

King Hall 141

Chapter 141: Drink with Me!

"Let's eat." Mu Jinyu said with a smile, not saying anything more, and picked up the chopsticks to serve some dishes for Wen Rou.

Wen Rou ate the vegetables Mu Jinyu had served her, her gaze on him growing even more tender.

"My cooking isn't bad, right?" Mu Jinyu asked.

"Mhm." Wen Rou buried her head in her meal, smiling.

The two of them finished eating quickly, and Wen Rou cleared the table and went to the kitchen to wash the dishes.

Meanwhile, Mu Jinyu walked into the living room, flopped down on the sofa with abandon, and gently rubbed his belly.

After all, he had eaten a meal with Gu Xiyan and the others around three o'clock, and now it was nearly six, and he'd eaten another meal, which indeed made him feel a bit too full.

But his digestive system was excellent, so it wouldn't really affect him, and he would be fine soon.

Wen Rou quickly finished washing the dishes and then went to the living room, sat next to Mu Jinyu, and looking at him hesitantly, she asked, "Shall I give you a rub?"

"Sure." Mu Jinyu turned his neck and said casually, "I didn't sleep very well today, feels like I might have a stiff neck, help me press it a bit."

"Okay." Wen Rou responded, moved closer to Mu Jinyu, and then placed his head on her knees. Her small hands began to gently knead his neck and the back of his shoulders. "Does it hurt here?"

"Mhm, it's alright, a bit higher up." Mu Jinyu directed, "Yeah, that's the spot..."

After massaging Mu Jinyu for over ten minutes, he said, "That's enough, let's stop there."

After saying that, he reluctantly got up from Wen Rou's thighs and then looked carefully at Wen Rou, who was dressed in a black OL suit, and smiled, "How was work today?"

"It was pretty good, Sister Qingya was very kind to me. I don't understand a lot of things, and she patiently taught me, but should I just be an assistant or a secretary in the company? How could I..."

While speaking, Wen Rou cautiously glanced at Mu Jinyu's expression and said softly, "How did I suddenly become the vice president of the company?"

"I can't handle this!" Wen Rou said with a distressed look.

These confusions and misunderstandings had been on her mind both while at work and on her way home.

But during work hours, it wasn't appropriate for her to call him carelessly, and on the way home, she got tangled up with Second Aunt and the others. By the time she saw Mu Jinyu, she was so affected by them that she really had no interest in asking about these matters.

Now that Mu Jinyu had brought it up, she also hurriedly asked, thinking that she should ask Mu Jinyu to retract his decision, as it was really inappropriate for someone with only a high school education like her to be the vice president of a company, making her feel very unsettled and fearful.

Mu Jinyu laughed, "No worries, with your intelligence, those things won't be too difficult for you. Just go ahead and do it, don't be afraid. After all, my company is backed by others, even if it goes bankrupt, I could still sell it for a billion, so you don't need to be concerned about anything."

After saying that, Mu Jinyu suddenly wondered, relying solely on Wen Rou and Xu Qingya, could they really grow his first company?

They seemed to lack experience, right?

As his thoughts continued, Mu Jinyu suddenly thought of Gu Xiyan, Yu Linglong, and Mei Yinxue, and mused that it would be great if they came to his company to work for him...

But that didn't seem quite realistic, since each of them was a CEO in her own right. Mei Yinxue's net worth was unknown, probably at least a hundred billion, and Gu Xiyan's company seemed smaller, but was probably worth at least a dozen billion, right?!

How could they possibly join his company and work for him?!

After chatting with Wen Rou for a while, Mu Jinyu told her not to overthink things, to diligently learn at the company, and to work hard for herself.

And then, they each returned to their rooms to sleep.

...

In the following days.

Mu Jinyu had a rare few days of peace, without being called upon for medical assistance or having various matters to deal with.

Although Xu Qingya had asked him to visit the company so that the senior management could meet him, since Wen Rou had already gone there, and he didn't need to show her the way, he felt a bit lazy and decided to check it out later.

When that time came, he planned to go undercover, entering the company as a new employee to see how many pests were inside, and then root them out!

Mei Yinxue also called him yesterday, telling him that her people had searched that stretch of road for a long time and indeed found several of Huang Qiu Hua's hideouts in River City, but they were a step too late, as his people had already retreated.

Even so, Mei Yinxue still breathed a sigh of relief. The uncomfortable feeling that had been stuck in her throat had also diminished, and she would increase vigilance over the comings and goings in River City so that Huang Qiu Hua and his ilk could no longer freely enter and threaten her.

Having said this, she then invited Mu Jinyu out for a meal and wanted to offer him some compensation to express her gratitude for the information he provided.

But the lazy Mu Jinyu directly declined Mei Yinxue's invitation.

And tonight, after Mu Jinyu finished dinner and was preparing to watch a TV drama with Wen Rou before going to sleep, he suddenly received an unexpected call.

It was from Gu Xiyan.

Since he had helped her handle Trotsky, as well as dealt with Soldier King Lin Feng, the two of them had not been in contact.

Why she suddenly called tonight, could it be that she had another matter for him to handle?

Mu Jinyu pondered with suspicion, feeling inclined to ignore the call, but for some reason, he eventually answered it.

"Hello, come out and drink with me..."

Gu Xiyan's voice sounded somewhat drunk, as if she had already consumed quite a bit of alcohol. Her tone carried a tinge of sadness and heartache, as though she purposely sought to drown her sorrows in liquor.

Upon hearing her tone of voice, Mu Jinyu suspected she had dialed the wrong number. After all, although he had posed as her boyfriend a few times, his actual relationship with her wasn't that good.

"Hey, you've got the wrong number, woman. This is Mu Jinyu!" Mu Jinyu reminded her with a frown.

"I didn't dial wrong... *hic*..." Gu Xiyan let out a hiccup, not caring at all about maintaining her ladylike image, and said in a tipsy manner, "It's you I'm looking for. Hurry up and come out to drink with me!"

Mu Jinyu, who had refrained from alcohol and smoking since a young age for some reasons, responded with a frown, "But I don't drink."

Gu Xiyan, still in her drunken state, retorted, "Then just omit the drinking part!"

"Come out for a drink but omit the drinking part..." Mu Jinyu repeated, surprised, and then asked in disbelief, "You want me to accompany you?!"

"Hurry up and come out, accompany me... *sob* ..."

Gu Xiyan said impatiently, seemingly touching upon her grievance, her tone becoming even more sorrowful, making Mu Jinyu feel all the more her loneliness and distress.

Mu Jinyu, unable to bear it, sighed and said, "Tell me the address, I'll be right there."

Gu Xiyan then gave him the address, muttering, "Be quick about it!"

Chapter 142: Hand Over the Company!

An hour earlier.

Gu Xiyan had finished her work and was ready to dine at her favorite Western restaurant before returning to her small apartment.

But on her way to the restaurant, she received a call from her mother, informing her that tonight was the Gu Family's family gathering and asking her to come home for dinner after work.

Gu Xiyang was annoyed by such family gatherings; they were always like her grandfather's last birthday party, with a few people from the Zhang Family showing up, then trying to match her with Zhang Qihuai—she was absolutely tired of it.

So, she outright refused, but her mother knew her thoughts and assured her that there were no people from the Zhang Family or Zhang Qihuai at this gathering. She asked her to hurry over and not make the elders wait too long.

After that, her mother hung up the call.

Having no other choice, Gu Xiyang reluctantly changed her plans and headed to the Gu Family Villa.

Upon arrival at the Gu Family Villa, Gu Xiyang indeed did not see Zhang Qihuai or anyone from the Zhang Family, but...

Instead, she saw people from another family, the Chens, who were far more influential than the Zhangs.

Just as Gu Xiyang's face changed slightly and she thought about turning around and leaving,

A dashing young man in a suit from the Chen Family spotted her entering, gave her a slight smile, and approached her with a glass of red wine in hand.

The young man greeted Gu Xiyang, "Xiyang, it's been a long time. I didn't expect that the girl from junior high, once so inexperienced, has become even more beautiful!"

Gu Xiyang had no recollection of the young man, so she paused and gave him a closer look.

The young man's features were extremely handsome, with a soft and gentle beauty that balanced strength and delicacy. Although his smile was radiant, Gu Xiyang did not like his type of attractiveness and slightly furrowed her brows.

"Don't you remember me?" Seeing Gu Xiyan's expression, the young man was disappointed though his face showed no change. He smiled, showing his teeth, and introduced himself, "I'm Chen Xuyang. We were classmates from elementary school to junior high. Then in the second year of junior high, I went abroad to study."

Upon his introduction, Gu Xiyan suddenly showed a look of realization and started to remember him.

"It's you, huh? It really has been a long time, more than a decade has passed in a flash," Gu Xiyan spoke with a touch of nostalgia in her voice.

Chen Xuyang, standing close to Gu Xiyan, couldn't help admiring her grace and the look in her eyes. He felt a surge of amazement and affection but then remembered the words of Gu Xiyan's parents. With a mix of concern and worry, he said,

"Have you been well all these years? Your parents said you had been single until recently. Is it because you have high standards, or what? But why did you suddenly decide to date someone? Your aunt and uncle are very worried you're being deceived..."

Gu Xiyan, upon hearing his words, furrowed her brows tightly, sensing her mother's intent for calling her back. Her tone immediately grew colder, "I'm doing well, I've been getting along very well with my boyfriend, so there's no need to worry about me. My mom is calling for me, I should go."

With that, Gu Xiyan didn't wait for Chen Xuyang to respond. She left by herself and walked toward the spacious central hall's wine table.

"Eh..." Chen Xuyang wanted to say something, but seeing her like this, he could only shake his head with a sigh of resignation.

Gu Xiyan's mother had just instructed him to have a good chat with Xiyan once she got home to rekindle their old friendship—how could she suddenly be calling for her daughter now?!

Ah, a woman's mouth really can say anything!

Gu Xiyan did not dawdle and promptly freed herself from Chen Xuyang's entanglement, heading straight toward her parents who were sitting at a wine table drinking tea and eating sunflower seeds.

The moment Gu Xiyan had entered the villa, her parents had spotted her right away. It was they who had hinted for Chen Xuyang to approach her.

At that moment, seeing Gu Xiyan approaching them, they revealed somewhat guilty smiles and greeted her, "Xiyan, why are you here so soon? Didn't you want to chat more with your old classmate?"

"Mom and Dad, haven't you had enough? I already have a boyfriend, yet you're still setting me up with people?"

Gu Xiyan's tone was confrontational as soon as she arrived.

She was truly fed up with her family's arrangements. Her life did not need their meddling!

Upon hearing her words, Gu Xiyan's mother, Lin Lingling, displayed an embarrassed smile and explained, "Mom was just worried since that boyfriend of yours seems unreliable, with no proper job, and you don't like Zhang Qihuai. Plus, with Chen Xuyang from the Chen Family back in the country, I thought you could have a chat."

Gu Xiyan's father, Gu Tianhe, however, gave her a stern look and scolded, "What kind of attitude is that? Your parents only want what's best for you. Getting to know Chen Xuyang and building a relationship with him could be very beneficial for you!"

"Beneficial for me my ass, it's beneficial for you two, right!" Gu Xiyan retorted sharply.

"You?!" Gu Tianhe was fuming, his hand trembling as he pointed at Gu Xiyan. "What kind of language is that for a young lady to use!"

"Pfft!" Gu Xiyan scoffed disdainfully.

Her relationship with her parents had plummeted over the years, as they constantly tried to marry her off to Zhang Qihuai to unite the Zhang and Gu families and strengthen their own family's power.

Normally, except for major events like Old Master Gu's birthday celebration, she would return to the Gu Family Home. In regular circumstances, she wouldn't come back at all and would instead go to her own small apartment.

"You..." Gu Tianhe, seeing that Gu Xiyan was still set in her ways, slammed the table in anger and was about to say more.

But Gu Xiyan wasn't in the mood to listen to his ramblings, frowning she said, "I already have a boyfriend and won't be going on blind dates. If there's nothing else, I'm leaving."

She hadn't even had dinner yet, and though the Gu Family was about to start their meal, just looking at Chen Xuyang and the others made her lose her appetite.

Therefore, it was better to trouble herself a bit more and leave right away to find a restaurant to eat at.

It would be more peaceful, without anyone lecturing her.

Having said that, Gu Xiyan picked up her bag and was about to leave the Gu Family Villa.

Just then, the elderly voice of Old Master Gu came from behind her.

"Bringing you back here wasn't just for you to meet this young man Xiuyang. Of course, there's something else."

"What is it, Grandpa?" Gu Xiyan turned back, looking at her suddenly appearing grandfather, Gu Zhengxin. She furrowed her brows but since he was the Family Head of the Gu Family, she couldn't speak as impolitely as she had to her parents, so she suppressed her impatience and politely asked.

"Dad!"

"Dad!"

Seeing Old Master Gu step in, Gu Xiyan's parents quickly rose from their seats to greet him.

Gu Zhengxin waved his hand at them, then fixed his murky old eyes on Gu Xiyan and said indifferently, "There's only one matter..."

He paused, turned his head away from Gu Xiyan, and continued, "For you to hand over Face of Jade Company!"

Chapter 143: The Agreement of That Year!

"What?!"

Upon hearing Grandpa's words, Gu Xiyan's emotionless face suddenly lost its color as she raised her voice, "My company, why should I have to hand it over?!"

"Why?!" Gu Zhengxin heard this, smiled faintly, and gestured with his hands downward a few times, signaling Gu Xiyan to calm down. He then explained, "Because our Gu Corporation has developed to a point where it has become somewhat difficult to make progress. Without assistance from other families, I'm afraid we could only stop here or even gradually decline. Therefore, we are in dire need of a marital alliance with either the Zhang Family or the Chen Family to gain their resources and support!"

Gu Xiyan, upon hearing Grandpa's righteous words, laughed angrily and spread her hands, "But what does that have to do with me? Why should I sacrifice my own happiness for the development of the family corporation?!"

Gu Tianhe and Lin Lingling's faces changed instantly when they heard Gu Xiyan's words, and they exclaimed in a low voice, "Xiyan, don't talk back to Grandpa!"

Gu Zhengxin didn't mind Gu Xiyan's retort and continued serenely, "You ask what this has to do with you?! Let me tell you how it concerns you."

As he spoke, he looked at Gu Xiyan, his expression growing colder and his tone full of authority, "You were born into the Gu Family; from the moment of your birth, you've enjoyed endless benefits that the family has provided, allowing you to be pampered from a young age, letting you live without worries, without having to struggle for money like the poor. When you've grown up, naturally you must endure the various unpleasant aspects of a large family, as well as shoulder the responsibilities that you ought to bear..."

Then, Gu Zhengxin pointed his finger at Gu Tianhe and Lin Lingling, who stood somewhat helplessly to the side, and said in a cold and defiant voice, "Ask your parents, when they got married, whether they were truly in love or if they had no feelings for each other, marrying just to ensure better relations between the families, for a more secure cooperation."

Gu Xiyan's expression grew darker as she turned to look at her parents.

Gu Tianhe and Lin Lingling, however, helplessly lowered their heads, remaining silent.

Obviously, the truth was just as Gu Zhengxin had laid it out.

Seeing their reaction, Gu Zhengxin scoffed and continued to preach to Gu Xiyan, "You want to enjoy the convenience of being born into the Gu Family, but not fulfill the corresponding obligations. You talk about starting a company from scratch by yourself, yet you take the resources that the Gu Family has provided for you, all the while rejecting the plans we make for you. Where in the world does such a good deal exist?!"

Pausing slightly, Gu Zhengxin's tone turned uncompromising as he raised his voice, "You have two choices, either completely rely on yourself without the backing of the Gu Family, start from nothing on your own, and we'll lower our heads and no longer control you, or, accept our arrangement, kick away that disrespectful boyfriend of yours, and then choose between Zhang Qihuai and Chen Xuyang to marry!"

"There are no other options!"

Gu Zhengxin stared at Gu Xiyan's reddening face and said firmly.

Clearly, he had tolerated Gu Xiyan's freedom for years without much restraint, and now he could no longer bear it, perhaps due to the scolding he had received from Mu Jinyu that day, forcing Gu Xiyan to make a decision immediately.

Gu Xiyan, her face red with anger, looked at her grandfather, who stood with an air of moral superiority, and at her parents, who turned their heads away helplessly, not daring to look at her. She suddenly sneered:

"Do I need you to lecture me on how to live my life?"

As she spoke, she pointed at her mother Lin Lingling and said, "You say I'm taking resources from the Gu Family on one hand and refusing your arrangements on the other. Are you referring to the one million yuan I took from my mom to start Face of Jade Group with my best friend?"

Gu Zhengxin nodded and said, "Are you trying to deny that you didn't take the money?"

Gu Xiyan shook her head, "Initially, mom did give me one million yuan as startup capital, but I paid her back tens of millions after the company started making a profit, and I haven't taken a single penny from you since then, so I don't owe you anything at all."

"Not owe anything?" Gu Zhengxin scoffed, saying, "If it weren't for the one million yuan your mother gave you, could your company have started up? Is that what you call not owing?"

"Of course, I don't owe anything!" Gu Xiyan pressed her lips together, locked eyes with her grandfather unflinchingly, and said firmly, "Could you take your one million yuan, lend it out to someone else, get back the principal in a year, and also earn tens of millions in interest?!"

"Absolutely impossible!" Without waiting for Gu Zhengxin to answer, Gu Xiyan directly gave the answer.

"I am fully aware that without the support my mother gave me, the company I started would take at least several more years to develop, which is why I offered such a high interest rate. This return is already more than ten times over, so I fundamentally don't owe you anything!"

Gu Zhengxin was about to say something.

But Gu Xiyan, still riding her surge of anger, continued, "And you accuse me of enjoying the Gu Family's resources and connections, yet unwilling to take responsibility. Since when have my company, Face of Jade, and Linglong ever used the Gu Corporation's name to make collaboration with other companies more convenient?"

Gu Zhengxin sneered, saying, "Even if you don't flaunt the Gu Family's name, as long as you carry the surname Gu, those partners of yours are naturally going to cooperate with you out of respect for our family name!"

"You're overestimating the weight of the Gu Family's name!" Gu Xiyan said scornfully, "Do you really think your Gu Family is one of the Four Great Families of River City? That you carry so much clout?"

Gu Zhengxin opened his mouth but found himself speechless, his face suddenly turning extremely grim.

Gu Xiyan, without any mercy, continued to expose their ugly true colors, saying, "Also, don't think I'm unaware that after I rejected the blind date you arranged with Zhang Qiuwai all those years ago, you covertly spread word, forbidding anyone from collaborating with me!"

Upon hearing this, Gu Zhengxin's face turned even uglier; he truly hadn't expected Gu Xiyan to have connections aware of these matters.

Gu Xiyan grew increasingly infuriated as she spoke, and since the conversation had already opened up, she simply voiced all the grievances and frustrations that had been festering inside her over the years:

"Your suppression indeed made some who didn't want to give up collaborations with Gu Corporation choose to forego working with me. However, some of the companies I found simply couldn't care less about giving you face!"

"Which of the companies I've worked with lately, including the foreign luxury brand agency I just secured a few days ago, chose to work with me because they were giving face to your Gu Family?!"

"Hah..."

With a cold laugh, Gu Xiyan said, "Now that you see you can't control me anymore, you have the audacity to claim you've given me so much help?"

Her tone intensified, "Over these years, if it weren't for your constant efforts to trip me up behind the scenes, suppress me, and make even getting a bank loan difficult, my Face of Jade Group could have, by now, possibly outstripped your bloated and chaotic Gu Corporation!"

Looking at the drastically changing faces of her parents and grandfather, Gu Xiyan said with a sneer, "Now, no matter how much you try to suppress me, the endorsement deal I just signed with this luxury brand is enough for me to overtake Gu Corporation within a year. So, Grandfather, don't even think about making me bow my head or forcing me into marriage and teaching children!"

Having said her piece, Gu Xiyan turned around stylishly, ready to leave the dinner table.

Gu Zhengxin, however, after being berated by Gu Xiyan, felt as though he couldn't maintain his dignity, and in a burst of annoyed shame he said, "Very well, you really have done quite well. But my dear granddaughter, do you remember the agreement you signed when you took my one million yuan? Oh, you forgot, you didn't really read it, you just signed the agreement, right..."

Chapter 144 Threatening Persuasion

Gu Xiyan halted abruptly when she heard the cold words of her grandfather, then whirled around, eyes fixated on Gu Zhengxin as she exclaimed, "Did you tamper with the agreement?!"

"Tamper with it?!" Gu Zhengxin responded, his aged face darkening as he spread his hands innocently and said, "You signed it with black on white, how could I tamper with it?"

"Mom?!" Gu Xiyan ignored him and turned her disbelieving gaze towards Lin Lingling.

Lin Lingling lowered her head, not daring to meet Gu Xiyan's look of despair.

But this action was a clear admission to Gu Xiyan that the agreement she'd been given years before had indeed been tampered with.

Gu Xiyan felt a chill at the bottom of her heart, never expecting that all these years she had been manipulated by her own family.

She no longer wanted to ask her mother whether she knew about the problem with the agreement when she took it out, or if she found out about it later.

That question was no longer important now!

"My dear granddaughter, do you want to take a look at this agreement?"

Seeing the hopeless and helpless expression on Gu Xiyan's face, Gu Zhengxin's stern countenance softened considerably, and he once again showed a kind smile.

It was as if he truly were a benevolent grandfather concerned about whether his granddaughter was treated fairly!

In reality, he didn't want to expose the issues with the agreement; after all, doing so would seem rather distasteful.

But there was no choice; if Gu Xiyan had just been more compliant and chosen to be with either Zhang Qihuai or Chen Xuyang, he wouldn't have needed to tear away the mask of a kind grandfather.

Fortunately, though he had little faith in Gu Xiyan managing anything significant on her own with just one million yuan, his cautious mentality had still led him to plant numerous traps within the agreement prepared for Lin Lingling in advance.

Now, they were finally going to force Gu Xiyan into submission.

"Fine, bring it out for me to see!" Gu Xiyan forced herself to calm down, thinking that perhaps her grandfather was just trying to scare her.

Even though she knew the likelihood was slim, she still couldn't accept the cruel truth of being deceived and betrayed by her own family until she saw it with her own eyes.

Upon hearing this, Gu Zhengxin smiled faintly, taking his time to pull out a photocopied document from his pocket that had already been prepared, and handed it to Gu Xiyan.

Trembling, Gu Xiyan took the photocopy of the agreement, looking it over carefully numerous times. She discovered several traps within, stating that if she hadn't returned the one million yuan after a certain period, she would voluntarily do this and that, and if they needed, the company she started with that money would also become an unpaid subsidiary of Gu Corporation...

She was struck by a sense of absolute despair.

However, she wasn't completely defeated; with Yu Linglong at the company, she could still slowly dilute their shares and eventually kick them out of the game!

Seeing Gu Xiyan's expression forcibly calming, Gu Zhengxin spoke again, shattering her hopes.

"You're thinking that the shares in Yu Linglong's hands could give you a chance to turn things around, aren't you? Unfortunately, her father went to the Haojiang Casino yesterday. He first won several million yuan but then lost his cool and ended up losing tens of millions. Unable to pay on the spot and knowing you didn't have that much cash, your best friend sold her shares to me..."

Gu Xiyan trembled upon hearing this, thinking to herself, no wonder Yu Linglong rushed off work yesterday and booked a ticket to Haojiang. When she asked what was going on, Yu Linglong wouldn't say.

So, the truth turned out to be like this...

Then, Gu Xiyan suddenly realized, no wonder there had been no commotion from Grandpa after the birthday banquet ended that day, although she had initially thought he would make a move. He had been planning all this!

She even thought at that time that Grandpa was letting things slide because Mu Jinyu was her boyfriend.

Little did she know, Grandpa had been holding back his anger, plotting something big. Knowing that the agreement alone was only enough to take her shares but not enough to topple her position at Face of Jade Group, he had been scheming against Linglong's father all this time.

It wasn't until yesterday that his plotting came to fruition. Linglong was desperate to raise money to help her father, and knowing she couldn't easily sell her shares or come up with that much money herself, and not being fully aware of her relationship to the Gu Family, she naturally chose to sell her second-largest shareholding to Gu Zhengxin.

Such a ruthless person, such a poisonous heart...

To achieve his own ends, he would even calculate against his own family!

Gu Zhengxin, seeing Gu Xiyan's face turn pale in an instant, revealed a smile and said with a grin, "How about it? Do you still think you could have grown the company this large without any influence from our Gu Family?"

With a light chuckle, he continued leisurely, "Now, Grandpa still gives you two options. You either choose to marry either Zhang Qiu Huai or Chen Xuyang, to deepen our cooperation with one of their families, and then I will give you back your company. Even handing over the management of Gu Corporation to you is not off the table, or..."

Gu Zhengxin's tone suddenly turned cold, "Or, you really start from scratch, without taking a penny from the Gu Family and without using any of our connections. Then, Grandpa will let you have control over your life, and you can decide on your own marriage!"

"Oh, by the way..." Gu Zhengxin finished speaking and seemed to remember something, then added a reminder, "Your bank and credit cards are all frozen now, and those properties have been reclaimed by me!"

"So..." he said with a smirk, "If you still want to start from scratch, it looks like you might not even have a place to stay tonight."

Gu Zhengxin believed that Gu Xiyan, having been pampered since childhood and never having suffered any hardships, and with her extremely proud personality unwilling to let others see her downfall, would most likely end up roaming the streets tonight.

Not until she had suffered enough in the next few days and been battered by society, would she obediently return home and accept his arrangements!

But if she were smart, she might not have to suffer; she could straight away marry someone rich and not worry about these trifles anymore.

Gu Xiyan's parents, upon hearing Gu Zhengxin's words, felt it hard to bear but were unable to interfere with his decision, so they could only hang their heads, avoiding their daughter's expression.

As Gu Xiyan heard that her money, house, car... were all gone, her expression didn't change much. Her fists, however, clenched tighter, whitening her knuckles even further.

At this moment, Gu Xiyan's cousin, Gu Shiyu, came over and advised her:

"Xiyan, don't be stubborn. We are born into a great family, and from birth, we enjoy many conveniences; naturally, there are many things we can't decide for ourselves. Think about it, when I was your age, I also thought I could endure all hardships for love, and left home resolutely..."

Speaking of this, Gu Shiyu thought back to those simple yet embarrassing times, shook her head gently with a helpless smile, and said, "As a result, my credit card was frozen, I had no place to live, and I had to squeeze into a small broken rental with him, hearing the neighbors quarrel every night, hardly ever getting to sleep until late."

"And as for eating, I couldn't even eat what I wanted, I was eating food that seemed like chaff and vegetable stalks every day!"

Letting out a sigh, Gu Shiyu seemed to expel the bottled up frustration from her heart, her expression becoming much more relaxed and natural, and she said with an open smile, "I endured for two days before I couldn't take it anymore, and returned home to accept the arrangement, and then married your brother-in-law. Look, we're very much in love now, aren't we?"

Chapter 145: Drowning Sorrows in Alcohol!

"Intimate love?!"

When Gu Xiyan heard Gu Shiyu's words, she nearly threw up her lunch and snack.

She knew very well that in the first year of her cousin's marriage to her husband, they seemed inseparable, but years later, they grew tired of each other and had long been living apart, each doing their own thing.

Gu Xiyan had initially refused to believe these rumors, thinking that they were slander against her cousin. However, one day, when she saw her cousin strolling hand in hand with a young boy on the street, even giving him the ice cream she had eaten, could that be a mere friendship?

At that moment, Gu Shiyu's image collapsed in Gu Xiyan's heart.

Now, as Gu Shiyu claimed that she and her husband were still deeply in love, Gu Xiyan seriously doubted if something was wrong with her ears.

Or perhaps, was it Gu Shiyu's head that had a problem?

No... that's not right...

If a couple, behind the scenes, were already each playing their own game but it didn't affect their affection for each other, and they could still display a loving front in public, then indeed, it could be called... intimate love...

Gu Xiyan's expression was stern as she glanced at Gu Shiyu and distanced herself, saying coldly, "You want me to learn from you and your husband and be intimately in love? Sorry, I can't do that!"

After speaking, she looked up with a cold gaze at Gu Zhengxin, whose face was full of smugness, and said with a determined tone, "Even if you deprive me of everything I've worked hard for using your filthy tricks, I won't bow down to you because of it. I might leave the Gu family penniless tonight, but one day, I will rise again from the ashes and reach heights beyond your imagination, looking down on all of you..."

When Gu Zhengxin heard Gu Xiyan's refusal of his arrangement, the smugness on his old face instantly froze!

His complexion turned extremely ugly in an instant!

His fingers trembling, he raised his hand to point at Gu Xiyan, wanting to berate her for her foolishness.

However, Gu Xiyan simply ignored him, her gaze slowly sweeping over her parents, uncle, and other members of the Gu family. As their eyes met hers for a moment, they immediately dodged her gaze.

Gu Xiyan's face, previously tense, suddenly relaxed as she laughed lightly and said, "Your visions are always so narrow, just for the small benefits offered by the Zhang and Chen families for Qiu Huai and Xuyang, you're always thinking about selling me out, not realizing that I alone am worth more than both of their families combined. Today, you use all means to drive me away and strip away my company, but it's not me who loses, it's you. One day, you will regret today's decision..."

Having said that, Gu Xiyan turned around, signifying a complete break with the Gu family, and walked out of the hall with a sharp click of her high heels.

Chen Xuyang, who was chatting absently in the living room with Gu Xiyan's younger cousin Gu Shiqian, stood up immediately when he saw Gu Xiyan come out. He walked straight towards her, not minding the sudden change in Gu Shiqian's expression to an extremely ugly one.

"Xiyan, so many of our junior high classmates haven't seen each other for a long time, could you help me organize a reunion so we can catch up, play some games, and reconnect?"

Chen Xuyang thought of gathering the junior high classmates, anticipating that Gu Xiyan's wariness towards him would decrease considerably, then through playing games and easing the mood, followed

by a round of Truth or Dare, he was sure to find a chance to win her favor by bribing the classmates in advance.

But before he could finish talking, he saw Gu Xiyan, with a cold face, walking past him without even the courtesy of a response.

"Xiyan, Xiyan... what's wrong with you?"

Seeing this, Chen Xuyang paused, then called out loudly to her retreating figure.

After calling out and seeing that Gu Xiyan had no intention of stopping, he quickly stepped forward, trying to grab her arm to stop her and ask what was wrong.

Gu Xiyan heard the noise, abruptly stopped in her tracks, dodged his move, and with her mood at rock bottom, she certainly wasn't in the mood to humor the likes of him, simply spitting out one word coldly, "Scram!"

Having said that, she withdrew her gaze, turned around, and strode away, her high heels clicking on the floor with a rapid and sharp sound, and in a few steps, she had left the Gu Family Villa!

"Xiyan..."

Chen Xuyang weakly stretched out his hand and called after her, then thinking about the word 'scram' that Gu Xiyan had just shouted at him, his original bright mood, upon hearing that the Gu Family wanted to bring him and Gu Xiyan together, instantly turned sour!

"Damn it, what in the world is going on?!"

Extremely displeased, Chen Xuyang left behind Gu Shiqian, who still wanted to talk to him, and headed toward the main hall inside.

He was going to ask the Gu family what they meant by summoning him, were they just playing him for a fool?!

Chen Xuyang stormed into the hall, and before he could speak, Gu Zhengxin, with a glum face, apologetically said to him, "I'm sorry, Young Master Chen, Xiyan is a bit stubborn and sticks to her guns. I just hinted at introducing you to her, and she turned against us and left. It was my oversight; I really am sorry..."

Chen Xuyang, who was originally ready to curse them out, couldn't vent his pent-up anger upon hearing Old Master Gu apologizing to him like that, and could only dejectedly say, "Old Master Gu, if you're not sure about something in the future, don't make promises to me. I don't want to come over all happy next time, only to be told to scram!"

After finishing, Chen Xuyang, regardless of the Gu family members' attempts to retain him, also left the Gu Family.

With everyone gone, Gu Zhengxin's face darkened terribly, but he didn't lose his composure to the point of smashing things in anger!

After all, though he hadn't expected Gu Xiyan to be so resolute and openly break with them, his goal wasn't achieved, yet he wasn't at a loss either.

Even though because of Gu Xiyan, he couldn't reach further cooperation with the Zhang Family or the Chen Family, acquiring the highly promising Face of Jade Group would still allow the Gu Corporation to advance.

This could be considered a fair compensation for the loss brought about by Gu Xiyan's refusal to accept his arrangements.

As for Gu Xiyan's claim that they would regret their decision tonight, he didn't believe it at all. Without the Gu Family's support, what upheaval could Gu Xiyan possibly cause?

...

Gu Xiyan left the Gu Family, intending to drive away, but recalling what Gu Zhengxin said, she knew she didn't even have her car anymore. If she took the keys and drove away, who knows if her grandfather, who only cared about profit, would take the opportunity to call the police and have her arrested!

So, clutching her purse, and seeing that there was still several hundred yuan inside, she walked out and hailed a taxi.

As for the credit cards, she didn't bother trying. She just knew they must have been frozen, and that she couldn't use them!

Having left the Gu Family, Gu Xiyan, with a heart full of suffocation and no outlet, thought of calling her best friend Yu Linglong, but then she didn't know what to say. Her situation was probably not great either. Was she supposed to comfort her?

Forget it.

Gu Xiyan sat in the back seat of the taxi, not wanting to dwell on the annoyance of where to stay tonight. When she saw a bar called "Night Cat" through the car window, she told the taxi driver to stop, paid the fare, and walked toward the bar.

She, who never drank, was going to drown her sorrows in alcohol because of tonight's misfortune!

Chapter 146 Disturbing the Good!

"Night Cat" bar was situated in the bustling district of River City, where the volume of pedestrian traffic was enormous.

But with an increase in patrons, the inevitable consequence was that the entire bar became a mixed bag of characters.

Gu Xiyan, dressed in a black professional outfit, entered the bar, and although she wasn't wearing anything particularly eye-catching, she still exuded an overpowering presence that outshone everyone else.

She effortlessly eclipsed all the other women in the bar, drawing the undivided attention of the men there.

They were awed by Gu Xiyan's exceptionally charming looks and the formidable aura of a powerful woman, yet despite their admiration, none dared to approach her.

The men who frequented bars to pick up women were undoubtedly familiar with all sorts of luxury brands and could instantly tell that the bag Xiyan was carrying was worth more than a hundred thousand, something they could only afford after several years of saving.

Her business attire and the diamond necklace around her neck only intensified their sense of inferiority, deterring them from rashly intruding on the beautiful lady.

They could only hope that Gu Xiyan hadn't called friends to join her and that she was planning to get thoroughly drunk, in which case, they might have a sliver of a chance.

Gu Xiyan stepped into the bar and, listening to the cacophony of metal music and the fervent gazes cast her way, frowned, feeling somewhat out of place.

However, she was no stranger to such settings and simply ignored them, found a vacant seat, ordered several bottles of alcohol, and without any interest in dinner, began drinking heavily on her own!

A few confident men who believed they were elegant enough to win Gu Xiyan over approached her to invite her for a drink, but were sent away with just one word from her, "Scram!"

"You?!"

Angered and embarrassed by her blunt dismissal, they wanted to say more but were ultimately driven away by her commanding presence, leaving dejectedly.

The friends who had egged them on looked on at this scene and erupted in a chorus of hisses.

Gu Xiyan couldn't be bothered with these fools driven by lust, continuing to drink, one bottle after another...

In no time, she had finished three bottles.

Because she was drinking on an empty stomach, she was already quite drunk, her face flushed a brilliant red, which, when paired with her icy gaze, made her appear cold yet stunningly attractive.

The men who had been biding their time now looked intrigued; their lips curled into a sly smile as they sensed a bountiful harvest coming their way tonight.

Gu Xiyan's vision was beginning to blur from her drinking, but the discomfort and grievances in her heart weren't lessening despite the amount she had consumed.

She could still clearly remember her oppressive grandfather at the Gu Family, his threats and persuasions, her parents' weakness, her uncle's silence...

No one stood by her side to fight alongside her.

"Haha... family interests, sacrificing oneself..."

Gu Xiyan kept drinking, her expression somber. She murmured to herself and then suddenly thought of Mu Jinyu.

Although this man always managed to annoy her, he had nevertheless resolved the problems she asked him to help with every time, despite always refusing initially.

But surely, he must have done it for the sake of money, right?

Now that she was out of money, if she called him over, would he come?

Drunk, Gu Xiyan pondered this and decided to test it out. Without offering any financial incentive, she wanted to see if he would come to join her for a drink and protect her, or if he, like her relatives, would reveal his true colors once her value for exploitation was no longer as significant as the petty benefits they sought.

"Heh heh..."

Gu Xiyan chuckled to herself in her inebriated state, took out her phone, and dialed Mu Jinyu.

When the call ended, the outcome was somewhat unexpected.

Without mentioning money, Mu Jinyu didn't refuse her request and didn't even ask her to reimburse his travel expenses; he simply said he would be there soon and told her to stay safe.

"Heh heh..."

Gu Xiyan propped her cheek with one hand, her head tilted, as she chuckled drunkenly, not bothering to consider whether Mu Jinyu's previously harsh attitude toward her had been an act of playing hard to get.

Right now, she was extremely vulnerable; she didn't want to think about these matters, she just wanted to find someone to drink with and share the troubles weighing on her mind.

Gu Xiyan was strong-willed, and she hardly had any real friends, apart from Yu Linglong. It seemed that Mu Jinyu, someone she didn't find too irritating, could count as half a friend.

While waiting for Mu Jinyu to arrive, Gu Xiyan picked up her glass and took several more sips of alcohol.

Those who had been watching Gu Xiyan were considering the phone call she had just made; seeing her suddenly relax, they guessed she must have called a friend to come pick her up.

Even as their prey was about to fall into their mouths, they were unwilling to let go so easily.

However, they didn't hurry to act; knowing her friend was coming to pick her up, they figured they had some time. They decided to wait until Gu Xiyan drank even more, preferably until she blacked out. That way, they wouldn't have to lift a finger to easily drag her away.

"Bang!"

Ultimately, having drunk too quickly and too much, and after a few more sips, Gu Xiyan couldn't hold on any longer. Knowing that Mu Jinyu would soon arrive and thus less tense and cautious, her head tilted and she, holding the glass, sprawled over the bar table, her eyes drunkenly glazed, drifting off to sleep.

"The chance has come!"

A pack of wolves lying in wait, eager for their feed, saw that Gu Xiyan was blackout drunk, shouted in their hearts, and rushed towards her location.

They knew Gu Xiyan's friend would come for her soon; they had little time and needed to hurry to take care of any rivals in the bar, then carry Gu Xiyan away!

"Crash bang!"

The bar instantly erupted into chaos, with no one wanting to miss this opportunity.

In the end, a man in his thirties with a buzz cut, seeing the people lying on the floor, wore a smirk of triumph on his face, tossed away the half bottle in his hand, and strutted towards Gu Xiyan with his head raised and chest puffed out like a triumphant general.

"Babe, wake up, I'll take you home!"

The man lightly pushed Gu Xiyan on the shoulder and said those words; without waiting for a reaction from Gu Xiyan, he reached out to pick her up.

At that moment, someone suddenly patted his shoulder from behind.

"Hey!"

A very young man's voice.

"Get lost; don't disturb me," the man cursed without looking back, then ordered his minions, "Gouzi, Erdan, quickly get rid of this nuisance behind me. People will be arriving soon; hurry up!"

No one responded.

"Hey!"

The person behind him was still gently patting his shoulder.

"You motherf..."

The man, annoyed at the repeated interruptions and with a clenched fist, turned around to punch the person disrupting him!

"Slap!!"

But as he turned his face towards the person behind him, a palm struck him fiercely across the face!

The crisp and loud slap echoed throughout the noisy bar!

"Pff!!"

A few teeth and blood flew out.

Chapter 147: Pouring Out Troubles!

Mu Jinyu rushed to the Night Cat Bar and saw a pile of bodies strewn on the ground just as a man with a sleazy smile was walking towards Gu Xiyan.

He looked at Gu Xiyan who held a wine glass and rested her arm as if she were about to fall asleep, his eyebrows slightly furrowed as he quickly approached her.

The man's henchmen, upon seeing Mu Jinyu approach, exchanged glances, not wishing to disturb their boss's good time, they clenched their fists and walked towards Mu Jinyu, ready to take him outside and deal with him.

Mu Jinyu strode forward to meet them, casually lifting his hand and lightly tapping a few places on their bodies; they immediately collapsed to the ground, unconscious.

Then, as the middle-aged man prepared to regretfully reach for Gu Xiyan, Mu Jinyu stood behind him and patted his shoulder.

Interrupted twice, when the man turned around, ready to strike him, Mu Jinyu's gaze turned cold, and he violently stretched out his palm and fiercely slapped the man's face.

"Pff!"

Instantly, the man spun on the spot like a top, whirling around as he spat out blood, with the occasional splintered teeth flying out.

Mu Jinyu extended another foot and kicked the man away.

He had no intention of speaking with them.

After kicking away these disgusting maggots, Mu Jinyu went over to Gu Xiyan, lifted her hair with his hand and gently tapped her rosy cheeks, "Hey, wake up!"

As he called out, he inwardly sighed at Gu Xiyan's carelessness; had he been any later, wouldn't she have fallen prey to someone else's scheme?

Upon hearing the shouting, Gu Xiyan's tightly closed eyes suddenly opened, revealing a pair of eyes still full of intoxication yet extraordinarily cold and proud.

"So, you weren't drunk after all!"

Seeing Gu Xiyan like this, Mu Jinyu breathed a sigh of relief and joked, "You had me worried for a while, scared that I wouldn't arrive in time... "

Gu Xiyan's clear eyes, slightly drunken, looked at Mu Jinyu as the anxiety in her heart also settled, and her hand underneath the table that was tightly holding the key relaxed.

Slightly shaking her head, Gu Xiyan struggled to sit upright, gave Mu Jinyu a forced smile, then felt the world before her eyes spin wildly. Frowning tightly, she felt weak all over and, her head lolling to the side, she laid it on Mu Jinyu's shoulder.

"Hey, are you okay?! If you can't drink, don't indulge. Getting so drunk and still asking me to come drink with you is really..."

Mu Jinyu supported Gu Xiyan's shoulder as he saw she was severely intoxicated. After speaking a few words, he pulled out a Silver Needle from his pocket and stuck several needles into her body.

Suddenly.

The drunken flush on Gu Xiyan's pretty face quickly receded, returning to a healthy rosy color.

And her half-open eyes, brimming with intoxication, also faded significantly.

"All right, there, you're fine. Get up."

Mu Jinyu withdrew the needles, placed them back in the bag, then returned it to his pocket, before turning to Gu Xiyan, who was tilting her head with a slightly dazed expression, and spoke to her.

"Eh, why doesn't my head hurt anymore?" She tilted her head to look at Mu Jinyu and habitually reached up to rub her brow as she asked.

Mu Jinyu said, "Because I've metabolized the alcohol in your body, of course you're feeling fine now."

As soon as the words were out, Gu Xiyan realized the side effects of metabolism, glared fiercely at Mu Jinyu, and hurried to the bathroom.

When she came out of the bathroom, although her head still ached a bit, she felt much better overall.

And there stood Mu Jinyu at the bar's entrance, under the admiring and fervent gazes of the common rabble, as he turned back to her and said, "Let's go, I've already paid."

Gu Xiyan, upon hearing these words, felt somewhat overwhelmed.

I never would have guessed that such a money-grubbing guy would actually pay for my drinks.

Gu Xiyan strode towards him and, amid the disappointed and reluctant gazes of the women in the bar, left Night Cat Bar with Mu Jinyu.

"Why are you being so kind today, even paying for my drinks? Do you expect me to repay you tenfold or a hundredfold?"

Walking side by side with Mu Jinyu, Gu Xiyan spoke while casting a doubtful glance at him.

Mu Jinyu shook his head slightly and said, "Forget it, you don't have to pay me back. Consider it my treat. What's gotten into you tonight anyway? Why the sudden madness to go drinking at a bar all by yourself, without even bringing a bodyguard? And where's that best friend of yours?"

At his words, Gu Xiyan's face darkened once again, and she spoke in a low voice, "Even if you wanted me to pay back the price of those drinks tenfold or a hundredfold, I wouldn't have the money to repay you now... I'm completely broke..."

"What happened to you?" Mu Jinyu asked, frowning as he turned to look at the gloomy Gu Xiyan.

Gu Xiyan's gaze became vacant, like a lifeless paper flower, as she shook her head gently and murmured, "Let's not talk about that. I want to drink, I want to get drunk, just be with me..."

Seeing her like this, Mu Jinyu suddenly felt a pang of pity for her. Then he noticed a small shop up ahead, so he nodded and said, "Alright, I'll go buy you a drink."

Having said that, he quickly walked towards the shop.

Before long, Mu Jinyu had bought a case of beer, paid for it, and walked out of the shop, only to find that Gu Xiyan wasn't where she had been before.

Feeling a tightness in his chest, he heard Gu Xiyan call out from another direction, "I'm over here."

Mu Jinyu turned and saw that Gu Xiyan had slowly made her way to the steps of a nearby plaza and was sitting down, waving and calling out to him.

Exhaling softly, Mu Jinyu carried the case of beer towards her.

Reaching the steps and sitting beside Gu Xiyan, Mu Jinyu opened up the plastic bag and handed her a can of beer.

"Tsstt!"

Gu Xiyan pulled the tab open and began to sip the beer in small gulps, tilting her head up slightly, her gaze hazy as she looked at the starless night sky.

Mu Jinyu said nothing but let her have some quiet time to herself, simply sitting by her side.

After finishing a can of beer, Gu Xiyan felt slightly inebriated. She looked at Mu Jinyu through drunken eyes, gave a self-deprecating smile, and then told him about what had happened that evening.

Normally, no matter how much she suffered or how tired she felt, Gu Xiyan wouldn't share her troubles with others.

It wasn't that she lacked friends to confide in, nor that she didn't want comfort. She just felt that if something was troubling her, why talk about it with friends and drag them into her troubles?!

Years ago, Gu Xiyan didn't have this mindset. Whenever she was troubled, she would confide in her best friend from school.

Initially, after venting and receiving comfort from her best friend, she felt much better.

Until one day, when her best friend, apparently troubled herself, bluntly said, "Don't keep telling me these crappy things. I'm not a trash can. Stop dumping your annoying troubles on me and making me worry with you."

From that day on, Gu Xiyan became stronger and stopped sharing her worries and negative emotions with others.

And though she still maintained a relationship with that best friend, things had changed due to those words, and they became just ordinary friends.

Even if she felt wronged and distressed about tonight's events, Gu Xiyan didn't want to talk about her troubles only to get an insincere response that would make her even more heartbroken.

Mu Jinyu was a bit different, though. After all, he had mocked and scoffed at her so many times before. She felt that in front of him, she hardly had any dignity left, so she might as well use him as a trash can to vent her frustrations...

As for how he would mock or belittle her after she finished talking, Gu Xiyan didn't care anymore.

Chapter 148: Mu Jinyu's Past!

Mu Jinyu listened to Gu Xiyan's outpouring and didn't show a mocking smile, but instead, his eyes grew complicated.

With sadness, reminiscence, resentment, and melancholy...

It was indeed complex.

He sat on the steps and reached into the plastic bag by his feet to pull out a can of beer, with a "tsk" he opened the tab and then took a sip.

After exhaling the smell of alcohol, Mu Jinyu smiled nonchalantly and said, "What's this? My past was much more miserable than yours."

"Do you want to hear about it?!" Mu Jinyu turned his head to look at Gu Xiyan.

Gu Xiyan sat on the steps, her elbows on her knees, her palms supporting her cheeks, and her head tilted as she looked at Mu Jinyu drunkenly. When she heard his question, she nodded lightly.

Mu Jinyu smiled, his gaze lost in memories, and then he took another drink of his beer. After gathering his thoughts, he began:

"When I was about five years old, I think? I've forgotten how old I exactly was back then, my family was extremely poor. Finally, one day, my mother, unable to bear the family's poverty and my father's endless outpouring of love, chose to leave me and my father..."

Sitting to the side, Gu Xiyan was initially looking at Mu Jinyu through drunken eyes, but hearing his story, she shivered and her eyes cleared up quite a bit. The way she looked at Mu Jinyu grew complex as well.

She hadn't expected him to have had such a childhood.

Mu Jinyu took another sip of beer, then rubbed his temples, smiling numbly and nonchalantly, "That day, I watched my mother get into a car that seemed very luxurious, then she said goodbye to me. I was just a child then, not realizing her goodbye meant we would never see each other again. I asked her, 'Mom, where are you going, when will you come back?'"

At this point, Mu Jinyu's breathing suddenly grew heavier, and his eyes, after several sips of beer, reddened with more bloodshot veins. His hand unconsciously clenched tighter as he smiled faintly, "My mom said she was going on a long trip and would come back to get me when it snowed in Rong City, and we could have a snowball fight..."

"Rong City?!" Gu Xiyun, hearing this, was startled at first, then realized the implication and her gaze toward Mu Jinyu became much more pitying.

Rong City is a flourishing metropolis in Bamin Province, located downstream along the Min River and the coastal region. One could say the city hardly ever sees snow in a hundred years, and even if there have been a few occurrences of snowfall in several hundred years, it's just a sprinkling and not enough to have a snowball fight.

Therefore, the answer Mu Jinyu's mother gave naturally meant she was never going to come back for him...

Mu Jinyu drained the can of beer in one go and squeezed the can in his hand a bit too hard, crushing it into a lump. He continued with a laugh:

"After speaking with my mother, she coaxed me to go back home. Assured by her promise, I obediently went home and then waited every day for it to snow in Rong City so that my mom could come back and cook something tasty for me. But I waited many days and it never snowed, so I went to ask my father, who by then had aged quite a bit, 'Dad, when will it snow in Rong City? When will mom come back to see me?'"

"Every time I asked my father this question, he always had a complicated expression and then he would say soon, very soon, she will come back to see me soon..."

At this point, Mu Jinyu suddenly sneered, then discarded the crumpled soda can in her hand and continued with a smile,

"A year later, my mother still hadn't come back, and I gradually understood that she might never return. It was during this time that my father, who was already in poor health, suffered a massive blow from my mother's departure. One day, while drinking, he suddenly vomited blood and we sent him to the hospital for a check-up. That's when we discovered he had stomach cancer."

As Mu Jinyu spoke, her expression remained calm and unfazed, as if she had already accepted this fact, and she smiled, "It must have been because he ate irregularly, sometimes going a whole day without food when busy, on top of his drinking and smoking that led to the cancer."

Gu Xiyan stayed silent, unsure how to comfort Mu Jinyu.

Mu Jinyu wasn't looking for her pity or comfort; she had just held these things in her heart for too long and occasionally wanted to vent.

Shaking her head with a wry smile, Mu Jinyu seemed to mock her own old man's pointless struggles and continued,

"My father was a local doctor, the kind who devoted himself to public health, benefiting the villagers. Many in our village received his help. After seeing patients who couldn't pay the consultation fee, he would just laugh it off and still prescribe medicine for them. He let them owe the fees, telling them to pay him back when they could afford it..."

Saying this, Mu Jinyu's expression suddenly twisted into a fierce grimace, but her tone remained light-hearted as she chuckled, "But most people wouldn't come back to repay their debts after getting treated. So though my father was the best doctor in the village, he couldn't earn much money. He even often ended up paying out of his own pocket for others, which is why my mother couldn't stand his excessive generosity and left him."

Mu Jinyu rubbed her slightly reddened cheeks, then picked up a can of beer, popped the tab, and began to drink.

She downed it in one go.

After tossing the empty can aside, Mu Jinyu laughed, "We didn't have much in the way of savings to begin with, so naturally, when my father got stomach cancer, our family's funds were quickly depleted. At that point, he remembered the villagers who owed him money for consultations and prescriptions and went to ask for repayment..."

At that, Mu Jinyu's eyes turned ice-cold, filled with rage, and her hands unconsciously clenched tightly, whitening her knuckles.

"My father didn't actually know how much money they owed him, but it was definitely upwards of a couple hundred thousand yuan. Yet when he went to collect his debts, even upon learning he had stomach cancer, they evaded payback at every turn. When they had no other choice, they begrudgingly gave a hundred or two hundred yuan, as if offering alms..."

"Gone was any pretense of kindness or warmth when they accidentally met on the street!"

Upon hearing this, Gu Xiyan's mouth hung open in shock, unable to fathom the tragic end to her father's good deeds.

Mu Jinyu's breathing grew heavier, and her eyes reddened, "And some of them, the costs of the medicine my father gave exceeded several thousand yuan. In the end, they only gave tens of yuan, then shoed my father and me away like chasing away flies."

"How could they possibly do that?!" Gu Xiyan finally couldn't hold back and spoke up. Then, with trembling hands, she grasped Mu Jinyu's hand, finding it was very cold.

Just like her own heart at this moment.

The rage in Mu Jinyu's eyes faded, and she smiled numbly, "Everyone had grown accustomed to my father's unpaid contributions. When they learned that they actually had to repay him, of course, they would turn hostile and deny him. Hahaha... it serves my dad right, huh? He didn't see that all those he helped were just a pack of ingrates! Ha ha..."

Chapter 149 Facing Calmly

Listening to Mu Jinyu's desolate laugh that sounded like a lone wolf howling at the moon, Gu Xiyan suddenly felt a pang of heartache.

Then, she shifted her position on the staircase steps closer to Mu Jinyu, reached out to wrap her arms around his waist, and snuggled against him, as if to offer him a bit of warmth.

Mu Jinyu didn't embrace her, nor did he push her away. His thoughts were still lingering in the past, and with a numb expression, he shook his head and laughed,

"Who knew that there were far more ungrateful people than just these, the students who had been supported by my father through college. They had all made it big, owning assets worth hundreds of millions, even billions. Yet, when they heard about my dad's troubles, not only did they not offer a helping hand, they didn't even make a phone call to show concern..."

"My father supported their education without expecting anything in return. Although their indifference was disappointing to him, he didn't blame them. After realizing he had no power to reverse his fate, he gave up on the hope of getting better to wait for his wife to return for a family reunion. He took the initiative to call those students and bid them farewell..."

"Hahaha..." Mu Jinyu suddenly burst into laughter again, laughing so maniacally that he even laughed out tears, "When he made those calls, that group of students, if they didn't ignore the call, they dismissed him with a few perfunctory words and hung up quickly. They were so stingy that they wouldn't even offer fake words of concern to my dad! Hahaha..."

Gu Xiyan suddenly hugged Mu Jinyu tightly, her head resting on his chest. With a voice choked with sobs, she cried out, "Stop it, I don't want to hear anymore... Wuuu..."

Mu Jinyu paid no attention to her and didn't push her away, letting Gu Xiyan cry her eyes out, her tears and snot staining his shirt, as he continued to laugh,

"My dad spent his life healing people, did so many good deeds, yet in the end, it was because of money that he met such an end, dying in depression..."

"Since then, I've vowed not to live such a pathetic life like his. I only want money, I only like money, even if people criticize me, calling me money-hungry and lacking medical ethics, I don't care!"

Mu Jinyu's eyes suddenly sharpened, the bloodshot orbs seemingly emitting a chilling frost.

"So, after that, I changed my name to Mu Jinyu. Originally, I planned to name myself after 'Mu Qian' (desire for money), but that felt too crass, so I went with 'Mu Jinyu' instead, the 'Jinyu' from Jinyu Mantang (a home filled with gold and jade)..."

When he mentioned Jinyu Mantang, Mu Jinyu's eyes suddenly softened, and his expression relaxed and became natural, free from the earlier coldness and hatred.

With a tranquil smile, he gently patted Gu Xiyan's back and said with a chuckle, "I chose this name as a reminder to myself that I must make a fortune. When I treat people, I will surely charge them. I'll treat them only if they pay; if not, they can bugger off! I won't let anyone owe me money; I refuse to be a good-hearted person like my dad who ends up poor and dies destitute without his family!"

Gu Xiyan, lying in Mu Jinyu's arms and listening to all he said, finally understood his miserliness and greed.

Before knowing him, her impressions and labels for him were marked by disdain and contempt.

But now, all that remained in her heart was pity and sympathy for Mu Jinyu.

Gu Xiyan suddenly felt that the pain and suffocation of being betrayed by her entire family didn't seem so painful anymore, after all, compared to Mu Jinyu's experience, at least her own parents were still alive. At least her parents, when it came to being pressured by her grandfather to marry for the family's gain, were also helpless and unable to speak out.

Images of her parents avoiding her gaze and sighing helplessly when her grandfather forced her swelled up in her mind.

If they had had the means, how could they have allowed her grandfather to pressure her like that? But there was nothing they could do; within the family, they had no status and couldn't speak for her. Even if they did, no one would listen!

At this thought, Gu Xiyan's tears circled again within her eyes, soaking the front of Mu Jinyu's clothes.

Mu Jinyu, however, continued to express the frustration that had been pent up in his heart for many years, "People always think that doctors should save lives and heal—the more without charge, the better. Then they can casually toss out a few cost-free praises. But what's the use of a widely admired reputation in the medical community? Does selfless dedication pay off? Blind compassion only ends up moving oneself. To live with dignity in this world, only money is the real eternal foundation!"

"Stop talking!"

Gu Xiyan abruptly lifted her head from Mu Jinyu's embrace, her tears drenching her face. Her beautiful black eyes, blurred by tears, resembled a smudged ink and color painting suffused with the sorrow of falling rain.

Mu Jinyu wanted to say more, but Gu Xiyan suddenly threw herself on him, sealing his lips!

"Wu wu wu..."

Mu Jinyu's eyes widened as he found Gu Xiyan's face close to his, his mouth blocked, unable to speak, and could only make muffled noises.

Feeling somewhat breathless, Gu Xiyan finally let go of Mu Jinyu.

"Phew!"

After releasing Mu Jinyu, Gu Xiyan's face flushed red with her bold action. She breathed lightly, her eyes darting away, not daring to meet Mu Jinyu's gaze, but inside, she felt no regret for her impulse.

She sat back down next to Mu Jinyu, glanced at the streetlight beside her, and said softly, "You're being too extreme. Not everyone is like those you've encountered. There are still many people who remember and honor my uncle's goodness. At least I admire him a lot."

Because of Gu Xiyan's spontaneous act, the hatred and frustration that had surged through Mu Jinyu after his previous confession dissipated quite a bit.

The events had already passed so many years ago. Although Mu Jinyu couldn't completely let go, he had come to terms with them to a certain extent.

Hearing Gu Xiyan's words, Mu Jinyu chuckled softly. His expression was not as scary as before, "What's the use of admiration? The man is long gone. Plus, I'm not telling you this because I want your comfort, but rather to show you that, despite all the hardship and torment you're currently facing, feeling insurmountable, when time passes and you look back, everything will seem much lighter."

Upon hearing this, Gu Xiyan abruptly turned to look at Mu Jinyu, her beautiful eyes shimmering with an indescribable luster, enchanting and captivating.

Mu Jinyu also turned to meet her gaze, saying with a calm and serene smile, "Just like me now, haven't I also seen through those things? My heart no longer dwells on them as before. I once thought that speaking of them would reopen the wounds, turning it all bloody, yet now I face it with equanimity."

Chapter 150 Adorable Gu Xiyan

The two sat on the bustling plaza steps, the dim streetlights casting their shadows long and distant, giving them a somewhat lonely appearance, yet clearly entwined with each other.

In contrast, not far from them on the plaza, aunties were lively dancing to square dances, filled with laughter and excitement.

The happiness and laughter on the plaza seemed to belong to someone else, but they weren't alone. At least at this moment, their hearts were very close.

"Thank you." Gu Xiyan leaned close to Mu Jinyu, staring into the autumn brilliance of Mu Jinyu's beautiful eyes, then with a graceful smile, she expressed her gratitude.

Mu Jinyu shifted his gaze away, no longer meeting Gu Xiyan's eyes, thinking about the moment she had just smiled. What was it he had forgotten?

Oh, right...

His heart had skipped a few beats and forgotten to start beating again.

With this thought, Mu Jinyu took out a packet of tissues from his pocket and tossed it to Gu Xiyan, saying indifferently, "Take this and wipe off your tears and snot. You've cried yourself into a little tabby cat, everyone is laughing at you, and you're dragging me down with you!"

"You're so annoying!" Gu Xiyan glowered at Mu Jinyu after hearing his words, then lightly punched him, feeling that he was really spoiling the mood.

However, Mu Jinyu's reminder made Gu Xiyan aware of how unsightly she must look.

Fortunately, she always wore light makeup, so even though she had cried a lot, her makeup wasn't ruined. That would have been truly hideous.

Taking the tissues Mu Jinyu threw her, Gu Xiyan didn't want to embarrass herself further in front of Mu Jinyu and hastily wiped the tear stains from her face.

After that, the two continued to sit on the steps, drinking beer and chatting.

When they had finished a can of beer, Gu Xiyan, having cried earlier and talked with Mu Jinyu, managed to vent her pent-up feelings completely.

Gu Xiyan tossed the empty can away, clapped her hands, stood up, and with a sweet smile, said to Mu Jinyu, "Thank you for your consolation, I feel much better now."

Mu Jinyu checked his phone for the time and realized it was already ten o'clock, guessing that Wen Rou must still be waiting for him at home.

However, leaving Gu Xiyan behind didn't seem right. After all, she had just mentioned that she was currently without a place to live. After thinking it over, Mu Jinyu said, "You probably don't have anywhere to go right now, right? Do you want to stay at my place for a while?"

"Stay at your place? Live with you?" Upon hearing this, Gu Xiyan's eyes became wary as she looked at Mu Jinyu.

Mu Jinyu said exasperatedly, "What's that look for? Please, I'm kindly offering to shelter you, do you think I'm planning something bad? If I really wanted to do something bad to you, I could have just not let you sober up and dragged you straight from the bar to my home, couldn't I?"

"That's true," Gu Xiyan said, nodding thoughtfully.

She didn't think Mu Jinyu would do anything to her, but her modesty and shyness still made it hard for her to immediately agree.

Mu Jinyu saw Gu Xiyan hesitating and thought she didn't want to, which immediately gave him the frustrating feeling that his kindness was being taken for granted.

After all, he had wasted so much time helping her and even offered her a place to stay, and yet she thought he had ulterior motives. He shouldn't have let his compassion get the better of him.

With a slight shake of his head, Mu Jinyu spoke, his tone much colder, "If you don't want to go, forget it. Find yourself a place to stay. You probably have plenty of friends and don't really need me. I was just being presumptuous. I'll be going back now."

Having said this, Mu Jinyu got up, patted the dust off his pants, and prepared to leave.

Gu Xiyan, hearing his much colder voice, felt somewhat taken aback.

She was only being a little reserved, and he suddenly blew up—what an unromantic jerk. As if she wanted to go!

She turned her head away, no longer wanting to speak with Mu Jinyu.

Seeing this, Mu Jinyu sighed softly to himself, began to gather his things, and made to step away.

As he took a step, he felt something tugging at him from behind.

Mu Jinyu looked back, puzzled.

Gu Xiyan was still sitting on the steps, her expression distant as she turned her head to look at the street lamp beside her and reached out her right hand to fiddle with the corner of her own clothes.

Mu Jinyu's brows furrowed slightly as he reached out to pry her hand away.

It wouldn't budge, and if he truly exerted force to pry open Gu Xiyan's hand, he would surely hurt her.

With a sigh of resignation, Mu Jinyu said, "What exactly do you mean?"

"Nothing much," Gu Xiyan replied dismissively, remaining seated.

Mu Jinyu was at a loss with her, thinking that Gu Xiyan wanted him to keep her company outside for the entire night.

Furrowing his brows, he persuaded, "I need to go home and sleep."

"Then go back," Gu Xiyan said, turning her head to look at the street lamp indifferently, "I'm not stopping you."

Mu Jinyu stared at her small hand gripping the corner of her clothes. How could she say she wasn't holding him back?!

This woman was truly unreasonable!

"Then let go," Mu Jinyu said with an exasperated sigh.

This time, Gu Xiyan pursed her lips and remained silent.

Mu Jinyu saw something like tears rolling in her eyes and felt a stir in his heart, vaguely guessing her thoughts.

So, he tentatively said, "I'm leaving now, if you want to follow, then follow."

Having said that, he turned around once more and slowly began to descend the steps.

This time, he wasn't held back by Gu Xiyan tugging at the corner of his clothes.

Because as he turned leisurely, Gu Xiyan quietly stood up, silently clutched the corner of his clothes, and followed him down.

Mu Jinyu couldn't help but glance back at her. Gu Xiyan was still looking away, refusing to look at him.

Letting out a soft sigh, Mu Jinyu didn't want to say anything more. He walked to the side of the road, hailed a taxi, then opened the door and got in.

Gu Xiyan naturally followed him into the taxi and then closed the door.

After Mu Jinyu gave the address, he looked down at Gu Xiyan's hand.

Her little hand was still stubbornly clinging to the corner of his clothes, as if fearing he might suddenly abandon her and run off.

Mu Jinyu sighed in resignation and said, "We're already in the car; you can let go now, right? I won't leave you behind."

"That's not for sure," Gu Xiyan spoke, her head facing the car window to watch the scenery, not looking at Mu Jinyu, but she finally spoke another sentence.

The cab driver, seeing this scene in the rearview mirror, couldn't help but chuckle, "Are the young couple having a quarrel?"

"Who's his significant other?"

"Who's her significant other?"

After saying the same sentence in unison, they glanced at each other and snorted, then turned their heads away.

The taxi driver saw Gu Xiyan's hand still clutching Mu Jinyu's clothes corner from the rearview mirror, displayed an envious smile, and then fell silent, focusing on driving.