that she would take a soft approach rather than a hard one, Qin Mu continued to explain amiably.

However, Feng Fanghua shook her head again and again, her eyes reddening: If you want to go, go by yourself, but my granddaughter cannot go.

"If you really can't agree, then I'll have to defy you this once."

Qin Mu said this and was about to take Huanhuan upstairs, but was immediately stopped.

"Qin Mu!"

Qin Mu turned around to see Feng Fanghua looking at her coldly: "Defy me this time? How often have you not defied me? Since you were determined to be with Yichen, you should consider him in everything. Don't you know what people are saying about you and your master, that it's not proper?"

Huanhuan, thinking her grandmother and mother were fighting, instinctively snuggled closer into Qin Mu's arms.

Qin Mu looked down, gently stroking her daughter's hair, then looked up again: We'll discuss this after Huanhuan falls asleep.

"I don't think there's any need to talk further. Jian Yan suddenly coming to live in the city, I didn't even ask you why, did I? Do I say anything about you two being together in the studio every day? I think I've been tolerant enough. He collapses in Rongcheng, and you go to take care of him early in the morning, even bringing breakfast from home. Did I ever say a bad word about it? You can give money, you can pull strings, you can bring him breakfast, Qin Mu, have you really not realized that you care for this man more than you do for Yichen?"

Feng Fanghua asked after her rant, looking puzzled.

Qin Mu glanced up at Feng Fanghua's bewildered expression, a light smile involuntarily crossed her face. She could humble herself to the dust without rebuttal, but no one could stop this decision of hers.

"I'll go change my clothes first."

Qin Mu lightly kissed her daughter: "Want to go upstairs with mommy to change clothes?"

"Mmm!"

Huanhuan nodded, and Qin Mu picked her up to go upstairs together.

Feng Fanghua still sat there, watching them go upstairs, headache intensifying from irritation: "Simply doesn't know what's important."

It was just the three of them at home for dinner. Afterward, Qin Mu routinely took her medicine, and Feng Fanghua felt slightly better seeing her obediently doing so.

Once Huanhuan was asleep, Feng Fanghua finally resumed the conversation with her in the living room on the ground floor.

"Qin Mu, I think I've been tolerant enough with you. As long as you make Yichen happy, I can almost endure anything. But for this matter, even if Yichen agrees, I won't. Besides, has Yichen agreed?"

"He will agree!"

Qin Mu said softly.

Feng Fanghua laughed: You can call him and check before you answer me.

"He's currently on a flight back to Australia and can't answer the phone."

"What?"

Just as Qin Mu finished her reply, Feng Fanghua looked at her in shock, then stood up and headed back to her bedroom in frustration.

Qin Mu thought, Feng Fanghua must be upset because Mu Yichen cared for her too much, so she couldn't soothe Feng Fanghua's heart right now.

After all, friction is inevitable in a family.

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She thought that perhaps it was because she hadn't lived with a family for so many years that she found it so hard to adapt.

How could there be no friction, no quarrels, when a family lived together? But once it was past, it was past. Remembering the kindness Feng Fanghua had shown her, Qin Mu let it go and unconsciously let out a light laugh before getting up and going upstairs.

Her long hair was gathered up before she went to bed, and as she looked at her precious daughter lying there, her whole heart warmed from cold to hot, soon enveloped in a warm cocoon.

It seemed as if, after wasting half a lifetime, the warmest thing at last was right in front of her, in her arms!

But who knew about the future?

Just like how Mu Qingxin still hadn't come home, would her daughter grow up to dislike her, even be unwilling to come home?

Qin Mu, thinking of the day they would have to part, couldn't help but lean gently against Huanhuan's shoulder, her heart full of reluctance.

In the quiet night, while the city was a spectacle of lights in every household, mother and daughter lay quietly together, asleep.

She thought that Mu Yichen wouldn't stop her, so she gradually fell asleep.

And then she had a nightmare. In the dream, Mu Yichen had learned that she was going to Paris to accompany Jian Yan for his surgery, so he flew back, grabbed her as she was about to leave, and took her back to the room. He threw her onto the bed, ferociously threatened her, and said he wouldn't allow her to step out of the room. She struggled, and Mu Yichen even tied her hands with his necktie, telling her, "I won't let you leave this door. You might as well give up on this heart that wants to accompany him."

She trembled uncontrollably in her sleep, and when she woke up the next day, her hands and feet were icy cold.

In the morning, Xiaomei accompanied Jian Yan at the airport. Qin Mu was there to see them off, handing the luggage to Xiaomei and instructing, "After I meet with clients today, I'll immediately fly over with Huanhuan. Everything has been arranged at the hospital; you can just go straight to checking in."

"If the Mu Family doesn't agree, forget it! It's not a big deal for me!"

Jian Yan's countenance was still haggard. The sky outside was overcast and Qin Mu noticed his face was pallid and lusterless.

Unconsciously, she ended up looking at him a few more times. After a long while, she laughed and said, "Why wouldn't they agree? My mother-in-law even said that I should go with you today. If it wasn't for this client who I had arranged to meet today, I really could have gone with you."

She said to Jian Yan with a smile.

Xiaomei didn't say much, knowing that Qin Mu was avoiding any appearance of impropriety by not leaving together.

Moreover, who knew how many people Jing Qing had watching Qin Mu? If Qin Mu left with Jian Yan now, nobody would know if Jing Qing would give any tracking information to the media.

"Then we're going to go ahead; be careful driving back," Jian Yan said after hearing the airport announcement, bidding her farewell.

Qin Mu nodded and stood there, watching them until they reached the security checkpoint.

To be honest, Qin Mu didn't feel like going back at all; she just raised her hand and waved goodbye to them with a smile as Xiaomei and Jian Yan departed.

When she mustered up a smile, and after they had left, she could no longer maintain her cheerfulness.

She turned and walked towards the exit, thinking she was smiling, but feeling a chill on her face. When she touched her face, she realized it was tears. She looked at her wet fingertips in disbelief, then couldn't help but laugh again.

She knew she was probably used to no one caring about her, and suddenly, being cared for was something she couldn't get used to, so she drove back to the studio.

As soon as she entered the studio, she saw Yang Qianxi busily making coffee for everyone. Everyone was immersed in their work, with only her darting about.

Qin Mu suddenly thought of Xiaomei and continued walking with her head down.

"Good morning, Miss Qin!"

Yang Qianxi, holding a cup of coffee for a colleague, greeted her when she saw Qin Mu, who responded with a smile, "Good morning!"

A gleam of shrewdness flashed in Yang Qianxi's eyes. After delivering the coffee to her colleague, she immediately took a cup of rose petal-infused water upstairs.

"I heard you're not drinking coffee now. I saw some rose petals in the small kitchen and made you a cup," Yang Qianxi said as she gently placed the cup on Qin Mu's desk. Qin Mu glanced at the water cup and then looked up at her, "Find some time in the next couple of days to draw two sketches for me."

Yang Qianxi was taken aback but nodded vigorously, "Okay!"

"Don't forget to find Wen Runuan's assistant later," Qin Mu reminded her again.

"Uh-huh, I've already contacted her assistant; I'll go straight to the studio later," Yang Qianxi replied.

Qin Mu nodded and didn't say anything more.

Yang Qianxi watched her for a while, seeing that Qin Mu was about to start working, she unconsciously bit her lower lip.

Qin Mu felt her lingering and looked up again to see if she had something difficult to express.