

I Regained 221

Chapter 221: Watching the call disconnect

Sheng Xin, comparing herself to Song Ling's ex-wife, proudly listed her advantages, "Compared to your ex-wife, I believe I present myself better. After all, I studied abroad, participated in different art activities during my school days, and won quite a few notable competitions. I've also attended many high-society banquets with my family."

She enumerated her strengths over Gu Dai, but Song Ling, upon hearing her, couldn't help but have his mind filled with thoughts of Gu Dai instead.

Gu Dai hailed from a wealthier family background than Sheng Xin, was more attractive, knowledgeable in art, proficient in medicine—talents that dwarfed mere artistic endeavors by leagues. Most importantly, at her young age, she had already taken control of the Gu Group, demonstrating exceptional managerial prowess. In just a few months under her leadership, the company had seen significant improvements.

Song Ling realized, Sheng Xin was far from comparable to Gu Dai.

Seeing Song Ling silent, Sheng Xin took the initiative to ask, "What do you think?"

Song Ling responded indifferently, without a hint of emotion, "Hmm."

Stunned, Sheng Xin had thought that after listing her qualities, Song Ling would see her in a new light, but all she got was a noncommittal "Hmm".

Sheng Xin had dressed up deliberately for the occasion, donning a tight black dress that accentuated her proud figure. Yet, Song Ling hadn't glanced her way even once.

Not wanting to admit a lack of charm, Sheng Xin's eyes darted as she grasped at a possible explanation, "I know there's a woman in President Song's heart that he can't seem to let go of."

Song Ling's expression remained unchanged.

Unfazed, Sheng Xin continued, "I also know she saved your life, and that person is Jiang Yue."

Song Ling was surprised; he wasn't one to share personal matters, so how did Sheng Xin come to know of this?

Before Song Ling could inquire, Sheng Xin chuckled and explained, "Coincidentally, Jiang Yue and I were high school classmates, which is how I heard about her saving you."

Song Ling finally spoke, "So what's your purpose today? To speak on behalf of Jiang Yue?"

He was grateful to Jiang Yue for saving him ten years ago.

Amidst a raging fire, smoke had stung his eyes, blinding him, and he couldn't see the girl who saved him. He only remembered her soothing voice, gently saying, "Hang on, I will get you out."

Song Ling suffered burns on his arm in the fire, and when he finally breathed fresh air and felt safe, he passed out from exhaustion.

When he came to, it was Jiang Yue crying by his side, claiming it was she who saved him.

The comforting words of Jiang Yue during the fire were etched into his heart like a brand, and that was the reason he had tolerated her for so long.

But although Song Ling appreciated Jiang Yue's help, she had changed, and he couldn't endure her deceit and lies, nor her constant leveraging of past favors.

Now, he wouldn't listen to anyone speaking on Jiang Yue's behalf.

Sheng Xin tucked a stray lock of hair behind her ear, looking up at Song Ling with a smile, "Of course not. All of us classmates were quite envious of Jiang Yue, thinking she would end up with you, but who knew..."

Song Ling interrupted her, speaking earnestly, "I only intended to repay a debt of gratitude to her."

Sheng Xin paused, looking cautiously at Song Ling's expression, then ventured, "I see. But in this rapidly developing era, there aren't many who value loyalty and righteousness as much as President Song, I..."

Song Ling, not wishing to hear more platitudes, picked up his suit jacket, "Miss Sheng, I don't wish to marry you due to my mother's intentions because I do not want to ruin a woman's life."

Pausing briefly, he continued, "If there's nothing else, Miss Sheng, I must be going."

With those words, Song Ling didn't wait for her response and turned to leave.

Twice interrupted, Sheng Xin's face changed to a touch of displeasure, but thinking of Song Ling's excellence, her spirits lifted somewhat.

Watching Song Ling's departing figure, Sheng Xin's eyes dimmed.

What would Song Ling do to Jiang Yue if he ever discovered the truth behind that life-saving deed?

Song Ling, eager to avoid an encounter with Wang Lan, left the Song residence quickly. To his surprise, as soon as he settled into his car, his phone rang—it was Jiang Yue.

Watching the call disconnect, Song Ling dialed his assistant Zhao Xuan, "Later, call Jiang Yue to find out what she wants. Handle it for her, and don't disturb

me.."

Chapter 222: Why don't you marry her yourself

Jiang Yue repeatedly dialed Song Ling's number, but the calls went unanswered. Finally, her phone rang.

Without even glancing at the caller ID, Jiang Yue answered with a pinched, soft voice, "Brother Song Ling, have you finished work? Remember to eat when you're resting."

A cold voice replied, "Miss Jiang, 1 am Zhao Xuan."

Jiang Yue's expression chilled and her voice turned icy, "Why is it you? Where is Brother Song Ling?"

Zhao Xuan, accustomed to Jiang Yue's swift mood swings, responded indifferently, "President Song is quite busy and has asked me to take care of your matters."

Jiang Yue rolled her eyes, her tone disdainful, "And what exactly can you resolve for me?"

Zhao Xuan felt a pang of annoyance at her tone. Compared to Miss Gu Dai, Jiang Yue was markedly inferior!

Zhao Xuan said, "Miss Jiang, you could try to reach President Song, but I'm not sure he will take your call."

Recalling her unanswered calls to Song Ling, Jiang Yue reluctantly spoke up, "My injury has mostly healed. Arrange an office for me at the company."

Zhao Xuan agreed, "Alright."

Jiang Yue was satisfied with Zhao Xuan's attitude. "Place my office next to Brother Song Ling," she requested.

Jiang Yue began to fantasize about seducing Song Ling, dressed in a tight-fitting black suit.

Zhao Xuan shattered her daydreams with his next words, "I apologize, but the only available space is in the logistics department. The secretary positions are filled."

Jiang Yue was shocked, "What did you say?"

Zhao Xuan repeated his earlier statement.

"But I had already agreed with Brother Song Ling to be a secretary at his company!" Jiang Yue protested.

"Miss Jiang, given your frail condition, the quieter logistics department would be suitable for you to rest more," Zhao Xuan remarked, emphasizing 'frail condition' to subtly mock Jiang Yue.

Absorbed in how the logistics department was the farthest from Song Ling's office, Jiang Yue missed the sarcasm in Zhao Xuan's voice.

"I refuse to go to the logistics department, I won't—" Jiang Yue started angrily.

Zhao Xuan cut her off, ending the call before she could finish.

Fuming, Jiang Yue slammed her hand on the table. The pain shooting through her hand only fueled her inner flames more, prompting her to pick up a glass from the table and hurl it to the ground with ferocity.

Jiang Yue seethed, "It's all that Bit*h Gu Dai's fault for ruining the wedding! If not for her, I'd be married by now, a Mrs. Song with endless money, living leisurely, attending exhibitions, having afternoon tea with the ladies, buying branded items!"

She was convinced that Gu Dai had destroyed everything she had meticulously planned, leading to her current state.

Determined not to let Gu Dai off, Jiang Yue vowed to make her pay.

Still fixated on the idea of becoming a secretary, she tried to call Song Ling again, but after several attempts, the line remained busy.

Meanwhile, Song Ling was enduring a scolding from Wang Lan.

“Wang Lan chided, “Song Ling, how could you just leave Sheng Xin at home alone? Where are your manners as a gentleman?”

Driving, Song Ling replied nonchalantly, “I don’t have any.”

Wang Lan was momentarily speechless, taking deep breaths to compose herself before continuing, “Sheng Xin is an educated and sensible young woman who returned from studying in England. She is the daughter of a friend Mom just met, and our families know each other well. Mom likes her a lot and hopes you take the initiative to marry her and make her my daughter-in-law!”

Song Ling’s face was a mask of cold anger.

Over the years, Wang Lan had not turned into a qualified wealthy matron, lacking in both education and graceful conversation. She mingled with all sorts of people and had introduced him to seven or eight women in just a few days.

If it weren’t for the fact that Wang Lan was his mother, he would have arranged for someone to teach her a lesson long ago.

Oblivious to Song Ling’s ire, Wang Lan persisted, “Even after you left her at home, Xinxin didn’t get angry. That shows her good temperament. You must spend more time with her to nurture your relationship, so that when you get married, you can give me a healthy grandson.”

Song Ling, exasperated, let out a sigh and finally retorted, "I'm too busy for romance.. If you really like Sheng Xin that much, why don't you marry her yourself!"

Chapter 223: Admirer

Zhou Ci raised his glass with a flourish, tilting his head slightly back to drain it in one go. With flushed cheeks, he sprawled lazily on the couch and expressed his surprise, "At this time in the past, you were always buried in work, almost like a shadow that's never seen. Even when I tried to invite you out, you wouldn't come. And here you are today, out of the blue, asking me to meet you at a bar."

Song Ling's brows were tightly knit with a look of irritation, as he methodically sipped his drinks, one after another.

Song Ling remained silent, and Zhou Ci did not press him further, plunging the space between them into a tranquil silence.

Eventually, Song Ling couldn't contain himself and broke the silence, "Gu Dai had lost her memory."

Zhou Ci was stunned. Shock compelled him to stand abruptly, grabbing his coat, ready to rush out.

"What are you doing?" Song Ling asked, seeing this.

Zhou Ci's expression was fraught with urgency, as he blurted out, "Didn't you say Gu Dai has lost her memory? I have to see her—perhaps, I can make her fall in love with me while she's forgotten everything!"

Song Ling's face darkened, and he placed his glass heavily on the table, his voice cold, "Sit down, Gu Dai hasn't lost her memory now!"

After Zhou Ci resumed his seat, still unable to grasp the meaning of Song Ling's earlier words, he inquired, "What did you mean when you said Gu Dai had lost her memory?"

Song Ling was silent for a moment before he slowly revealed, "Three years ago, on that exploding cruise ship, though Gu Dai narrowly escaped death, she lost her memories."

The cruise ship incident had been monumental, and Zhou Ci, connecting the dots, was wide-eyed with disbelief for quite some time before he could compose himself.

Pain filled Zhou Ci's eyes as he murmured, "I had no idea Gu Dai went through so much."

It slowly dawned on Zhou Ci, and he turned to Song Ling, voicing his realization, "So, Gu Dai has changed so much because she lost her memories. No wonder she fell for you."

Song Ling's gaze was dark and piercing as he stared at Zhou Ci.

Zhou Ci cleared his throat, halting his train of thought, yet internally he was affirming his own conclusions.

Filled with regret, Song Ling hung his head and said lowly, "Ever since I found out that Gu Dai hasn't deceived me, hasn't betrayed me, or been lying to me, her image has been haunting my mind, even in my dreams."

Zhou Ci had half a mind to scorn Song Ling, thinking he deserved it for his past wrongdoings, and now it was too late for regrets.

Observing Song Ling continue to drown his sorrows in alcohol, Zhou Ci remarked dispassionately, "Now that you know, you shouldn't keep bothering Gu Dai and making her unhappy."

Song Ling paused with his glass in hand, looked up at Zhou Ci but said nothing, then finally spoke, "That's my business."

Zhou Ci stood up, looking angrily at Song Ling.

Unmoved by this, Song Ling locked eyes with Zhou Ci and asked pointedly, "Do you like Gu Dai?"

Zhou Ci nodded firmly, "You and Gu Dai are already over, and I've told you long ago that I liked her. So this is not about overstepping among friends!"

Pressing down the irritation in his heart, Song Ling regarded Zhou Ci and said, "But you should know, Gu Dai doesn't only have you as an admirer. As far as I know, there's also that model Su Ting."

Song Ling continued, "Su Ting spoke up for Gu Dai during the recent controversy. I've taken over Zhou Corporation, and yet Gu Dai won't even glance at me, so clearly, she has a liking for this model. Do you think your chances are high?"

Zhou Ci smiled and said, "I don't know how good my chances are, but I know I don't need her to reciprocate because liking her is my own business. All that matters is that I'm good to her."

Grinding his teeth, Song Ling nodded. He hadn't expected Zhou Ci to be so open-minded, and Gu Dai was capable indeed, to turn a frivolous playboy so earnest.

Zhou Ci continued, "Isn't it normal for a remarkable woman like Gu Dai to have more than one person pursuing her? Besides, I, the admirer, am calm about it, what's there for you, the ex-husband, to be agitated about?"

At the word "ex-husband," Song Ling's frown deepened, and his voice turned icy, "But it's not just you and Su Ting!"

Zhou Ci looked at him, puzzled.

Song Ling revealed, "One night, I saw a man come out of Gu Dai's villa."

Zhou Ci gazed at Song Ling with a grave expression, his voice laden with a serious tone. “I need to tell you something important — secretly observing others is a perverse behavior!”

Song Ling’s face grew even grimmer, his eyes casting a frosty look towards Zhou Ci.

Zhou Ci continued, “That man might simply be Gu Dai’s friend. Don’t jump to conclusions.. And even if he truly is an admirer, what issue does that pose?”

Chapter 224: Kicked several times more

Song Ling continued, “When I once infiltrated the Gu Group, I encountered a hacker. This was the only man I knew of... in the places beyond my knowledge...”

Upon hearing about the hacker, Zhou Ci was momentarily stunned. Regaining his composure, he ventured, “Is it possible, I mean, could it be possible that this hacker is a woman?”

Song Ling dismissed the idea instantly, “That’s impossible! That hacker was incredibly skilled; it must have been a man assisting Gu Dai.”

Zhou Ci was surprised that his brother harbored such stereotypical views about gender. He had promised Gu Dai to keep her secret, but at this moment, he found it difficult to hold back.

Taking a deep breath, Zhou Ci fixed his gaze on Song Ling and said directly, “Let me just tell you straight, that formidable hacker is actually a woman.”

Before Song Ling could recover from his astonishment, Zhou Ci continued, “And this hacker wasn’t someone Gu Dai paid a hefty price for.”

Song Ling furrowed his brow and followed-up, “Could it be a friend of Gu Dai’s?”

Zhou Ci shook his head, then barely opening his lips, he uttered words that shocked Song Ling, "The hacker is none other than Gu Dai herself."

Song Ling's expression froze, his face cycling through shades of red, white, and black in quick succession.

Zhou Ci, knowing Song Ling for so many years, had never seen him like this before.

When Song Ling came to, he asked, "How can you be so sure the hacker is Gu Dai?"

Zhou Ci explained, "On the day you hacked into the Gu family's system, I happened to be looking for Gu Dai. I saw with my own eyes how her fingers flew across the keyboard to fend off your intrusion. It wasn't the work of an amateur hacker."

Song Ling visualized Gu Dai typing away, then recalled the times she had done household chores when they were together.

At that moment, he couldn't reconcile the two images of her.

Seeing Song Ling's stunned look, Zhou Ci couldn't resist adding, "Gu Dai is not only skilled in hacking, but also in cooking."

Song Ling quickly interjected, "I know, Gu Dai has cooked for me many times."

Zhou Ci felt a pang of jealousy but soon regained his composure, smiling, "I think the meals Gu Dai makes now would be even more delicious than before."

Without waiting for Song Ling to ask, Zhou Ci inquired, "Do you know of Linxian Pavilion?"

Song Ling nodded, then a possibility flashed through his mind. He tentatively asked, "Could it be that Gu Dai is a chef at Linxian Pavilion?"

Zhou Ci shook his head, denying the guess, when he saw that Song Ling could not uncover the answer, he finally said slowly, "Gu Dai isn't a chef there, but her apprentice, Feng Fei, is the head chef at Linxian Pavilion. And what's more, the owner of the restaurant is actually Gu Dai!"

At this revelation, Song Ling was utterly flabbergasted.

Even though he was always busy with work, he had heard of Linxian Pavilion's popularity and dined there often, never imagining it belonged to Gu Dai.

Song Ling's mind was in turmoil. He irritably loosened his tie and unbuttoned his suit jacket to try and clear his head.

He asked, "How do you know all this, and I know nothing?"

Zhou Ci replied helplessly, "This only shows that you don't care enough about Gu Dai, or perhaps, it's just that there's no fate between you two. I found out about these things by chance."

Song Ling, feeling displeased, glanced at Zhou Ci and strode out of the bar.

By the time Zhou Ci came to his senses, all he could see was Song Ling's back.

Song Ling lay in the car, waiting for the driver. The alcohol made his head throb with pain, and he continuously massaged his temples to ease the discomfort.

The driver, startled by Song Ling's behavior, cautiously said, "President Song, shall I take you home?"

"Not home! Take me to the Gu residence, quickly!" Song Ling demanded.

The driver, having served the Song family for many years, understood that Song Ling was referring to Gu Dai's home.

As Gu Dai stepped out of her villa, she was abruptly dragged by someone.

Her expression turned cold, and a hint of danger flashed in her eyes. She swung her elbow backward at the person behind her.

Song Ling couldn't help but cry out in pain, "It's, it's me."

Recognizing Song Ling's voice, Gu Dai didn't let go.. Instead, she kicked him several times more and demanded, "What are you doing at my doorstep?"

Chapter 225: No

After wrenching free from Gu Dai's grasp, Song Ling staggered back several steps and collided with the wall, letting out another exclamation.

Smelling the alcohol in the air, Gu Dai furrowed her brows and asked, "Have you been drinking?"

Song Ling nodded, a smile playing on his lips as he looked at Gu Dai and said, "You care about me!"

Gu Dai regretted her choice of words when she heard the certainty in Song Ling's tone and saw the resolute smile on his face, which had led him to a misunderstanding.

Gu Dai's expression grew taut as she spoke earnestly, "No."

Song Ling's smile stiffened, and he looked at Gu Dai in disbelief.

Desiring to avoid further confrontation, Gu Dai said coldly, "If there is nothing else, I'm going home."

Song Ling quickly spoke up, "Don't go! I have a question for you."

Gu Dai crossed her arms and waited with a detached expression for him to speak.

"Was it on my birthday that you regained your memory?" Song Ling asked.

At his words, Gu Dai's memories were cast back to that day.

She recalled how she had carefully prepared a cake and selected gifts for him, while Song Ling hadn't spared them a glance, his heart set on going to Jiang Yue.

Reminiscing about those painful times turned Gu Dai's mood for the worse.

Her gaze dropped as she spoke with a heavy voice, "That's all in the distant past. We are divorced now, so is there any need to bring it up?"

Song Ling's eyes reddened as he shouted, "There is a need!"

Gu Dai nodded noncommittally, "Oh."

Gu Dai's face was the same as before, but her demeanor had become much colder, no longer filled with him as it once was.

Yet, it was precisely this change in Gu Dai that agitated Song Ling. He couldn't understand why, after their divorce, he still found himself wanting to pay attention to her, to the point where he couldn't focus on his work.

Taking a deep breath, Song Ling questioned her in frustration, "When you regained your memory, we weren't divorced yet. Why didn't you tell me then?"

Gu Dai, perplexed, responded, “Why should I have told you? Wasn’t our main goal to divorce? Even if I had told you, would you have chosen not to divorce me?”

Song Ling fell silent; he knew he would still have chosen divorce, but...

“You could have told me the truth even after our divorce, instead of keeping me deceived. Your identity as the Gu Group heiress, your hacking skills, your culinary talents, your medical knowledge—you didn’t share any of that with me. If you had, I wouldn’t have misunderstood you,” Song Ling argued.

Gu Dai, her patience worn thin, slapped Song Ling.

Song Ling’s head turned to the right, a vivid red handprint marking his left cheek. He pushed his tongue against the inside of his cheek, looking coldly at Gu Dai.

“I hope this slap brings you to your senses,” Gu Dai said flatly.

Seeing Song Ling calm down, Gu Dai added, “Even if I had told you the truth, you wouldn’t have listened.”

Unwilling to accept this, Song Ling countered, “How do you know I wouldn’t have listened?”

Gu Dai chuckled wryly, her gaze inky as she looked at him, “When I told you before that my approach was without ulterior motives, that it was just because of love, did you listen?”

Song Ling, reminded of that moment, found himself speechless.

“You never believed me. You were convinced by your own assumptions. What else did you want me to say to you? I’ve already told you, there’s nothing between us anymore. Don’t show up in front of me again. Isn’t Jiang Yue back now? Isn’t it good enough for you to be happy with her?” Gu Dai’s words cut through the air.

Song Ling hung his head low, murmuring, "I don't like Jiang Yue. It's not what you think between us. She's my lifesaver, and I only wanted to repay her kindness."

Gu Dai paused, momentarily lost, "Repay her kindness? You mean Jiang Yue has helped you, how did she..."

Then Gu Dai's voice turned cold again, "Never mind, I don't want to know about what happened between you two!"

After a moment of thought, Gu Dai realized why Song Ling still supported Jiang Yue despite her excessive actions.

But what did it matter? She and Song Ling had no connection anymore.

And speaking of lifesaving grace, hadn't she saved Song Ling from a fire ten years ago? He had promised to repay her back then, but had that ever come to fruition?

As Song Ling watched Gu Dai, a question surfaced in his mind, and he heard himself ask, "Do you still love me?"

Without hesitation, Gu Dai answered, "No.."

Chapter 226:1 hope we'll work well together

Song Ling's gaze sharpened as he stared at Gu Dai, his voice harsh with inquiry, "Why would you fall out of love? Even if you no longer cherished me, is there a need for such a clear-cut boundary between us?"

Gu Dai pressed her lips together, her eyes brimming with scorn as she looked at Song Ling, "Why I don't love you, you really don't know?"

Song Ling froze, his question tinged with bewilderment, “How would I know?” “Because the one who loved you was me without my memories, not who I am now. Moreover, what makes you think that, after regaining my memories and knowing how indifferent you’ve been to me for three years, hurting me time and again, I could still get along with you harmoniously?” Gu Dai retorted.

The thought of her own dejection over the past three years made Song Ling particularly irksome to Gu Dai. She couldn’t help but want to punch him—and she did exactly that.

Song Ling was kicked several times, ending up in agony on the ground.

Seeing Song Ling’s condition swept away the frustration from Gu Dai’s heart. At that moment, she realized something.

Gu Dai thought she had been wrong to refuse Song Ling’s partnership in the past. After all, leveraging his involvement for profit came with no loss to her and could bring about benefits—it was clearly a favorable venture.

Looking down at Song Ling on the ground, Gu Dai casually said, “About that collaboration on the Suzhou embroidery project you mentioned last time, I agree. I hope we’ll work well together.”

Song Ling, taking the hand Gu Dai offered, was momentarily dazed by the smile on her face. He grasped her hand, somewhat stupefied, and replied, “I look forward to a pleasant collaboration.”

Gu Dai nodded in satisfaction, withdrew her hand, and said, “It’s getting late. President Song, you should also head back. Goodbye.”

With those words, Gu Dai strode into the villa.

Song Ling watched her retreating figure, his expression inscrutable, his fingers rubbing together as if they could still feel the softness of her touch.

Gu Dai received a call from Zhou Ci the moment she stepped back in.

Sitting on the couch with her legs crossed, her voice was cool, "Calling me, do you have something to confess?"

Gu Dai had known the moment Song Ling disclosed her identity that it was Zhou Ci who had told him.

After watching Song Ling march away, Zhou Ci had a foreboding feeling and called Gu Dai guiltily. He knew that Song Ling had approached Gu Dai when Gu Dai questioned him.

Realizing this, Zhou Ci apologized sincerely, "I'm sorry, I was wrong."

"I remember you promised me that you wouldn't tell anyone else my identity," Gu Dai said.

Zhou Ci hurriedly replied, "I did promise, but when Song Ling wronged you, I just couldn't hold back and revealed your identity."

Gu Dai didn't need confirmation; she knew this was something Song Ling would do.

After Zhou Ci's explanation, he took the initiative to say, "As compensation, I'm willing to adjust the share of the Suzhou embroidery contract from fifty-fifty to forty-sixty."

Gu Dai's eyebrows lifted slightly in surprise, "After the change, you'll lose at least ten million yuan. Will the Zhou Corporation agree?"

Zhou Ci quickly assured, "Don't worry, I will make sure my sister agrees. Even if she doesn't, I'll find other ways to compensate!"

The current president of the Zhou Corporation was Zhou Ci's cousin, Zhou Jue, who prioritized the company's interests above all and would never agree to a loss-making deal.

Gu Dai felt that Zhou Jue would never agree, but...

Gu Dai's eyes lowered as she said, "I've just reached an agreement with Song Ling; he will also join the Suzhou embroidery project. So even with a forty-sixty split, we will still earn much more than with the original fifty-fifty."

Zhou Ci's eyes brightened at the news, eagerly responding, "Great! By the way, when Song Ling came looking for you, he said..."

Before Zhou Ci could finish, he realized the call had been disconnected, leaving him somewhat perplexed.

Nevertheless, knowing that Gu Dai wasn't angry about him informing Song Ling relieved him, and he left to find Zhou Jue.

Gu Dai had abruptly ended the call because she suddenly remembered that although she had decided to collaborate with Song Ling, they hadn't signed a contract yet—it was only a verbal agreement. She hurriedly instructed her lawyer to draft a contract and had it sent to the Song Corporation.

In the following days, Gu Dai was engulfed in work, almost forgetting the existence of Gu Zhi and Gu Yin, so when she saw the two in the villa one day upon returning home, she felt a sense of surrealism.

Gu Dai cast a casual glance at the two, inquiring, "What do you need from me?"

Gu Zhi responded with a smile, "It's all because Yinyin said she missed you and insisted that I bring her over to see you.."

Chapter 227: Poisoning

Wu Zhen approached Gu Dai with a troubled look and said, "Miss, I tried to persuade Miss Gu Zhi to leave, but she wouldn't, and Miss Gu Yin is also with her. I couldn't bring myself to speak too harshly."

Gu Dai nodded and responded, "Uncle Wu, you can go about your business; leave this to me."

Wu Zhen was reluctant to leave, considering Gu Zhi harbored ill intentions toward the young miss. He worried that bringing Gu Yin along was part of a scheme to harm Gu Dai, perhaps even to drug her.

Understanding what Wu Zhen was about to caution, Gu Dai cut him off, "Don't worry, nothing will happen."

Seeing the resolve in Gu Dai's eyes, Wu Zhen had no choice but to leave.

Gu Zhi's face twisted in displeasure. She hadn't expected to be ignored by Gu Dai, who instead whispered something to old man Wu Zhen.

When Gu Dai's gaze finally fell on her, Gu Zhi hurriedly mustered a smile and softly greeted, "Daidai."

Gu Dai casually acknowledged her before turning her attention to Gu Yin and asking softly, "Yinyin, is that so?"

Gu Yin looked at Gu Zhi timidly, remembering her cousin's instructions before coming, and nodded slightly.

Seeing this, Gu Zhi smiled and said, "See, Daidai, I didn't lie to you, right?"

Gu Dai didn't respond to Gu Zhi's remark, but Gu Zhi didn't show any signs of discomfort. She continued, "After seeing Yinyin, I've realized that we, as sisters, should live in harmony. If I've done anything wrong in the past, going forward..."

Gu Dai didn't respond to Gu Zhi's words, instead she looked directly at her and said earnestly, "It's not about what you might do wrong; it's what you did do wrong!"

Gu Zhi's expression froze into an awkward smile. "Yes, right. It was me. I did wrong."

“If you know you were wrong, then follow Uncle Wu and take care of the work in the villa,” Gu Dai instructed.

Gu Zhi was stunned and then exclaimed, “What!”

With a calm tone, Gu Dai said, “It’s been several days since you last ran away, but you were right about one thing—we sisters should get along. So, you only have to do it for three days, and then you won’t have to anymore.”

Reluctantly accepting the limited punishment, Gu Zhi gritted her teeth and agreed, “Fine, I’ll do it! But may I speak to Yinyin first?”

A flicker of darkness crossed Gu Dai’s eyes before she replied after a few seconds, “You may.”

Gu Zhi crouched down, whispering plaintively into Gu Yin’s ear, “You see, I told you your cousin Daidai is out to get me. Now I have to do all the hard and tiresome work. Do you want a life like this?”

Gu Yin shook her head fearfully and asked in a trembling voice, “But isn’t it because you did something wrong that she’s punishing you? If I don’t make mistakes, I won’t end up like you, right?”

Caught off guard, Gu Zhi quickly said, “It was just a small mistake I made, and she’s punishing me severely for it. Plus, she’s got a temper. It’s easy to unintentionally provoke her.”

Gu Yin nodded, still not fully understanding.

Relieved that Gu Yin seemed to absorb her words, Gu Zhi instructed softly,

“Just do as I taught you at home, okay?”

Gu Yin whispered in acknowledgment, “I understand.”

With that, Gu Zhi left, reassured.

Gu Yin mustered courage in her heart and looked up at Gu Dai tentatively, offering, “Cousin Gu Dai, are you thirsty? I’ll go get you some fresh water.”

Gu Dai, who had not heard the conversation but guessed its gist, called Gu Yin, who was about to get her water, “I’m not thirsty, and there’s still water in my cup.”

Gu Yin hesitated before insisting, “This water isn’t fresh anymore. I’ll get you a new one!”

After, Gu Yin picked up the cup and ran towards the kitchen.

Once in the kitchen, Gu Yin looked back and, seeing that Gu Dai hadn’t followed, breathed a sigh of relief.

Gu Dai emptied the water from her cup and took out the powder Gu Zhi had given her, pouring a good amount into the cup. But as she tried to add hot water, she struggled—the countertop was too high, and she couldn’t quite reach the water dispenser.

Stretching on her tiptoes, she pressed the dispenser, watching as the powder dissolved with a sense of relief.

But just as she was about to retract her hand, she accidentally touched the hot water. A sharp pain caused her to cry out and lose her balance. With a crash, she tumbled to the floor..

Chapter 228:1 get it now

Gu Yin felt the sting on her behind and tears began to dampen her eyes.

But in the next moment, she found herself in an embrace, one that was warm and carried a faint, soothing fragrance. In this embrace, the pain seemed to vanish, leaving Gu Yin stunned into silence.

Gu Dai cradled Gu Yin to the couch, her voice a gentle whisper, "Yinyin, are you hurt anywhere?"

Gu Yin, still in a daze, shook her head slightly and replied softly, "No, I'm fine."

Gu Dai spoke softly with a tinge of regret, "I'm sorry, I should have stopped you from pouring water earlier."

Gu Dai had been preoccupied with how to handle the matter of Gu Yin offering her poisoned water, momentarily forgetting the dangers a child could face in such an act.

Looking up at Gu Dai, Gu Yin whispered, "It's my fault. I wanted to pour the water. Cousin Gu Dai, I'll be fine after I rest a little."

After she inspected Gu Yin and found no injuries, she finally let herself relax and responded, "Alright."

As Gu Yin observed the care Gu Dai showed, a warm flush crept up to her eyes, and she covertly wiped away her tears.

Never before had Gu Yin felt cared for by anyone, and Gu Dai was the first.

With this realization, Gu Yin's heart firmed with a decision. She looked at Gu Dai with a resolute gaze, intending to divulge the task Gu Zhi had assigned her.

But when Gu Dai saw Gu Yin's expression, she knew what was about to happen. She lifted a finger to her lips, signaling silence.

Gu Yin, puzzled, complied with obedient silence.

Gu Dai's gaze then fell upon the teddy bear necklace around Gu Yin's neck. She pressed a bulge on the necklace, opening it to reveal and switch off a small, red-glowing orb.

Upon seeing this, Gu Yin's eyes were filled with confusion as she asked, "What is this?"

"It's a miniature camera," Gu Dai revealed.

Gu Yin gasped in shock, "What!"

Though young, Gu Yin had heard of such devices in dramas. Now, to her astonishment, one was in her very possession.

Realizing its significance, Gu Yin hastily explained, "Cousin Gu Zhi gave this to me this morning. I had no idea there was a camera inside."

Gu Dai nodded and suggested, "Let's go upstairs to talk."

Upon entering Gu Dai's room, Gu Yin couldn't help but exclaim in wonder, "Cousin Daidai, your room is so beautiful! It's nothing like what Cousin Gu Zhi told me."

Sitting on the couch, Gu Dai inquired, "What did Gu Zhi say?"

Gu Yin answered, "Cousin Gu Zhi said your room was filled with tools to torture children."

Gu Dai expected Gu Zhi to smear her reputation but not to the extent of scaring a child, which she found utterly immoral.

"Why did you come with me if she told you my room was dangerous?" Gu Dai asked.

A genuine smile broke on Gu Yin's face as she cheerfully said, "Because my intuition told me that Cousin Daidai is a good person, not at all like what Cousin Gu Zhi described."

Gu Yin continued, "Cousin Daidai, I was actually trying to slip you a sleeping pill earlier. I'm sorry..."

Her voice trailed off to a whisper.

Gu Dai patted her head softly and spoke quietly, "I know. But what you were giving me was not sleeping pills, it was poison."

Gu Yin froze, her disbelief audible, "How could that be? But Cousin Gu Zhi clearly..."

As she spoke, understanding dawned on her. Although she often appeared naive, her challenging upbringing had made her wiser than her peers.

With a mother who abandoned her and a father given to drunken violence, not to mention a brother of similar age but a different mother, Gu Yin's life was far from easy.

Yet, it was precisely because of her yearning for affection that she seldom doubted Gu Zhi's words.

"That's right, Gu Zhi lied to you," Gu Dai stated.

Gu Dai sighed softly, her gaze meeting Gu Yin's as she spoke gently, "Yinyin, the most important thing in life is to improve oneself. There is no need to please or yield to others, as they may not reciprocate kindness and might even take advantage of you."

Gu Yin nodded and whispered in understanding, "Cousin Daidai, I get it now.."

Chapter 229: She really is foolish

Gu Yin revealed, "Gu Zhi was just using me. She lied to me that she was giving you sleeping pills, but instead, she handed me poison. If I had really done as she said, once you had an accident, she would have pushed all the blame onto me while remaining unaffected herself."

Gu Dai praised her, "Well done."

Gu Yin's eyes sparkled, shining with unshed tears. It was the first time in her life she had been praised.

Unable to control her emotions, tears streamed down Gu Yin's cheeks.

Seeing this, Gu Dai quickly reached for a tissue to wipe them away, asking with concern, "What's wrong?"

Embracing Gu Dai, Gu Yin replied with a smile, "Cousin Daidai, I'm so happy. You are the first person to ever tell me these things. Before, no one ever taught me."

Gu Dai chuckled softly, "Yinyin, I quite like you, so if you ever need my help in the future, just come to me."

Gu Yin nodded repeatedly, her voice choked with emotion, "Okay!"

Gu Yin felt that if the first person she had met after getting off the plane had been Gu Dai, she would never have even glanced at Gu Zhi.

After sweeping the floor for several hours, Gu Zhi sneakily glanced toward the villa's living room, only to find no sign of Gu Dai or Gu Yin.

Panicked, Gu Zhi made an excuse to go to the bathroom, where she hid and took out her phone. Opening the camera, she was shocked to see nothing but darkness.

"How can this be? There's clearly network coverage," Gu Zhi muttered to herself. "Damn it, the seller must have sent me a faulty camera. I'll definitely leave them a bad review!"

Pacing in the bathroom, she prayed that Gu Yin had already served the water to Gu Dai.

Suddenly, there was a knock on the door.

Gu Zhi froze, her expression tense, and asked, "Who is it?"

Standing at the door, Gu Yin said sweetly, "Cousin Gu Zhi, it's me. The grandpa butler told me you were here, so I came to knock."

Hearing it was Gu Yin, Gu Zhi opened the door with a look of joy. After making sure they were alone, she asked in a whisper, "Yinyin, how did it go? Did you give the sleeping pills to Gu Dai?"

Gu Yin hung her head, looking hurt, "Cousin Gu Zhi, shouldn't you ask if I've been bullied?"

At that moment, Gu Zhi's primary concern was to find out about Gu Dai's situation; she had little interest in engaging with Gu Yin. Nonetheless, to avoid arousing any suspicion, she felt compelled to ask, "Did Gu Dai bully you at all?"

Gu Yin shook her head, "No, Cousin Gu Dai was already asleep before I could prepare the sleeping pills, so she didn't bully me."

Gu Zhi caught on to a crucial point, frowning, "So you didn't give her the sleeping pills?"

With an innocent smile, Gu Yin replied, "Nope."

Gu Zhi's face soured as anger flared within her. Unable to contain herself, she questioned sharply, "Today was such a good opportunity. I reminded you so many times at home, why didn't you give the water to Gu Dai?"

Gu Yin looked at Gu Zhi in fear, tears streaming down, "You're scolding me... You said as long as Cousin Gu Dai is asleep, she won't bully me. She fell asleep on her own so there was no need for sleeping pills. Why would you want me to give them to her?"

Irritated by Gu Yin's tears and even more by her failure, Gu Zhi snatched the glass of water from Gu Yin's hand and drank a big gulp.

Gu Yin's lips curved into a smile as she watched.

After drinking the water, Gu Zhi remembered she still needed Gu Yin in the future and couldn't afford to offend her.

She was about to soothe her when a sudden, intense pain exploded in her stomach, like a fireball rampaging within, rendering her speechless.

Curled up on the floor, Gu Zhi's complexion turned ashen as she moaned in agony.

Her cries alarmed the servants in the villa, who hurriedly called for an ambulance, and she was taken to the hospital.

Watching Gu Zhi being carried away, Gu Yin shook her head with a sigh, "She really is foolish."

Gu Dai, descending the stairs upon hearing the commotion, caught Gu Yin's comment and stood beside her, asking, "What did you do?"

Gu Yin's eyes glistened as she looked at Gu Dai, simply saying, "I didn't do anything. Gu Zhi drank the water on her own.."

Chapter 230: Shi Nuan's Return

Gu Dai nodded slightly, signaling for Gu Yin to continue speaking.

Realizing she could no longer deceive Gu Dai, Gu Yin confessed earnestly, "I was trying to think of an excuse to get Gu Zhi to drink it, but she didn't give me the chance."

Gu Dai cast a glance at Gu Yin and inquired, "Was the poison in the water from Gu Zhi?"

Gu Yin looked up at Gu Dai with an obedient gaze and replied, "It was poison, but I only added a little bit, not enough to kill her."

Gu Dai shook her head in resignation and affectionately ruffled Gu Yin's hair, saying, "You should live here."

After making this statement, Gu Dai had Wu Zhen prepare a room with good lighting for her.

Gu Yin was stunned, hardly believing her ears, "Cousin Daidai, you're letting me stay here?"

Gu Dai hummed in affirmation.

It wouldn't be appropriate for Gu Yin to go back now, especially since Gu Zhi had already had an incident.

Moreover, it must be said that Gu Yin's antics, albeit damaging, were indeed refreshing.

Recognizing Gu Yin's intelligence, Gu Dai planned to keep her close and guide her personally from now on.

Upon receiving Gu Dai's firm reply, Gu Yin couldn't help but jump up excitedly, exclaiming, "Thank you, Cousin Daidai!"

Gu Dai smiled and responded, "You're welcome. Go check out the room and if you need anything, just tell Uncle Wu Zhen or the aunties in the villa to prepare it for you."

Gu Yin's eyes sparkled as she nodded eagerly, "Okay!"

In comparison to Gu Dai, Gu Yin felt increasingly that Gu Zhi was foolish.

Cousin Daidai had instantly noticed the camera hidden in her necklace and knew that the substance she intended to administer was poison, not a sleeping aid, yet Gu Zhi didn't even realize when the camera malfunctioned.

Feeling deeply shamed for being deceived and used by such a person, Gu Yin vowed to take her revenge on Gu Zhi when the opportunity arose.

Perhaps it was because of the incident where Song Ling was hit; he hadn't appeared before her for several days. Gu Dai was quite pleased with this.

After listening to Lin Sheng's report on recent company matters, Gu Dai's phone suddenly rang with a message from Shi Nuan.

Shi Nuan: Daidai, I have a huge surprise for you!

A huge surprise?

A smile curled at the corners of Gu Dai's lips, her mind conjuring up various images. Just as she was about to inquire about the surprise, someone knocked on her office door.

A guess flickered through Gu Dai's mind and was confirmed the next second as she saw Shi Nuan's radiant figure.

An excited Shi Nuan ran towards Gu Dai and hugged her, exclaiming, "How about it, Daidai? Is my gift a surprise?"

Gu Dai smiled and said, "Yes, it is!"

Ever since their last farewell at the banquet, Shi Nuan had been sent abroad for studies by Old Master Shi, and they had only stayed in touch through texts and calls.

With both of them being busy, one with work while the other with studies, their interactions were sporadic, and often interrupted by unforeseen events.

Due to the time difference, Shi Nuan felt hungry by two in the afternoon, and Gu Dai took her out for a meal.

Gu Dai said, "The food in this restaurant is delicious; give it a try."

Shi Nuan nodded repeatedly, entering a mode of devouring.

After Shi Nuan finished, Gu Dai spoke, "Why didn't you tell me you were coming back? I didn't even have time to prepare a gift for you."

Shi Nuan coughed lightly, looking at Gu Dai, "Daidai, we're good friends, we don't need gifts."

In truth, Shi Nuan had deliberately not informed Gu Dai because she hadn't forgotten that their exchanges usually involved prank gifts.

Gu Dai said lightly, "Nuannuan, you wouldn't be trying to avoid my gift, would you?"

Shi Nuan stiffened, then quickly spoke excitedly, "How could I? I love the gifts you give me. It's just that this trip was so rushed, I didn't get to tell you."

Gu Dai nodded, a smile playing on her lips, "Well then, I'll make it up to you later."

Seeing no escape, Shi Nuan reluctantly agreed, "Okay..."

Gu Dai let out a laugh, "I'm just teasing you, I won't give you a prank gift this time."

Shi Nuan still hadn't gone home since she arrived, so after giving the gifts she had brought from abroad to Gu Dai, she prepared to leave.

Shi Nuan then said, "Daidai, once I sort everything out, I'll come to see you."

Gu Dai nodded in response, "Alright."

Gu Dai returned to the company, her mood light and pleasant as she carried the gifts. However, upon seeing Song Ling, the smile on her face slowly faded away..