

His Beloved 331

Chapter 331: Compensation Required by President Mu (8)_2

"Suddenly? Doesn't make sense?"

Yang Qianxi walked beside her, not quite understanding, and asked.

"Yes! It's normal for a young master who has just returned from abroad to throw a party, but it's not normal to order couture for so many friends at the party, especially when he not only wants to order, but also to design the latest styles. Do you think that makes sense?"

Qin Mu glanced at her and continued walking forward.

Arriving at the corner, Yang Qianxi couldn't help but frown and mumble for a while, but in the end, she had to ask, "Aren't rich people all capricious like that?"

"I'm not afraid to tell you, even Mr. Mu's suits are not all designed by designers."

Yang Qianxi...

"That's why I say he's strange. Is he being generous by taking on the couture for so many people, or does he have another plan?"

"So you suspect he is here to cause trouble?"

"Not sure, but at times like this, anything uncertain should be directly rejected."

Qin Mu responded, continuing to move forward, near to the restaurant.

However, Yang Qianxi suddenly stopped, pondered for a moment, and when she thought of those two women, she immediately ran after Qin Mu: "I got it. Are you worried that this person is related to Qin Mingzhu?"

Qin Mu did not speak, just smiled and walked with her to the restaurant.

All was mere speculation, so there was no need to overthink it; just reject it.

But when Qin Mu and Yang Qianxi reached the restaurant, they were taken aback.

The whole restaurant, besides their studio's staff, was occupied by the Mu Family's aunt and Feng Fanghua, with Feng Fanghua sitting at a table near the door with a dark face, staring coldly at Qin Mu as she entered, regardless of what Qin Mu thought.

"Is this how you take care of my granddaughter? Handing her over to just anybody, and even letting them give her Coke?" Feng Fanghua asked angrily, fortunately refraining from pounding the table outside due to her upbringing.

The two young girls inside the bar were curiously watching the scene, visibly frightened.

Because just now, the other customers had been sent away, this wealthy lady holding the little girl had booked their entire store.

The place was not very big but had attracted some people who worked nearby because of its exquisite decor and delicious food. It was the first time someone so generously booked the entire venue, and not only the staff but even the usually calm owner was excited.

After entering, Yang Qianxi saw Feng Fanghua and then looked toward Qin Mu, naturally recognizing her as Qin Mu's mother-in-law.

She had heard that Qin Mu and Mu Yi hadn't married yet, but because of the child, Qin Mu had already moved to live with the Mu Family, so in practice, she was the mother-in-law. Yang Qianxi felt this mother-in-law seemed quite formidable, and she was actually a bit scared.

But she thought, if someone bullies Qin Mu now, she wouldn't allow it either.

"They are all very familiar with each other, and Huanhuan knows them."

Qin Mu whispered, suddenly sounding a bit annoyed.

"What is this attitude? Are you giving me attitude? Familiar? Just because they are familiar, they can give her a drink? Let her eat junk food?" "Mom, it's okay for a child to eat a bit of junk food occasionally."

Qin Mu couldn't stand Feng Fanghua's attitude, knowing Feng Fanghua was not usually like this. Sometimes she herself would take Huanhuan to eat junk food, but right now, after Mu Yichen had moved her and Huanhuan out.

"I don't want to hear so much from you. Since you're incapable of taking care of my granddaughter properly, I will take her away."

Feng Fanghua said, standing up with Huanhuan in her arms.

Huanhuan didn't understand what they were arguing about, but she could tell they were fighting, so she looked at her grandmother and then her mother worriedly, now missing her father a little.

"Mom, you can't do this. I know you treasure Huanhuan, but she isn't a delicate flower raised in a greenhouse. Just like how you take her to early education classes, you want her to interact with more people. Why can't she spend time with my team?"

"Is that the same thing?"

Feng Fanghua asked again, her voice still elevated.

"Isn't it the same? The principle is the same!"

Qin Mu didn't understand, didn't understand why Feng Fanghua had turned up at this restaurant, didn't understand why Feng Fanghua was so angry; there was really no need, was there?

No one was stopping the grandmother from visiting her granddaughter.

"Are people the same? Are children the same as adults?"

Feng Fanghua pressed on, and the aunt standing by seemed nervous as she glanced at Qin Mu with a pleading look. Qin Mu, after seeing the aunt's look, managed to suppress her temper again with great difficulty.

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During this time, she had really held back her temper time and time again because of Feng Fanghua and the Mu Family. She kept all the kindness shown by Feng Fanghua and Mu Zihao towards her in her heart. However, she truly couldn't accept this way of interacting, this mode of communication.

Even if the Mandarin of these foreign colleagues wasn't up to par, after all this time spent here, they had come to understand these simple words. They were all looking at Qin Mu and Feng Fanghua with disapproving eyes.

"Mom, it's okay for you to take Huanhuan home. I'll call her dad to pick her up later, but you really can't say things like what you just said," Qin Mu said.

"You think I'm eager to waste my breath on you?" said Feng Fanghua coldly, then walked away with the child in her arms.

"Mommy!"

Huanhuan suddenly burst into tears.

Qin Mu had just raised her hand to her forehead, worrying. Hearing her daughter's cry, her heart broke immediately, and tears instantly welled in her eyes, sparkling.

"Mommy, Huanhuan wants to stay with Mommy! Mommy..."

Qin Mu had no choice but to turn around and walk over. Feng Fanghua was also anxious seeing her granddaughter crying: Huanhuan, grandma will take you home to eat delicious food, and there are lots of toys.

"I want Mommy, Huanhuan wants Mommy!"

Huanhuan suddenly cried like a little girl caught in the rain, with large tears rolling down her face.

Qin Mu stepped forward and, regardless of whether Feng Fanghua was pleased or not, directly snatched Huanhuan from Feng Fanghua's arms. "Mom, since Huanhuan wants to be with me, then you can come and take her another day."

Qin Mu, holding back her tears and patiently talking to her, held Huanhuan and gently patted her back, hoping she would stop crying.

Feng Fanghua couldn't help but choke up as well, feeling cold inside as she saw her granddaughter as if frightened by her, as though a knife was being dragged across her own flesh.

"Remember, don't let strange men hold her again, and don't let her eat junk food any more," Feng Fanghua said before leaving, not forgetting to instruct her.

"Okay!"

Qin Mu subconsciously agreed, and after Feng Fanghua left, she watched the door move, watched Feng Fanghua and the maid get into the car, then turned her head to look at her daughter.

"Mommy, Huanhuan wants to always be with you."

Huanhuan murmured grievously, tears still running down her cheeks.

"Of course, we will always be together. Mommy and Huanhuan will never be apart," Qin Mu responded softly, comforting her, gently stroking her head, kissing her forehead, her cheeks.

It took a while for Huanhuan to calm down, but the lunch they had was not very cheerful.

As if they were misunderstood?

Especially the young male colleague who had just held Huanhuan, who was already thin-skinned due to his youth, felt his pride hurt after hearing Feng Fanghua's words, and ate his meal with his head down, barely touching his chopsticks.

Qin Mu guessed that he might be the one who had held Huanhuan and was even more troubled.

Ever since she returned from Paris, Feng Fanghua had changed, as if she became annoyed at the mere sight of her.

Everyone was talking about the sensational news concerning her, Jian Yan, Mu Yichen, and Jing Qing's abnormal romantic relationships, but Feng Fanghua also was supposed to be someone in the know.

Feng Fanghua originally visited the studio a few times, always giving off a particularly aloof impression, and now it seemed impossible for everyone to only think of her as simply cold.

That afternoon, when Wen Runuan came to find her, she noticed something was off with Qin Mu's mood. But Wen Runuan, who was always the best at conversation, didn't just casually ask her about it but said lightly with a smile, "Did you know there's a male star pursuing Jing Qing lately?"

Only the two of them were in the office. Qin Mu was hunched over, furiously sketching. She just gave a faint smile when she heard that, but her hands kept moving.

Wen Runuan stood in front of the mannequin in her office, touching the fabric on its body, "I heard he's also from a second-generation wealth and has a good family background, and it seems he's acting under the direction of her father."

Only then did Qin Mu react, lifting her gaze from the paper on her desk to look at Wen Runuan.

Wen Runuan was still smiling lightly, only saying, "Interested now?"

"Is his surname Yang?" Qin Mu asked, a glint of light in her eyes.

"How did you know? Have you seen him?" Wen Runuan asked curiously.

"Yes, I have seen him!" Qin Mu laughed softly to herself, her laughter implying that everything made sense now.

This man had come for Jing Qing, and thinking back to his arrogance, as if he couldn't care less about anyone else, Qin Mu found him to be quite the extraordinary young master.

"But he looks to be only about twenty-three or twenty-four years old."

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"Twenty-four, his ancestors were from Rongcheng, but no one has come back for many years. Coming back this time, I'm afraid it's not that simple."

Wen Runuan continued speaking. Qin Mu listened and gradually lowered her head, gazing at her drawing paper again.

"I heard about this from Director Zhang; I'm not very clear on the specifics. By the way, I've been thinking about checking out the gynecology and obstetrics department soon. Do you have time to come with me?"

Qin Mu looked at her curiously, "What for?"

She had never gone for a check-up there, except when she was having a baby.

"What do you think? Hasn't your mother-in-law asked about having a second child? Don't you want to give Huanhuan a little sister or brother?" Wen Runuan looked at her with a meaningful gaze, and Qin Mu's already cool demeanor turned even colder.

She lowered her head, giving a helpless, wry smile, "How would I know if the child I bear in the future will be a boy or a girl?"

She was angry inside because she didn't know if she would give birth to a son or a daughter, and she didn't want to concern herself with it. However, thinking about the escalating issues with Feng Fanghua did indeed trouble her.

Wen Runuan could hear the problem in her words and involuntarily asked, "Did you have a fight with your mother-in-law?" "I wouldn't dare!"

Qin Mu laughed and replied after hearing this.

How could she dare to argue with Feng Fanghua? She only hoped Feng Fanghua wouldn't be too hard on her. She truly appreciated those moments when Feng Fanghua was comforting and understanding her. Initially, Feng Fanghua's anger at her was easy to explain after coming back from Paris, but afterward...

For some reason, she felt that Feng Fanghua still hadn't accepted her at heart; at the slightest issue, Feng would start finding faults with her, even demanding her to swear an oath.

She could tolerate it all, but after this afternoon, she really had enough. Was it necessary for her, who shamelessly ran to France to start a business, to endure Feng Fanghua's attitude? Was it right or justified for Feng Fanghua to humiliate her colleagues like that?

"But does your bad mood have something to do with your mother-in-law?"

Wen Runuan asked, conveying her concern as a friend and wishing to share the burden of Qin Mu's hidden troubles.

Qin Mu then put down her pencil, chuckled despairingly, and said, "I've been thinking, if it were my own mother who said those words to me,—I would have probably blown up by now."

But such an opportunity never came.

"It seems you indeed had a fight, but now that you've moved out, you should try to let it go. At least she loves your daughter."

Qin Mu merely smiled, her mind flashing to Huanhuan crying for her mother in Feng Fanghua's arms—a little girl already knew fear and dread, and the future interactions within their extended family...

Some matters really become scarier the more one thinks about them.

Even though Mu Yichen had moved her into an apartment, whenever she thought of the difficult mother-in-law relationship, she still felt a headache.

She felt that she was having a hard time adapting, or perhaps she wasn't trying hard enough.

She didn't want to take her anger out on anyone; she believed she would definitely make an effort to do well.

Later, when Huanhuan woke up from her nap, Wen Runuan played with her for a while, looking at the Barbie doll she was holding curiously, she asked, "Does she really like this Barbie? She even sleeps with it."

Qin Mu looked toward the Barbie, falling into a habitual silence.

What could she say? A simple 'It was sent by the child's maternal grandfather'? So the child treasures it especially?

But she didn't want to say it, not even half a word about that man.

She heard he had recently been out at meetings, apparently overwhelmed with all sorts of affairs toward the year's end.

Qin Mingzhu and Zhang Rujia had not troubled her for several days—were they nervous because they were caught trying to steal her design drafts?

But that mother and daughter would start causing trouble again in just a few days—that was the usual pattern.

She remembered going to see Helian Hao and running into Zhang Rujia at the gynecologist, then she thought about how Helian Hao had intended to set up Zhang Rujia, and she couldn't help but lean against the wall and chuckle softly.

The big and small sitting by the bed both looked at her, and Qin Mu, realizing eyes were upon her face, quickly stifled her slightly mischievous laugh, turning to ask, "So you really are planning to have a baby?"

"Yes! Actually, I was pregnant twice before, but I didn't keep them. This time, I probably won't do that."

Wen Runuan picked up Huanhuan onto her lap, though Huanhuan quickly slid off and ran away.

Qin Mu didn't like to pry into others' personal affairs and simply nodded.

After all, such a matter is something no woman would want. Miscarriage is one thing to the body, but the sudden arrival of a little life, and then its departure is so...

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A woman got pregnant, and if capable, would want to bring the child into the world.

"He brought it up this time, and given my physical condition, I don't know when I could get pregnant, so let's just start trying, after all,—I actually really want a child now."

Wen Runuan suddenly thought that even if one day she had nothing, at least she would have a child.

Even if it was just mother and daughter relying on each other, but that at least meant having someone to cling to, a reason to live, a future. "Alright, I've got to entertain those big shots tonight, so I won't disturb your work anymore."

Wen Runuan said as she picked up the pretty little bag next to her and stood up.

Qin Mu walked her out while continuing to chat with her for a bit, and after Wen Runuan left, Qin Mu still stood at the door of the studio, bracing the cold wind.

This afternoon she had wanted to find that male colleague to apologize, but feared being too deliberate and making him feel worse, so she had not taken action.

At four o'clock, Mu Yichen finished his work and hurried over. Seeing his little daughter playing downstairs, he walked over, scooped her up and, looking at her slightly resentful little eyes, worriedly asked: How come? Who has bullied our family's little princess?

Huanhuan didn't speak, but just looked around at everyone.

Mu Yichen then also looked at the staff in the vicinity, but didn't notice anything unusual. Groups of two or three were discussing something, seemingly very busy. Could it be that his daughter felt neglected?

Without much thought, Mu Yichen carried her upstairs to find Qin Mu, and as soon as they stepped up, those people downstairs stopped working and looked up.

They were discontent but dared not show it; after all, they were just designers, originally thinking Mr. Mu was easy to talk to. But after today's interaction with his mother, they decided it was better to be careful when dealing with the Mu family in the future.

Qin Mu, hearing someone running in, knew it was Huanhuan and that Mu wasn't far behind.

Huanhuan always ran extra merrily whenever she had Mu's protection.

"Mommy, Daddy's here!"

Huanhuan ran over to notify her, and Qin Mu couldn't help but laugh, her eyes filled with indulgence. She glanced again at Mu approaching the doorway: Are you done with work?

"Yes!"

He confirmed, walking to her side, looking at the drawing she was working on, and then asked: Is our daughter not quite happy today?

Qin Mu looked up at him: "Why do you say that?"

"Just now, she seemed unhappy downstairs."

"You aren't suspecting my team of bullying my daughter, are you? I can assure you, that's absolutely impossible."

Qin Mu shook her head seriously as she replied.

"Then there must be something else, right?"

Mu's perception was acute.

Was it really okay that he had just arrived and already keenly sensed that his daughter was unhappy?

"Maybe she was just a bit groggy after waking up from her nap."

Qin Mu found an excuse, thinking that she still shouldn't tell him about Feng Fanghua's visit. Could it be because of that, her colleagues had deliberately distanced themselves from Huanhuan?

If that was the case, then she needed to have a serious talk with those people. It wasn't right to take out adult issues on a child, especially not on her precious daughter.

Mu Yichen, watching her draw seriously again for a while, later took his daughter into his arms: "I'm taking Huanhuan to buy groceries, what would you like for dinner?"

"Hmm, I like anything you make!"

Who could be picky about their meal? Moreover, there was no need for her to be picky about his cooking, because he knew her tastes, he knew all her habits.

Yes, they had been officially married for less than a year, but she felt as if they had been living together for many years already.

She recalled her childhood with him in Paris, those distant years that were now unreachable, where both children were watched by guardians, yet they had secretly planted an inconspicuous seed in each other's hearts.

That seed had long since sprouted into a towering tree, so robust that others could not meddle.

They were finally together, following their hearts' desires, despite some minor imperfections.

Yes, though she didn't dare possess it, she had still foolishly hoped for it.

Back then, how greatly her younger self had wished he would love her for a lifetime.

It was a dream both grand and impractical. Even now, she was not sure if they could last a lifetime, but at least they had taken the first step.

When Mu Yichen stepped out of the studio with Huanhuan, he put her on his shoulders and, holding her little hands, walked towards the grocery-selling place.

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This street was very quiet. Although it wasn't spacious and was paved with old bluestone, walking here felt substantial.

Passing by that restaurant at noon, Huanhuan subconsciously pointed inside to Mu Yichen.

"Want to go there? Is Huanhuan hungry?"

Mu Yichen glanced up but Huanhuan just shook her head after hearing his words and then said nothing.

It was the restaurant owner who came out just then. Since Mu Yichen and Qin Mu had visited a couple of times, he recognized them, came over to greet him, and made Huanhuan laugh, talking about something that happened at noon.

Later on, Mu Yichen continued on to the supermarket for grocery shopping, but the restaurant owner's words stayed in his mind.

It seemed that she still couldn't learn to tell him the truth.

He probably knew she was worried about him and Feng Fanghua becoming estranged. Didn't he think about it too?

The last person in the world who wanted to be estranged from Feng Fanghua was himself. However, from the moment he decided to follow Qin Mu, he was prepared for the worst.

Back then, Feng Fanghua and Mu Zihao were reluctant to let him go to Paris. Fortunately, Mu Qingxin was still at home then, so the old couple could bear parting with him.

Thinking of that girl Mu Qingxin, she should be returning soon, right?

While shopping, watching Huanhuan enjoy the store owner's washed cherry tomatoes, he made his selections with peace of mind and took the opportunity to call Mu Qingxin. It took a while for the other end to answer, still drowsy: "Bro!"

"You haven't gotten up yet?"

"I'm so idle I sleep all day, hehe!"

The voice on the other end was still weak, but playfully mischievous.

"You're coming back for the New Year."

His voice was calm, no nonsense.

"What's up? Did something happen at home?"

"You wouldn't come back if nothing happened? Don't you want this home anymore?"

Mu Yichen asked her with a frown.

"Of course not, but well..."

"You must come back for your sister-in-law's fashion show on the twenty-seventh. If I don't see you by the morning of the twenty-seventh, I'll immediately send someone to fetch you, understand?"

There was a pause on the other end, and without saying anything more, he hung up and turned back to his daughter, who, because the fruits were fresh, had unwittingly become addicted to eating them. She kept standing there, not leaving, her chin smeared with juice.

Those dark, long lashes were even more enchanting, two eyes with black and bright pupils, focused solely on the simple dish of cherry tomatoes.

As if she were tasting such a heavenly flavor for the first time.

Therefore, Mu Yichen eventually picked some too and, when paying, left without requiring change, carrying his daughter and the groceries.

Huanhuan hadn't had her fill, but it was too cold outside, so Mu Yichen wiped her hands clean and didn't let her eat any more.

That evening, back home, one was cooking while the other sat on the carpet in front of the sofa. Both hands perched on the coffee table, drawing. Someone else played with toys and watched cartoons nearby.

Every now and then, Huanhuan would grab a piece of her mother's paper to tear for fun. She found it very interesting. When Qin Mu, tired and shoulders aching, looked up...

She caught sight of the little girl beside her tearing paper into strips.

How bored must she be?

"Huanhuan, are you bored?"

Qin Mu asked her softly, as if casually chatting with his daughter.

Huanhuan shook her head as if she didn't quite understand, then suddenly grabbed a strip of paper from the table and threw it at her own face.

Qin Mu...

Why was his little girl becoming more and more mischievous?

Haha, alright, she liked Huanhuan this way. Then she swept up the paper strips from the ground, tearing them smaller to throw back at her daughter.

"Ah!"

Huanhuan joyfully tried to embrace the falling bits of paper but only ended up hugging her own chest.

Then she watched the papers fall onto her feet and took two steps back, as if she wanted to be close to them but was afraid of soiling them.

When Mu Yichen came out, he saw the paper scraps on the carpet and instantly frowned.

Qin Mu was still focused on her drawings, while Huanhuan had secretly pulled out another piece of paper to continue tearing. Catching sight of her dad standing not far away, she quietly put the paper back and bit her lip with her small white teeth, seemingly fearing that she might let out a peep.

Mu Yichen shook his head helplessly but laughed.

He wondered if tearing paper really helped with brain development?

The problem was, what if she tore up her mother's drawings?

Clearly, the person working had already thought of this and had put the finished drawings aside well in advance.

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It wasn't until mealtime that Qin Mu finally put down her pen, and as her long fingers moved, she suddenly felt a bit of a twist in her hand. Mu Yichen watched her, put down his chopsticks, and reached out to touch her hand, helping her to massage it.

Huanhuan sat opposite them, watching as Mu Yichen massaged Qin Mu's fingers.

Qin Mu looked up and saw her daughter's big eyes fixed on her hand, then commanded, "Huanhuan, eat your food!"

Huanhuan glanced at her mother, appearing to be disinterested in listening, and continued to stare at her hand as it was being massaged by her father's hand.

Qin Mu felt awkward under her daughter's gaze and wanted to pull her hand away from Mu Yichen's, but she just couldn't manage it.

Mu Yichen massaged her for a good while and kneaded her fingers before finally letting go.

The rest of the meal passed in relative silence, and Mu Yichen didn't bring up Feng Fanghua's matter; it seemed as if the issue had been left behind.

Many issues remained unresolved—what was right or wrong, or how long one could tolerate, nobody knew.

Later, Qin Mu, sitting cross-legged on the sofa, continued to draw, and Huanhuan climbed up onto the sofa and suddenly pulled at her sleeve.

Qin Mu, curious, lowered her gaze to the little girl beside her who had taken her hand, then clutched and gently pinched it. At that moment, Qin Mu's heart softened suddenly, as if there was no greater bliss in the world than this.

While pinching Qin Mu's hand, Huanhuan still looked at her mother, biting her little lips, those glistening eyes seeming to ask if Qin Mu felt really comfortable.

How could it not be comfortable? Qin Mu smiled at her as an answer, and Huanhuan's face immediately lit up with a smile.

Qin Mu saw in Huanhuan's eyes as if to ask, "Mom, am I better at massaging or is dad?"

"Our Huanhuan is the best, you can even give mom massages now, right?"

Qin Mu pinched her little cheek as she spoke.

Huanhuan smiled proudly, still quite composed, then let go of her hand and walked away, with an expression that suggested she had received her praise and was now free to ignore everything else.

Qin Mu...

Could only acknowledge the fact that her daughter must have been tired from the brief massage.

Later, as Mu Yichen sat on the sofa, Huanhuan climbed onto his lap and he watched a cartoon with her for a while until she fell asleep.

Mu Yichen, while holding Huanhuan, looked anxiously at his wife, thinking he probably needed to nourish this woman soon or else she would collapse from exhaustion.

And they would also have to reduce their bedroom activities, or else she wouldn't be able to handle it physically; as he thought about this, his mind also wandered to the compensation he would need after the New Year.

That night she was reluctant to put down her drawing board, intending to continue working in bed, but Mu Yichen simply took it away, pressed himself on top of her, and looked at her with his dark eyes: "Do you still remember the compensation you said you'd give me in the hospital?"

"Hmm? What are you talking about?"

I don't understand a single word.

That was the message conveyed by Qin Mu's eyes as she lay beneath him; she didn't understand a single word.

Mu Yichen, frustrated, lowered his head to nip her: "Remember now?"

"If I don't finish this drawing, the work will pile up onto tomorrow, then day after day, after a while I'll be insanely busy." "You're already so busy that you don't even recognize your own husband!" Mu Yichen reminded her sadly.

"Wasn't it because you made me stay home with you all day yesterday?"

"So this is how you plan to appease me tonight?"

His low voice asked her, and after asking, he gently nibbled on the side of her chin and then kissed the edge of her ear. Qin Mu trembled slightly from the kisses: "Mu Yichen..."

"Say husband!"

"Mhm, husband!"

"Say you'll compensate me, hmm?"

His husky voice continued as he licked behind her ear, coaxing and bewitching her.

But but...

"How do you want it?"

She asked him, distressed, now stirred up by him, only wanting him to hurry up and proceed.

He whispered in her ear, his devilishly alluring eyes gazing at a certain spot, the flame in his eyes suddenly blazing.

The next morning, after going to the studio, Qin Mu first went to her office, intending to drop off her things and then go downstairs for the meeting, but she didn't expect to receive a white invitation on her desk.

It was a very exquisite invitation, the location stated as AM.

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Qin Mu couldn't fathom why Mr. Yang would send her an invitation, but there she was, standing with Wen Runuan in AM's most luxurious banquet hall.

It could be said that both of them were regulars here, but still, there was a sense of unfamiliarity.

Especially Qin Mu, who, looking at the hustle and bustle inside, suddenly felt like an outsider.

Despite wearing a gown that was modest yet strikingly valuable, she still didn't want to step forward and enter.

"Ready?"

Wen Runuan, on the other hand, had long been accustomed to seeing all kinds of unfamiliar faces and was used to playing a certain role in front of them. She suddenly turned around and asked Qin Mu softly.

Qin Mu turned back, locked eyes with her, offered a shallow smile, and then they both lifted their skirts and walked into the crowd together.

Clearly not the main character, but they exuded the aura of one.

Undoubtedly eye-catching, they hardly needed any makeup to become the focal point of the entire room.

Mr. Yang, along with Qin Mingzhu and Jing Qing, stood together, and when he saw Qin Mu and Wen Runuan arrive, he couldn't help but laugh with a playful look in his eyes: indeed, they were breathtaking!

Every movement of Wen Runuan was as trained as Jing Qing's, and even every glance she knew where to cast most fittingly, she handled herself with such ease here. Her thin lips curved slightly, and her inner double-lidded eyes slightly bent, made it such a treat for the gentlemen to lay eyes on someone like her at a common gathering.

As for Qin Mu...

Mr. Yang still remembered seeing Qin Mu at her studio a few days ago, dressed in comfortable light-colored clothing, with her long hair casually gathered to one side. Now, facing her, she appeared like a dazzling queen, her gaze devoid of everyone, yet seemingly holding the world within it.

It was difficult to divert one's gaze from this woman.

When Qin Mu saw him, she also gave a slight nod, then approached and set down the fabric in her hand, nodding simply: Mr. Yang!

"Thank you, two beauties, for gracing this event with your presence!"

Mr. Yang said, taking a cup from a passing waiter and handing it to Wen Runuan, and then giving one to Qin Mu, looking completely different from the twenty-three or twenty-four-year-old boy he appeared to be on the day they had met.

Qin Mu gave him an extra glance when she took the glass, then looked beside him, where Jing Qing stood to his left, naturally full of airs. Jing Qing's strong presence no doubt made many feel suffocated, including Wen Runuan present there.

But Qin Mu just offered a slight smile: Miss Jing, we meet again.

Jing Qing hadn't expected such a greeting and her already unpleasant face became even more so.

"Miss Jing? I heard you two used to live in the same courtyard when you were kids, and were good sisters, right?"

Mr. Yang looked down at Qin Mu and then at Jing Qing.

Qin Mingzhu stood on the other side, holding her breath, silently waiting for the drama to unfold, her expression conservative.

Wen Runuan, on the other hand, involuntarily raised her eyebrows, looking at the man stirring trouble.

"You probably don't understand the Miss Qin in front of you," Jing Qing said softly with scornful laughter. "She doesn't like to be sisters with anyone."

Jing Qing's eyes on Qin Mu held what seemed to be an irreconcilable hatred, yet she concealed it slightly.

Qin Mu smiled faintly and said no more.

"Is that so? I find Miss Qin quite pleasant to get along with."

Mr. Yang spoke in a non-offensive tone, but with a few words, he managed to turn Jing Qing's face white with anger.

"If Mr. Yang likes Miss Qin so much, why not try pursuing her? I'm sure with Mr. Yang's magnanimity, the small matter of her having a child out of wedlock wouldn't be a concern, right?"

Jing Qing suddenly laughed with a tinge of sarcasm.

A few people around, curious, pricked up their ears to listen, and those who had been chatting animatedly fell silent, watching curiously towards their direction.

In the vast banquet hall, an awkwardness ensued.

"I remember seeing a little girl when I visited your studio the other day, oh right, it's said she's your precious daughter with Mr. Chen, right? It seems the Mu Family elders also quite like the girl."

"Yes!"

Mr. Yang continued to speak politely with her, unaffected by Jing Qing's words.

Qin Mu, seeing his attitude, likewise, answered with composure.

Wen Runuan, observing the expressions of the few people in front of her, felt some things didn't quite add up, but it wasn't the right moment to analyze this with Qin Mu, so she simply stood there politely.

Jing Qing turned and glared at Mr. Yang for a few seconds, then, frustrated, she bypassed him and strode out.

Mr. Yang tilted his head slightly, watching Jing Qing leave and then frowned helplessly with a wry smile: what troublesome woman, but my old man insists I chase after her. You tell me, how should I, so young, chase a woman who's nearly thirty?

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Not only Qin Mu and Wen Runuan, but Qin Mingzhu's expression was so exaggeratedly frightened that her eyeballs almost popped out.

"But I think the few of us can be friends, right? We are all about the same age, aren't we?"

Young Master Yang suddenly became childish again.

Qin Mu...

Wen Runuan also felt that this man really had too much of a split personality.

Qin Mingzhu was standing next to him, so with a stretch of his arm, he wrapped it around her shoulders, scaring Qin Mingzhu into raising her hand to her chest, hunching her shoulders and looking at him with a pale face.

It seemed that this young master still knew too little about the affairs in Rongcheng.

However, if he knew so little, why did he go to her to commission a custom dress as soon as he came back?

She turned to look at the crowd around her, some of whom were looking at her, while others whispered among themselves. Qin Mu knew her reputation in Rongcheng had been set in everyone's minds long ago, so she couldn't be bothered, but as she looked at these so-called young ladies and masters, she realized she barely recognized a few.

Oh, she knew Qin Mingzhu and Jing Qing.

She had always known that the younger generation in the city was divided into factions, but this was the first time she felt it so deeply.

It was said that Young Master Yang's family had officials in Beijing, so why come to associate with the Jing Family?

"I'll go see what Miss Jing is up to. If my dad finds out I made her mad, he might clean up after me. Oh, I forgot to tell you guys, my dad is her grandfather's student."

Young Master Yang said with a smile and went off to find Jing Qing, leaving Qin Mu and Wen Runuan looking at each other like fools.

Qin Mu initially thought it was because of Jing Feng?

After all, Jing Feng's prospects on that path were limitless, with the old man paving the way for him. The prosecutor's position was just a start; in the future, the head of the Jing Family would be Jing Feng, and all those connections would fall into Jing Feng's hands — so the man's father was a student of the Jing Family's old master.

Qin Mu suddenly regretted not asking Mu Yichen sooner, as he might have known more, and she wouldn't be so clueless now.

"Stunned, aren't you? Hmph!"

Qin Mingzhu took a disdainful glance at Qin Mu and then proudly went to chat with other girls.

"Qin Mingzhu is also quite a character, huh? How much longer is she going to hop around like this?"

Wen Runuan frowned and asked, feeling that this child needed a lesson looking at Qin Mingzhu's domineering attitude.

"Her father has been in Beijing lately; she's got even more to stir up. Just wait."

Qin Mu laughed softly and replied, feeling that Qin Mingzhu would get in trouble sooner or later.

"Miss Wen!"

Soon, many people surrounded Wen Runuan, asking for autographs, taking photos with her.

Qin Mu was about to leave when a girl grabbed her hand.

"Qin Mu, don't you remember? We were at the same school during kindergarten. Back then, Mu Yi would always come to kindergarten to watch over you after school. He's still managing you now, isn't he?"

Qin Mu twitched her mouth, kindergarten...

She really couldn't recall the events of kindergarten.

"Xiao Yan, what are you talking about? What do you mean Qin Mu is managed by Young Master Yichen? It's clearly Qin Mu who manages Young Master Yichen, okay? Since her return, have you seen Young Master Yichen with any other woman?"

Another one teased.

Everyone was linking arms, like close girlfriends.

"Exactly, but no offense, Qin Mu, before you came back, Young Master Yichen was such a dashing playboy, even more so than Young Master Yang here. Since your return, he dares not even touch another woman." Jia girl jested.

"Yeah, yeah, when he was with Jing Qing before, Jing Qing never had that much control over him." Yi girl also said.

Qin Mu...

Wen Runuan was originally taking photos with fans, but upon hearing this conversation, she instinctively looked at Qin Mu. Although Qin Mu's expression was interesting, she didn't seem angry.

"Ah, look at us, we're really bad at talking."

"Sorry, I'm going to the restroom!"

Qin Mu didn't want to chat with them, and after exchanging a look with the readily adaptable Wen Runuan, she turned and headed for the restroom.

And then on the way, she heard that conversation.

"Have you heard? Jing Qing went to the hospital to have an abortion while she was with Young Master Yichen."

"Who really had Young Master Yichen's child? Now why is it Qin Mu carrying a child to find Young Master Yichen? Wasn't the legitimate partner supposed to be Jing Qing? Is the Jing Family really okay with their daughter just casually sleeping with Young Master Yichen?"

Qin Mu stood at the corner, listening to the conversation of a few women who were smoking and drinking.

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It really was unintentional, but that remark was particularly grating.

Did Yichen really sleep with Jing Qing?

How is that possible?

"Stop talking, that woman is eavesdropping."

Suddenly, the chatting woman glanced over in her direction, then said.

Qin Mu couldn't help but find it amusing, yet she just walked over.

"Eavesdropping? If you're afraid of being overheard, then keep your voices down, find a secluded corner if you're worried about eavesdropping. Aren't you simply speaking so that everyone can hear?"

Qin Mu asked with a sneer.

" You, don't spew lies!"

"Me, spewing lies? Do you want me to grab the microphone over there and let you explain to everyone how I'm supposedly spewing lies?"

With a fierce look in her eyes, Qin Mu stared at her. Was it now so easy for any girl to dare act up in front of her?

Although she usually didn't provoke others, that didn't mean she was easy to bully, okay?

Hearing her words, the three girls immediately acted as if they couldn't afford to provoke her: Let's go, we can't be bothered with her.

"Exactly, why should a slut feel proud? Let's leave."

A slut?

Hah!

Qin Mu watched the woman walking by her, then crossed her arms around herself and slightly extended her foot.

"Ah!"

What sort of scene was it to see three girls tumbling down together?

Standing aside, Qin Mu gazed down at the three women sprawled on the ground, wailing. The one she tripped instinctively grabbed the girl next to her, who happened to be wearing a white strapless dress. In the fall, the only graspable spot on her back was torn, revealing her chest completely.

Suddenly, the scene turned chaotic, and everyone turned to look in this direction. When the three of them raised their heads to call for help and saw everyone's shocked expressions, especially the girl in the middle who covered her chest immediately after noticing it exposed, and then she let out a loud scream: Ah...

Qin Mu laughed softly, then turned to head for the restroom.

Although Young Master Yang was not present, Jing Qing leaned against the counter inside the restroom, smoking a cigarette with the aura of a celestial being brought down to the mortal world.

Amidst curling smoke, Jing Qing offered her a cigarette in a low voice: Want one?

Qin Mu walked over, and Jing Qing pulled out a metal cigarette case from her bag with a sharp look in her eyes, opening it in front of Qin Mu.

Qin Mu took one, not recognizing the brand but it looked quite expensive.

"So you smoke!"

After a few seconds, Jing Qing asked with a frown as she saw Qin Mu smoking quite comfortably.

"Humph! I sneakily learned before!"

She said with a smile, resting one hand against the other elbow, the smoking hand dangling by her shoulder, her sensuous fingers gently waving away the smoke.

The gesture seemed practiced.

Jing Qing couldn't help but laugh scornfully, but in the next moment, she took another drag from her cigarette with a trembling hand.

Qin Mu looked at her, remaining silent.

Between them, they no longer needed words to know what was on each other's mind.

Qin Mu knew she couldn't handle Jing Qing, and Jing Qing also knew she couldn't handle Qin Mu with Mu Yichen in the picture.

"Heard you moved out of the Mu family house again?"

Jing Qing asked after a moment.

"Yeah! You must have played a big part in that, didn't you? Thanks for giving us the opportunity to move out."

"What do you mean?"

Qin Mu had already started talking when she heard Jing Qing ask what she meant, and then she smiled faintly, her half-lowered eyes undoubtedly sharp.

"Do we still need to play dumb with each other? If not for you, who else would dare to expose Mu Yichen's woman? And who else would dare to blow the lid on the Jing family's eldest daughter?"

Qin Mu locked eyes with her, her piercing gaze nearly causing Jing Qing's suppressed anger to burst. Luckily, she had a cigarette between her fingers, puffing on it furiously before she was about to explode.

"Frankly, the more you do this, the more annoyed Mu Yichen will become."

After a few puffs, Qin Mu felt a bit uncomfortable, glancing at the still-burning cigarette butt before walking over to the trashcan to snuff it out, casually warning Jing Qing.

"Is this a warning, or are you flaunting your relationship with him to me?"

"Do I need to flaunt it? He's always been mine ever since we were kids."

"You... As I said before, it's too early to jump to conclusions about who he belongs to."

Jing Qing's face turned even worse, her hand shaking more violently.

Qin Mu turned back around, but just crossed her arms and looked down, seeing the foot of the woman she had just tripped over who called her a slut, and said in a soft voice with a chuckle: Jing Qing, I think it's wisest for you to stop here, back off now and he'll still be your friend, or perhaps your so-called childhood sweetheart.

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"What if I don't?"

Jing Qing felt somewhat provoked.

"If you don't, then when Mu Yichen turns his face, I'm afraid ten Jing Fengs won't be able to redeem it. You would completely lose this friend, or perhaps never be able to meet again. The power is in your own hands."

Qin Mu was somewhat serious, but very composed and steady.

"What right do you have to lecture me?"

After hearing those words, Jing Qing was even more infuriated, her breathing trembled with anger. She had never allowed anyone to question her, but now...

"I have no right to lecture you, I'm just reminding you. This is the first time, and it will be the last."

As Qin Mu spoke, she looked up at Jing Qing, and seeing Jing Qing about to explode with anger, she turned and walked away.

And Jing Qing, after she turned and stepped out of the restroom, clutched her own arms, leaned against the washbasin, and stretched her neck out with effort.

Later, the manager came up to her: Miss Qin, the president is waiting for you downstairs.

Qin Mu was chatting with Wen Runuan and a rather demure girl. Hearing this, the two women immediately said to her, "Go ahead! There's nothing fun here anyway."

Well, that young master Yang had vanished a long time ago. Qin Mu knew there was no need to say goodbye to the host, so she followed the manager downstairs.

But downstairs, she ran into young master Yang, who was drinking in the same private room with Mu Yi.

And moreover, it was President Mu who sat in the most important position, while young master Yang, despite his triumphant return, still sat below him.

After Qin Mu entered, she gave an awkward smile and unconsciously asked, "What's happening here?"

"Mummy!"

Huanhuan, who was standing by the sofa playing, turned immediately upon hearing her mother's voice. Once she confirmed it was her mother, she ran to her.

Qin Mu lowered her head to watch Huanhuan approach, then scooped her up and walked over to the seat that young master Yang had pulled out for her.

Qin Mu's heart skipped a beat, but she could only smile gracefully and say, "Thank you!"

"Sister-in-law, you're too polite!"

Young master Yang said with a smile, and only returned to his seat after she had sat down holding Huanhuan.

Qin Mu looked at the two of them: "You two knew each other from before?"

"Yichen was my senior. I even played basketball with him before."

Qin Mu...

"I just found out he was back too. Coincidentally, when you said you were attending a party here, I called him to come over for a drink. I didn't expect that the party you attended was hosted by that same young master Yang."

Qin Mu...

"Hehe!"

"Little sister-in-law, I truly apologize. Please don't take it to heart."

Yang Ming apologized to her in a manner that was more like a normal person.

Qin Mu could only smile in return.

"The other day, it was Jing Qing who called me to your studio. She promised that if I did that thing for her, she wouldn't trouble me about our date. She said you would seize any opportunity to make money, who would've known you'd reject it so directly - which is why I had to organize this party today. It was actually just for my parents to see ambiguous photos of me and Jing Qing."

"They say a woman three years older is a golden treasure; you might try it."

Qin Mu joked.

"Little sister-in-law, don't joke with me about that. Not to mention her personality, her heart already belongs to someone else."

Yang Ming said, and he glanced at Mu Yi unconsciously, his smile turning awkward.

Qin Mu also looked up at Mu Yi, suddenly remembering the girls mentioning Jing Qing had an abortion because of him.

Damnit, when would such rumors ever stop?

Or would they never cease?

That night after Qin Mu put Huanhuan to sleep, she returned to her room and asked, "Is this Yang Ming's family very powerful?"

"Yes, his grandfather and maternal grandfather were both very influential upstairs. Even though they're retired now, their networks are still intact."

Hearing this, Qin Mu couldn't help but nod her head, walked over to his side, and sat on the bed before carelessly throwing herself into his arms.

Mu Yichen raised his hand to gently stroke her hair as he too gazed at the light in that spot.

"This young master, he has multiple personas. He's one person in front of me, another at social gatherings, and yet another in your presence."

Qin Mu said, looking up at Mu Yichen.

"Do you think it's just you who has a singular persona?"

Mu Yichen asked her.

"Isn't it? At most, dual personas."

"Fool, everyone has many sides."

Mu Yichen said, as if he was a teacher talking to his student, and Qin Mu couldn't help but become fascinated by the teacher giving her a lesson.

She watched him uncontrollably.

"What about you?"

Qin Mu suddenly thought, you, President Mu, are probably the one with the most personas.

"Me? Don't you know already?"