

King Hall 161

Chapter 161 I Haven't Gotten on the Car Yet

Mu Jinyu listened to their discussions with a furrowed brow, knowing all too well that the task given to them by Manager Chen was absolutely a hot potato.

The reason she had hastily dumped this hot potato onto them was actually related to the newly arrived Gu Xiyan.

It figured.

Gu Xiyan had always been decisive and acted swiftly - she disliked dragging things out. At the time, Mu Jinyu had agreed to meet with Trotsky after a few days, yet Gu Xiyan came to her the very next day, speaking sweetly and softly, begging Mu Jinyu to meet with that pervert.

As soon as she joined the company and discovered that there were outstanding final payments owed by other companies, she naturally called for the person in charge of the matter to quickly look into it.

Consequently, it turned out to be her, the company's boss, who had to run errands for Gu Xiyan.

However, it was probably for the best. If Mu Jinyu hadn't been there, given Lin Qiaoxia's gentle nature, she might have been indirectly harmed by Gu Xiyan.

Thinking this, Mu Jinyu disregarded their sympathetic glances, following Lin Qiaoxia out of the office.

The two of them left the company, took the elevator down, exited the building, and stood by the roadside, waving for a taxi.

In the process, Lin Qiaoxia had already informed Mu Jinyu about the difficulty and complexity of the situation.

Hongmao Pharmaceuticals might not be the largest supplier of herbal medicine in River City, but it was a very capable one. According to what Lin Qiaoxia had learned, Jinyu Company had a standing collaboration with them before it changed its name.

Half a year ago, the former boss of Jinyu Company, Xu Xiaojiao, had spent a fortune to buy an allegedly powerful beauty recipe from a mountain farmer. She then made large purchases of herbal medicine from Hongmao Pharmaceuticals to invest in the development of this beauty recipe.

The development of the beauty recipe did not go smoothly. The R&D staff used a lot of medicine and could barely figure out some ideas. Seeing this, Xu Xiaojiao once again sent a large sum of money to Hongmao Pharmaceuticals, asking them to prepare the required herbs for her.

Afterward, Hongmao Pharmaceuticals gradually delivered the herbs ordered by the company, but there was still about five hundred thousand worth of herbs that had not been delivered.

When Xu Xiaojiao sent someone to inquire, it turned out that the boss of Hongmao Pharmaceuticals had fallen ill and their company was currently managed by his good-for-nothing son.

Upon taking charge, his son immediately squandered the money intended for purchasing herbs at the well-known gambling dens of River City, and eventually lost everything.

Hongmao Pharmaceuticals nearly went bankrupt, and upon seeing that they were unreliable, Xu Xiaojiao switched to another supplier for the herbs she needed. She then asked Hongmao Pharmaceuticals to transfer the remaining five hundred thousand to the company's account.

By that time, the ailing boss of Hongmao Pharmaceuticals had resumed his position. When he heard that Xu Xiaojiao was no longer cooperating with them, he kept dragging his feet and didn't transfer the money.

Later on, Xu Xiaojiao sent people to urge them to settle the final payment. At first, they were very polite, making all kinds of excuses, such as problems with cash flow, etc...

But it was clear to everyone that they were looking to default on the debt.

At that time, there was a male colleague in the PR department. Seeing this as an opportunity to excel, he volunteered to go to Hongmao Pharmaceuticals to collect the debt.

His debt collection journey obviously did not go smoothly. During the first few visits, the boss of Hongmao Pharmaceuticals was quite polite. But after a slip-up in which he spoke harshly, the boss's son ordered his men to break his leg, leaving him lying in the hospital without recovery till this moment...

From then on, the two sides had thoroughly fallen out.

Hongmao Pharmaceuticals all but declared they were going bankrupt and since Jinyu Company was no longer purchasing medicine from them, they weren't making any money. Naturally, they had no funds to repay. Want your money? Well, you'll just have to wait...

When Xu Xiaojiao heard about this situation, she originally planned to have the Xu Family behind her step in and take out Hongmao Pharmaceuticals.

But later, fearing that the Xu Family might think she was incompetent, she pressed the issue down and shifted her focus to the soon-to-be-completed research on a beauty formula, not bothering to deal with Hongmao Pharmaceuticals, the jumping clown, until she had spare time to take care of them!

So, the five hundred thousand that Hongmao Pharmaceuticals owed could not be reclaimed for the time being.

That's the reason this task was almost impossible to complete and why no one dared to take it on.

Lin Qiaoxia had not been with the company long, so she was able to recount the details clearly because she had just joined the company a few days earlier and had not much to do. Feeling it wasn't good to be idle, she asked her colleagues if there was anything she could do.

The colleagues from the public relations department then joked with her about this task.

At that time, Lin Qiaoxia, who knew nothing, was indeed planning to go collect the debt.

Then, when someone saw she was serious and feared she might end up in the hospital from a beating while acting on their instigation, and that they might have to compensate for it, they quickly pulled her aside and revealed the truth to her.

And they told her it was just a joke and that she must not go there, or with her slight frame, she would probably be beaten to death by them!

In fact, they were more concerned about not explaining clearly to Lin Qiaoxia, fearing her impulsive nature might lead her to seek trouble and cause trouble for them; otherwise, they wouldn't bother to explain so much.

...

After hearing Lin Qiaoxia's explanation, Mu Jinyu looked at her evasive eyes and timid demeanor, and couldn't help teasing, "So if we go like this, aren't we done for?!"

Hearing this, Lin Qiaoxia was on the verge of tears again. She pursed her lips, glanced at Mu Jinyu with fear, and apologized, "Sorry, it's my fault for dragging you into this. If I hadn't hesitated just now, the manager wouldn't have called you along..."

Lin Qiaoxia was a very kind girl, and the more she thought about it, the more she felt guilty toward Mu Jinyu. Then, gritting her teeth with resolve, she decided to let Mu Jinyu leave and go by herself.

She said, "If... if you don't really need this job, just resign. I'll go by myself..."

"Huh?!" Mu Jinyu raised his eyebrows.

He understood that if Lin Qiaoxia didn't really need the salary from this job, then even she knew that going to collect the debt would lead to a very bleak outcome. For a girl as timid as she was, even if she had a strong sense of responsibility, she would probably hand in her resignation directly.

Mu Jinyu thought to himself that this girl, Lin Qiaoxia, must have some unspeakable difficulties, which made her suppress her fear and go to collect the debt alone.

However, since it was her personal family matter, and they had only known each other for less than ten minutes, he didn't feel it was his place to outright ask about it.

While Mu Jinyu was lost in thought,

a taxi noticed Lin Qiaoxia's waving hand and pulled over to the side of the road.

Lin Qiaoxia gave Mu Jinyu another look, her gaze carrying a resolute meaning, then she opened the door and got in.

She was about to close the door,

but Mu Jinyu suddenly raised his hand, stopping her action, and said indifferently, "Why are you closing the door? I haven't gotten in yet."

Chapter 162 Damn it!

"Huh?!"

The car door was blocked by Mu Jinyu, and as he spoke in a teasing tone, Lin Qiaoxia was astonished and looked up at him.

"You... you're not leaving?"

Lin Qiaoxia stammered.

"Leave? Why would I leave?" Mu Jinyu raised an eyebrow and said, "I've already told you, I'm fond of money."

After a pause, he added, "You see, if we manage to recover this unpaid final payment, our bonus would surely be substantial, right?!"

"But we might get beaten up!" Lin Qiaoxia said with a sobbing tone.

"Fortune favors the bold," Mu Jinyu chuckled.

"Are you getting in the car or not?!"

At this moment, the taxi driver yelled impatiently.

"Of course we're getting in!" Mu Jinyu responded. He pulled open the half-closed car door, nudged Lin Qiaoxia to move inside, sat down himself, and then closed the door.

"Bang!"

As the door closed, Mu Jinyu shouted to the taxi driver, "To Hongmao Pharmaceutical Headquarters."

The car started moving.

Lin Qiaoxia sat beside Mu Jinyu, her expression one of helpless entanglement as she looked at him.

Though Mu Jinyu acted like a money-grubber, she understood that any sane person would never take a huge risk, risking hospitalization for months, just for an elusive little bonus.

Mu Jinyu had followed her to protect her.

Thinking this, Lin Qiaoxia felt a warmth in her heart, experiencing a long-missed sense of warmth.

She looked at Mu Jinyu and timidly said, "Thank you..."

Her voice was as soft as a mosquito's buzz, almost too faint to catch unless Mu Jinyu had excellent hearing.

Mu Jinyu smiled and said, "Thank me for what?"

"Thank you for being willing to take this risk with me," Lin Qiaoxia said, her face flushing slightly.

Mu Jinyu chuckled softly and replied, "I told you, I'm doing this for the money. If you really want to thank me, you could just give me all the bonus when the time comes."

"This..." Lin Qiaoxia did not expect Mu Jinyu to say that. She hesitated for a moment before nodding, "If we can recover this final payment, I can give you all the bonus I'm entitled to."

Lin Qiaoxia answered almost without hesitation, but Mu Jinyu still spotted a moment of hesitation and struggle in her beautiful, glass-like black eyes.

Mu Jinyu then understood; she was indeed in need of money, which was why, when she herself mentioned this unattainable bonus, her subconscious didn't want to let it go.

Laughing softly and shaking his head, Mu Jinyu said, "Relax, I wouldn't be so mean as to let you join me and then hoard everything for myself. If we genuinely manage to secure this bonus, we'll definitely share it equally."

Upon hearing this, Lin Qiaoxia instinctively sighed with relief.

If it had been before, she would definitely have refused, but now, she really needed the money, so she could only agree by default.

Even though the chance of her actually receiving this bonus was very slim.

The rest of the journey passed without conversation.

When the taxi arrived at the headquarters of Hongmao Pharmaceuticals, Mu Jinyu paid the fare, then got out of the car with Lin Qiaoxia.

Ahead, there was a building with an antique look, similar to an old medical hall, and a signboard hanging above it bore the gilded characters "Hongmao Pharmaceuticals!"

"This is Hongmao Pharmaceuticals? It looks rather small," Mu Jinyu murmured as he surveyed the headquarters of Hongmao Pharmaceuticals.

Lin Qiaoxia explained, "That's normal. Though they are named a pharmaceutical company, they just wholesale medical materials, so the company is naturally not large."

As they spoke, she surveyed the shop that resembled a medical hall, a flicker of fear crossing her eyes.

Mu Jinyu withdrew his gaze, glanced at her, and smiled, "Let's go, it's time to collect the debt."

Having said that, he took the lead and walked directly towards Hongmao Pharmaceutical Headquarters.

"Mm." Lin Qiaoxia replied timidly and hurriedly followed him.

Upon entering Hongmao Pharmaceuticals, Mu Jinyu looked around at the furnishings inside, which resembled a typical traditional Chinese medicine dispensary. Rows of wooden cabinets with small drawers lined the room, each drawer labeled with the name of a medicinal herb.

At that moment, there weren't many customers in the large hall of Hongmao Pharmaceuticals, picking up medicines. In the center of the hall, surprisingly, there was a wooden table where a group of people were smoking and loudly shouting as they tossed cards.

The place resembled a gambling den filled with smoke and haze.

Seeing this scene, Mu Jinyu thought to himself that it was no wonder Xu Xiaojiao had directly canceled their partnership, asking them to settle the remaining five hundred thousand.

This Young Master of Hongmao was really out of line.

This was no way to conduct business.

Shaking his head slightly, Mu Jinyu walked over to them under Lin Qiaoxia's frightened gaze.

Seeing Mu Jinyu act so impulsively, Lin Qiaoxia's heart nearly leapt out of her chest, anxious yet daring not to speak loudly to remind Mu Jinyu, for fear of disturbing the card players and provoking them into attacking. However, she didn't want to turn and run, leaving Mu Jinyu alone.

Clenching her teeth, Lin Qiaoxia finally jogged up to him, grasped a piece of his clothing to show her resolve to stand or fall together with Mu Jinyu.

Mu Jinyu felt Lin Qiaoxia's action, turned his head to look at her, saw her panicked face, and gave her a reassuring look, telling her to not worry.

Then, he turned back around and continued striding toward the card-playing group.

He mused to himself why women nowadays all seemed to like clutching at his clothes?!

Eventually, Mu Jinyu strode close to the gambling table, stopped, looked around, and then nonchalantly asked, "Playing cards, huh?"

Liu Zhiqiang glanced at Mu Jinyu and said impatiently, "Here to buy medicine? Wait over there!"

Mu Jinyu stared back at him, realizing he must be the Young Master of Hongmao Pharmaceuticals, and smiled, "Making much money?"

"None of your damn business how much I'm making!" Liu Zhiqiang frowned and yelled.

"None of my business?!" Mu Jinyu retorted with a cold laugh, then suddenly reached out, grabbed the table edge, and flipped it over, yelling furiously, "You owe me five hundred thousand and haven't paid it back yet, and here you are gambling? It's one thing to gamble, but you won't even tell me how much you're making?!"

The table flipped, and Liu Zhiqiang, along with the other gamblers, became furiously enraged, cursing:

"What the fuck!"

"You're looking for death?!"

"Who the fuck owes you money, go find them! Why the fuck are you messing with my table, I was about to win big this round!"

"..."

Mu Jinyu grabbed Lin Qiaoxia's document, flipped it open fiercely, and turned to a page—it was the supplementary agreement signed between his company and their pharmaceuticals!

"See this? You owe my company five hundred thousand, are you going to pay back or not?!"

Liu Zhiqiang saw the agreement, knew it was another person from Jinyu Company causing trouble, sneered, and spat, "Pay back? I'll pay your mom back!"

"Fight!"

As soon as the words dropped.

Liu Zhiqiang was about to rally his cronies to beat up Mu Jinyu.

However...

"Crackling!"

With a punch extended and a leg raised, Mu Jinyu sent the whole group to the floor, all sprawled out, groaning weakly and in agony.

Mu Jinyu stepped on Liu Zhiqiang's chest, looked down at him, and arrogantly said, "Now, do you still want to 'pay your mom back?'"

Chapter 163: Are You Playing Me?

Liu Zhiqiang, a long-term heavy drinker and smoker, had never exercised his body. How could he stand a chance against Mu Jinyu?

There he lay on the ground, his body aching and devoid of strength, unable to even curse loudly. Another firm stomp on his chest by Mu Jinyu nearly left him gasping for air, incapable of uttering a word in response to his affable comment about someone's mother.

Observing this, Mu Jinyu lifted his foot slightly, allowing Liu to breathe and speak.

"Huff... huff..."

Liu's face turned beet red, almost suffocating alive, but as soon as Mu Jinyu raised his foot, he began to breathe greedily in deep gasps, reveling in the sheer joy of being alive.

Mu Jinyu gave him a few dozen seconds to catch his breath.

Then he spoke, "Feels good to live, doesn't it? That was just a small greeting. If you don't pay me back the money now, I'll make you understand what it means to truly wish for death over life!"

"I'll pay, I'll pay..."

A flicker of spite crossed Liu's eyes, but he concealed it well and promptly cried out.

He was genuinely afraid that Mu Jinyu, the hotheaded youngster, wouldn't care and would just thrash him. With so few people in his medicine hall right now, if he dared to put on airs, he might actually be toyed with to death by Mu Jinyu!

"Then hurry up and pay the money. I don't have time to play games with you," Mu Jinyu said indifferently.

Lin Qiaoxia had been stunned by the terrifying skills of Mu Jinyu, but after hearing the conversation between the two, she snapped out of it. The worry in her beautiful eyes dissipated a great deal, replaced by a mixture of shock and joy.

Suddenly, she felt that perhaps this task was not impossible after all.

Then, she remembered her promise to Mu Jinyu—if she could recover this debt, she would forgo the bonus from the company and give it all to Mu Jinyu.

Instantly, her gaze became sad and conflicted.

Having caught his breath, Liu managed to regain enough composure to speak normally. He attempted to struggle up from the ground, but seeing that Mu Jinyu didn't intend to move his foot away, he gave a resigned smile, giving up the struggle.

"I don't have that much cash on hand; I'll make a call right now to have someone bring the money over," Liu explained, then reached into his trouser pocket, fumbled around, and took out his mobile phone to make a call.

"Hello, bring five hundred thousand over here. Yes, yes, yes, right away. My creditor is at the door asking for debts. How could I have any money here? No choice, I can't pay it back, I can only ask to borrow some from you. Yes, thank you."

Liu spoke hurriedly and quickly; the person on the other end had hardly said a few words, and Mu Jinyu hadn't caught what was said before Liu hung up the phone.

"All set, I've asked a friend to lend me the money, and he will deliver it shortly," Liu said from his position on the ground, his body aching, looking up at Mu Jinyu's indifferent face with an ingratiating smile.

Mu Jinyu, stepping on Liu's abdomen, looked down at him and the resigned smile on his face, feeling suspicious.

He faintly sensed that Liu's words were a bit off, not sounding like he was borrowing money, but more like he was signalling his friends that a creditor had come knocking, hinting for his gang of friends to come and save him.

But...

Was he afraid?!

Mu Jinyu didn't know whether his suspicion was correct or not, but it didn't matter; he wasn't afraid and was curious to see what tricks Liu Zhiqiang had up his sleeve!

If it was really about paying back the money, he would let it pass.

But if it was about calling people over, heh-heh...

Lin Qiaoxia, just out of college and new to work, didn't have much wariness. Hearing Liu's words, she was quite happy.

She tugged on Mu Jinyu's clothes and said with a smile, "That's great, I didn't expect you to be so formidable. It looks like we'll be able to complete this tough task after all. How wonderful..."

Mu Jinyu just laughed, without responding.

Liu, feeling uncomfortable lying on the cold ground being stepped on by Mu Jinyu, gave a resigned smile and said, "Big brother, I've already made the call, and they will bring the money shortly. Can you let off my foot?"

Mu Jinyu coolly glanced at him.

Liu Zhiqiang was so frightened that he shrank his neck and dared not speak any further.

But after five minutes had passed, he felt so sore all over that he couldn't help but gather his courage and say, "Big brother, isn't it tiring for you to keep stepping on me like this?"

He thought that if Mu Jinyu was also getting tired from standing, reminding him might make him sit on a chair to the side, and then he could get up too.

But who would have thought...

Upon hearing his suggestion, Mu Jinyu tilted his head to look at Lin Qiaoxia, who was standing next to him, and asked, "Are you tired from standing?"

"Not tired?" Although Lin Qiaoxia's feet were a bit sore, she still shook her head.

Mu Jinyu said, "But I'm tired, go bring over two chairs."

"Oh," Lin Qiaoxia obediently responded and went to get two chairs from the side.

Then, Mu Jinyu let her sit on one and sat down himself, continuing to step on Liu Zhiqiang with his foot to prevent him from running away.

Seeing this, Liu Zhiqiang truly felt like crying but had no tears.

If he had known it would turn out like this, he would not have spoken up and reminded Mu Jinyu. If he remained in discomfort while being stepped on, Mu Jinyu, standing and stepping on him, wouldn't be too comfortable either.

Now, it was great, Mu Jinyu was comfortably sitting on a chair, stepping on him without getting tired at all.

In the long and torturous wait for Liu Zhiqiang.

About ten or so minutes had passed.

His phone in his pocket started ringing.

Liu Zhiqiang quickly took out his phone, answered with a few muffled sounds, hung up, and then looked up at Mu Jinyu with a pitiable expression, saying, "Big brother, they have arrived but they don't know the way, let me go pick them up..."

"They are friends, and this shop of yours is quite famous, how could they not know the way?" Mu Jinyu said casually.

Hearing that, Liu Zhiqiang's heart skipped a beat, feeling that things were going south.

Just when he thought things were going to get worse, unexpectedly, Mu Jinyu actually lifted his foot and released him.

"Go ahead," Mu Jinyu crossed his legs and said indifferently.

Liu Zhiqiang struggled to get up from the ground, bowed to Mu Jinyu and quickly said, "Thank you, big brother, I'll bring them over right away."

After speaking, he ran out of the pharmacy as if fleeing and went to meet the people.

Even though Lin Qiaoxia lacked a sense of guard, she still felt something was off, glanced at Liu Zhiqiang's gambling buddy pretending to be dead at the side and whispered, "Why do I feel like he isn't going to borrow money? It's more like ..."

Before she could finish.

Suddenly, Liu Zhiqiang's arrogant, triumphant laughter echoed at the doorway, saying, "Haha, you fool, how dare you let me make a call and let me go, you didn't expect that, did you? I don't have five hundred thousand, but it would only take me minutes to find fifty brothers!"

With that.

Mu Jinyu and Lin Qiaoxia saw a completely different Liu Zhiqiang from when he was subdued under Mu Jinyu's foot, instead striding in with the swagger of a big boss, full of vigor, just like the Gambling God from the movies, followed by a large crowd!

This group of people were all wearing tank tops, displaying their Azure Dragon Pattern tattoos on their arms, wearing flip-flops, and holding pipes as they followed Liu Zhiqiang in.

Mu Jinyu, sitting leisurely in his chair, didn't show the slightest hint of panic and retorted, "Didn't you just say you were calling people to borrow money?"

Liu Zhiqiang glared hatefully at Mu Jinyu and cursed, "If I had a way to borrow money, would I be stuck in this dump playing games for one or two hundred bucks a round?!"

"So, you have been fooling me and wasting my time the whole time?"

Having said that, Mu Jinyu suddenly looked up, his gaze piercingly cold as he watched Liu Zhiqiang.

Chapter 164 Li Rujian

Mu Jinyu's gaze was ice cold, exuding a bone-chilling air.

Upon making eye contact with him, Liu Zhiqiang felt a chill envelop his entire body, as if he had plummeted into an ice cellar.

He abruptly bit down on the tip of his tongue, and the searing pain quickly brought him back to his senses. Then, glaring at Mu Jinyu, he snapped, "That's right, I was playing you, got a problem with that?"

"I have a problem!"

At this moment, the long-haired youth who had followed Liu Zhiqiang in, apparently the leader of this gang, suddenly spoke up.

When Liu Zhiqiang heard the long-haired youth speak, his heart sank with a thud, feeling a bad premonition. He hurriedly turned to look at him, putting on a butt-kissing smile, and asked, "Brother Jian, what problem do you have?"

Brother Jian's face was sullen. He first cautiously glanced at Mu Jinyu, then abruptly raised his hand and slapped it towards Liu Zhiqiang's face, cursing, "Damn it, you dare deceive me, and even dare to make me go against Master Mu?"

"Puh!"

Liu Zhiqiang's face swelled on one side from Brother Jian's slap, and he stumbled and fell to the ground. Then, he spat out a mouthful of fresh blood, mixed with several teeth.

Without even bothering to glance at him, Brother Jian ordered his subordinates, "Beat him to a pulp for me!"

"Yes!"

The tattooed youths responded in unison, raising the plastic water pipes in their hands and began to ruthlessly beat Liu Zhiqiang!

"Crackling sounds!"

"Ahh!!!"

Liu Zhiqiang was beaten like a dead dog, letting out pitiful howls.

"It's got nothing to do with us!"

"Stop hitting, stop! This has nothing to do with us!"

The few gambling demons lying on the ground pretending to be dead were not spared either; they received a fierce whipping from the brothers called over by Liu Zhiqiang!

Yet Brother Jian couldn't care less about these goings-on. After he ordered his brothers to sort out Liu Zhiqiang, the somber look on his face vanished instantly. He quickly put on a boot-licking expression and walked towards Mu Jinyu.

Lin Qiaoxia was sitting beside Mu Jinyu, extremely frightened by the scene unfolding before her eyes. Seeing Brother Jian approaching, she was nearly in tears from fear.

Her body trembling, she tightly clenched the corner of Mu Jinyu's clothing, hoping to glean some sense of security from it.

However.

What she hadn't expected was...

After Brother Jian had taken big strides toward them, he bowed deeply at a one hundred and eighty-degree angle, and then, with a "smack", he struck himself fiercely on the face, apologizing earnestly, "Master Mu, I'm sorry. I was fooled by a petty villain's slander and offended you. Please punish little Jian..."

Watching this spectacle, Lin Qiaoxia's mouth dropped open in shock. Then, turning to look at Mu Jinyu, who remained calm and collected throughout, she suddenly came to an understanding.

So they knew each other. No wonder he was unfazed all along.

But what Mu Jinyu said next left her stunned once more.

Mu Jinyu looked at Brother Jian with a perplexed expression, questioning, "Who are you? We don't know each other, do we?"

"Master Mu, of course, you don't know me, but I know Master Mu. I am with Boss Li Heshan at that teahouse casino. The scene of your great triumph that day, I cannot forget it to this day."

Li Rujian explained respectfully, his tone still betraying a measure of panic and fear.

He was a lackey who hovered around Li Heshan, so the gambling den Liu Zhiqiang often visited was naturally the same one Mu Jinyu had been to last time.

Since Liu Zhiqiang was a loser with terrible luck, they had gotten to know each other after a few visits.

Sometimes when Liu Zhiqiang got bullied, he would call him over for help, and considering the money involved, he would often bring a few brothers to back Liu Zhiqiang up and boost his presence.

He had just received a call from Liu Zhiqiang, learning that a creditor had come to collect debts, and knowing Liu Zhiqiang might have been badly bullied by his creditor, he also came over to lend Liu Zhiqiang some support, but he hadn't planned on standing up for him.

After all, paying debts is only natural, isn't it?

His intention was simply to arrive with a show of force, to ensure Liu Zhiqiang's creditor wouldn't go too far.

But who could have imagined that Liu Zhiqiang's creditor would actually be Mu Jinyu?!

That day, Mu Jinyu dominated every corner of the underground gambling den, and even Li Heshan, the once-regarded Gambling God, was no match for him; then Wang Zhengbiao arrived and bowed before him too. That scene was unforgettable. Afterwards, Mu Jinyu's dashing elegance had been deeply ingrained in his mind.

As soon as he entered this shabby shop, he felt that Mu Jinyu, who sat on the chair, looked very familiar.

Then, as Mu Jinyu looked up and cursed at Liu Zhiqiang, a chill went down his spine, and he immediately recognized Mu Jinyu.

He was suddenly filled with unease, cursing himself for being stupid enough to have come here.

The man in front of him was a fearful existence whom even his boss had to bow down to!

If Brother Biao found out that he had brought a group of underlings to support Liu Zhiqiang and oppose Mu Jinyu, he feared that Brother Biao would flay him alive!

He hurriedly disassociated himself from Liu Zhiqiang and called his subordinates to beat Liu Zhiqiang up before coming to apologize to Mu Jinyu.

He was extremely afraid that Mu Jinyu would misunderstand him, thinking he had come to bully Mu Jinyu in support of Liu Zhiqiang's tyranny!

When Mu Jinyu heard Li Rujian's words, his eyes flashed with realization, then his gaze turned cold, and he laughed, "What, you were planning to beat me up from the start, were you?!"

"No, no, definitely not..."

Li Rujian's heart nearly jumped out of his throat, and he waved his hands frantically, stammering, "I truly didn't mean to go against Master Mu. I'm not that kind of person who kicks a man when he's down. Just now, when that idiot shouted, I thought his creditor was bullying him too much, so I wanted to give him some backing to make his creditor think twice about going too far. But paying debts is a duty, I really had no intention of bullying anyone..."

Li Rujian, fearing he hadn't explained himself quickly enough, and that Mu Jinyu would take note of him, dialed Brother Biao right away, because if that happened, he would truly be done for.

After listening to his explanation, Mu Jinyu looked up at him intently.

Seeing that Li Rujian's gaze was fearful but didn't waver, Mu Jinyu knew he probably hadn't lied.

With a light chuckle, Mu Jinyu said, "Alright, first, tell your men to stop. If they kill him, who am I going to get my money from?!"

Li Rujian immediately turned around and roared, "Did you hear that? Master Mu says to stop!"

Upon receiving the order, the men gave Liu Zhiqiang another kick before retreating and dispersing.

Mu Jinyu's gaze followed, and he saw Liu Zhiqiang and his few fellow gamblers lying on the ground, barely breathing, probably lacking even the strength to get up.

Withdrawing his gaze, Mu Jinyu turned to look at Li Rujian and said indifferently, "Can you contact his family to come and pay off the debt?"

"Yes." Li Rujian nodded continuously, saying, "He often visits our gambling den, loses a lot of money, and regularly writes IOUs. His father, Liu Zhengguo, used to come to the gambling den often to get him out of trouble. We can get in touch with him!"

After speaking, Li Rujian said, "Please wait a moment, Master Mu. I'll give Brother Shan a call and have him notify Liu Zhengguo to come and pay you."

Chapter 165: Born to Gamble?!

Mu Jinyu lazily sat in the chair, hugging his knees, and nodded, "Go ahead."

Li Rujian quickly took out his phone to call Li Heshan, then informed Liu Zhengguo to come and settle the debt he owed to Mu Jinyu.

Lin Qiaoxia sat aside, staring dumbfounded at this rapidly changing scene, feeling it was more thrilling than watching a blockbuster.

However, she also had many questions in her mind.

If Mu Jinyu was so incredible, being called Master by such a group, why would he still work for their company?

She couldn't figure it out, but she realized why Mu Jinyu was so skilled and seemed unfazed even after Liu Zhiqiang had called people over.

Because he had long been accustomed to big scenes and was simply not afraid of them.

Lost in wild thoughts, Mu Jinyu also turned his head and smiled at her, "Lucky us, it looks like our debt collection process will go smoothly."

"Yeah." Lin Qiaoxia responded.

She didn't know why, but the scene that should have been frightening didn't scare her much.

Perhaps, it was because Mu Jinyu had made a good impression on her all the way, so she felt less afraid?

Lin Qiaoxia wasn't sure either.

Soon.

Liu Zhengguo, having been informed, arrived at the scene with a worried expression.

When he entered the pharmacy and saw his son lying on the ground, his face swollen and looking miserable, his eyes immediately reddened.

But when he saw the tattooed youths glaring from the side, his impulsiveness suddenly extinguished.

He had already learned from Li Heshan's notification, that these were Li Heshan's men, here to help someone named Master Mu collect a debt.

"Who is Master Mu, and may I know how much my son owes you?"

Liu Zhengguo suppressed his anger, looked around, and asked in a tone that was neither servile nor overbearing.

Mu Jinyu gently lifted his hand and said, "This way."

Upon hearing this, Liu Zhengguo looked over, and seeing how young Mu Jinyu was, his first reaction was disbelief.

But when he saw Li Rujian respectfully standing beside Mu Jinyu, he instantly understood that this indeed was Master Mu.

His expression flickered, he took a deep breath, then walked over to Mu Jinyu, and respectfully said, "Master Mu, may I know how much my unfilial son owes you for you to take such grand action?"

Mu Jinyu said lazily, "It's not him who owes me money, it's your Hongmao Pharmaceuticals that has owed my Jinyu Group five hundred thousand in final payments and has been unwilling to settle. I came to collect the debt, and he even tried to hit me, couldn't beat me, then called people over, and that's how things ended up like this..."

After briefly explaining, Mu Jinyu told Lin Qiaoxia, "Show him the agreement, so Manager Liu won't forget because of his status and think we are here to cause trouble."

"Yes, Manager Liu, you owe us..."

Lin Qiaoxia held the document, explaining earnestly to Liu Zhengguo.

Liu Zhengguo felt incredibly angry and had no intention of listening to Lin Qiaoxia's ramblings.

Fucking hell, his son had called people over to show strength, and it turned into helping others collect debts?

How useless could his son be?!

As the situation was beyond his control, Liu Zhengguo, no matter how dissatisfied or unwilling, still had to patiently listen to Lin Qiaoxia's ramblings, then said sternly:

"I understand now. I will immediately settle the overdue final payment we owe you, my apologies, this was my oversight..."

Then, he took out his checkbook, quickly filled in the amount of five hundred thousand, signed his name, and handed it to Lin Qiaoxia.

After Lin Qiaoxia accepted it.

Liu Zhengguo deeply looked at Mu Jinyu, thinking to himself, he had really misjudged the situation. He didn't expect that this ragtag company, now renamed Jinyu Group, had the means to get Li Heshan's backing. Had he known earlier, he would have just paid the full amount then and there.

Mu Jinyu, seeing that he had successfully received the outstanding final payment, showed a faint smile. He exchanged a surprised and joyous glance with Lin Qiaoxia and said, "Let's go, time to report back..."

At this time, Liu Zhiqiang, who had just regained some strength and could talk, saw his father actually give Mu Jinyu a check for five hundred thousand and his eyes immediately reddened.

He shouted, "Dad, you have money, why haven't you given any to me? You even lied to me saying you were out of money?"

Upon hearing this, Liu Zhengguo, livid with anger, scolded, "Shut up! All the money goes to you so you can gamble away everything we have, is that it?"

Just as Mu Jinyu got up from his chair and saw Liu Zhiqiang still unrepentant, he paused his steps to leave.

Then, he turned his head to look at Liu Zhiqiang, who was shakily standing up, eyes red, staring at the check in Lin Qiaoxia's hands, and asked, "You really like to gamble?"

"Nonsense!"

Liu Zhiqiang, seeing that the money had been paid and assuming Mu Jinyu wouldn't hit him again, grew bold and irritably said, "My luck was just about to turn around, it's just that my dad wouldn't give me money. Otherwise, I would have won back everything I lost."

As he spoke, his expression suddenly became agitated, and he said to Mu Jinyu, "Lend me that five hundred thousand; I'll go gamble one more time. If I win, I'll pay you back a million!"

Mu Jinyu was truly speechless at these words. He came here just to collect a debt and, having just gotten the money, this guy was asking to borrow from him. What kind of logic was that?

His mind must be fried from all that gambling!

"Heh..."

With a cold laugh, Mu Jinyu said, "So you love gambling that much, is gambling all that's in your head?"

"Of course!" Liu Zhiqiang replied, oddly proud, "I was born to be the Gambling God!"

Mu Jinyu found this guy quite interesting. With a look that was both mocking and not, he said, "Then you just said you'd pay me back, but ended up tricking me and even called people over to prepare to weasel out of it. On the gambling table, what do you call that move?"

Liu Zhiqiang, on hearing this, had his greedy expression instantly freeze on his face.

Liu Zhengguo, who had been silent, turned pale all of a sudden, and cold sweat broke out on his forehead.

Li Rujian replied, "Cheating at cards!"

Mu Jinyu nodded and said, "Right, cheating at cards."

After saying this, he looked mockingly at the pale-faced Liu Zhiqiang and said indifferently, "You, born to gamble, a self-proclaimed Gambling God, cheated. According to Jianghu rules, how should this be resolved?"

Liu Zhiqiang's face drastically changed, and he looked at Mu Jinyu in horror. His legs weakened, almost leading him to kneel.

Liu Zhengguo also had an anxious look and quickly shouted, "Master Mu, Master Mu, please don't hold his momentary foolishness against him. Let him off this once. I'll compensate you with five million..."

Li Rujian answered, "It depends on the situation. Usually, it's chopping a finger, but in severe cases, a hand!"

"Then chop off one of his fingers!"

Mu Jinyu disregarded Liu Zhengguo's plea and said indifferently.

Then, he took the somewhat dazed and silly Lin Qiaoxia by the hand and turned to leave the pharmacy.

Liu Zhengguo, desperately not wanting to see his beloved son hurt, tried to call Mu Jinyu back, urging him to reconsider and offering ten million yuan, but was blocked by Li Rujian's men.

Blocked by the crowd, he shouted desperately at Mu Jinyu's retreating figure:

"Master Mu, I beg you, please spare my son!"

Mu Jinyu, pulling Lin Qiaoxia along, simply ignored him completely.

Chapter 166 Leftovers

Mu Jinyu led Lin Qiaoxia out of the Hongmao Pharmaceutical Hall, and after taking a few steps, he noticed that her hand was very cold and still slightly trembling.

He understood that the girl must have been frightened by what he had just said.

"Scared?"

Mu Jinyu turned his head toward her and noticed that she was staring ahead with an unfocused gaze, her eyes filled with a trace of fear.

Hearing Mu Jinyu's words, Lin Qiaoxia's long, delicate eyelashes trembled lightly; her lips moved several times, but she did not speak.

Mu Jinyu noticed that her small hand had become even colder. He smiled faintly and said, "Do you think I am very scary, and that the gambler is somewhat pitiful?"

"Um..." Lin Qiaoxia mustered her courage and replied softly but still didn't dare to look at Mu Jinyu, nor did she dare to pull her hand back from his warm palm.

Mu Jinyu said, "That kind of person doesn't deserve any sympathy. Just think about it – if you were here alone to collect the debt today, what would he have done?"

Lin Qiaoxia pursed her lips, her eyelashes fluttered, and she kept silent.

Mu Jinyu glanced at her and said, "If you're lucky, you'll just get a beating and be chased away. If you're unlucky and they notice how pretty you are... ha ha..."

Mu Jinyu did not finish his sentence, but Lin Qiaoxia understood what he meant.

Her face suddenly turned pale.

The small hand held in Mu Jinyu's grasp also became colder and trembled slightly.

Patting Lin Qiaoxia's hand gently, Mu Jinyu said, "That's why I say, he's not worth your sympathy at all. Originally, I hadn't even planned to settle scores with him, but he insisted on bringing disaster upon himself. Chopping off one of his fingers might just make him come to his senses and repent. By then, he might even thank me!"

After finishing, he added, "And besides, I didn't instruct that Xiao Jian to chop off his finger to feed to the dogs. He can still take it to the hospital for reattachment surgery. Honestly, I am too kind..."

After listening to Mu Jinyu's words, Lin Qiaoxia also came to a realization; Liu Zhiqiang might not end up with a permanent disability, at worst his spirit might be a bit broken.

And for someone as addicted to gambling as him, that might just be the wake-up call he needs to stop gambling altogether.

Having realized this, Lin Qiaoxia's pale face gradually regained some color.

The small hand held in Mu Jinyu's palm no longer trembled.

"I'm sorry, just now... I thought of you as..." Lin Qiaoxia turned her head, looking embarrassed as she spoke haltingly.

"It's fine as long as you understand," Mu Jinyu looked at her and smiled faintly, saying, "I told you all this because I was afraid you'd scare yourself and resign as soon as we got back to the company."

"I won't..." Lin Qiaoxia shook her head repeatedly.

Mu Jinyu did not say much more. Looking at the time, it was already past eleven in the morning, so he smiled and said, "Come on, let's go find a place to eat. After that, we can go report our achievements at the company."

"Um." Lin Qiaoxia hesitated and then nodded obediently.

Mu Jinyu was not picky; he simply chose a small restaurant by the roadside and went in.

He had a big appetite, and immediately ordered a lot of food from the menu.

Handing the menu to Lin Qiaoxia, Mu Jinyu said, "Order whatever you like."

Lin Qiaoxia glanced at the prices on the menu, her color paled slightly, then hesitated and said in a low voice, "Are we going Dutch, or paying for our own?"

Mu Jinyu was slightly surprised to hear this.

In this day and age, most girls less beautiful than Lin Qiaoxia, going out to eat with a guy, wouldn't even think about going Dutch or paying separately. They would naturally, as a matter of course, expect the guy to pay.

Girls like Lin Qiaoxia were really rare.

Upon giving it a bit of thought, Mu Jinyu guessed that her pride was probably strong; she didn't want to just casually accept meals from others, but perhaps because she didn't have much money in her pocket, going Dutch wasn't favorable, so she opted to pay only for what she ordered.

"Let's just pay for our own!" Mu Jinyu didn't insist on treating, and said casually.

Upon hearing this, Lin Qiaoxia breathed a sigh of relief, then ordered a bowl of rice and a dish of scrambled eggs with tomatoes.

That altogether cost ten yuan, which she found quite distressing.

After all, she usually spent just a few yuan on several steamed buns to fill her stomach.

Cheap and cost-effective.

Mu Jinyu took back the menu, saw what Lin Qiaoxia had ordered, furrowed his brows, but said nothing, then ordered a few more dishes and handed the menu back to the waiter.

While waiting for the food, Mu Jinyu chatted with Lin Qiaoxia off and on.

Soon, the waiter began bringing the dishes they had ordered to the table one after another.

Steamed grouper, black pepper beef fillet, braised pork, stone pot fish, scrambled eggs with leeks, salt and pepper king oyster mushrooms...

Seeing so many dishes come out, Lin Qiaoxia furrowed her brows slightly and said softly, "You ordered quite a lot, didn't you? Can we finish all this?"

"We should be able to finish it." Mu Jinyu replied nonchalantly.

In truth, if he were to let himself go, he could definitely finish it all, but he said it vaguely to be considerate of Lin Qiaoxia.

"Oh." Lin Qiaoxia responded and added, "If you can't finish, remember to pack it up, don't waste it."

She didn't like taking advantage, so naturally, she wouldn't offer to help finish the food.

If she were that kind of person, she wouldn't have suggested paying separately at the start but would have ordered a lot, silently eaten everything, and when it was time to pay, she would have just clung to her seat.

Mu Jinyu smiled and said, "I don't like to take leftovers. They aren't fresh and don't taste good."

"Oh." Lin Qiaoxia responded softly, a trace of conflict appearing between her brows, hesitating whether to eat the remaining dishes if Mu Jinyu left quite a bit unfinished.

Eating them would make splitting the bill awkward, wouldn't it?

But not eating them would be wasteful...

Lin Qiaoxia swallowed a mouthful of rice, nibbling on the end of her chopsticks, clearly uncertain.

Mu Jinyu didn't pay her any mind and just kept eating heartily, quickly finishing a bowl of rice and then calling the waiter for another, continuing to eat.

Before long, while Lin Qiaoxia hadn't yet finished, Mu Jinyu had polished off most of the dishes on the table.

"I'm full."

Mu Jinyu said, patting his stomach and smiling contentedly.

Strictly speaking, he was only about eighty percent full. If he continued to eat, he could have completely cleared the table.

Lin Qiaoxia had only eaten half her rice and was somewhat stunned as she nibbled on her chopsticks.

It turned out he really could eat a lot, which explained why he ordered so much food.

However, despite his capacity, there were still many dishes left on the table...

Like the steamed grouper that Mu Jinyu tried but didn't finish; the braised pork he had a few pieces of but didn't finish; the scrambled eggs with leeks he did finish; and more than half of the black pepper beef fillet was left...

Wouldn't it be a shame not to pack them up and take them home?!

Chapter 167: Really Got It Back?

"You're not eating anymore? Or maybe you should take it to go? It's such a waste, you barely took a bite out of some dishes..."

Lin Qiaoxia hesitated for a moment before persuading.

Mu Jinyu, picking his teeth with a toothpick, responded casually, "No more for me. That braised pork is a bit too greasy; I lost my appetite after a few bites. The steamed fish is tough, not fresh, and the pepper steak is too strong for my taste..."

Pointing out flaws in the dishes like a connoisseur, Mu Jinyu said, "If you want, you can try them yourself, they really taste terrible."

Having said that, he secretly swallowed his saliva.

In fact, those dishes weren't as problematic as he had described; he only said that to coax Lin Qiaoxia into trying them.

Like that braised pork, which Mu Jinyu really wanted to have a few more bites of.

Initially, seeing that Lin Qiaoxia was rather frail and seemed to suffer from malnutrition, he intentionally ordered more meat dishes. He had planned to only have a bite of this braised pork.

But after one bite, finding it irresistibly delicious, he couldn't help himself and ate a third of it, then forced himself to stop eating.

If he were to let himself eat freely, this plate of braised pork would probably be among the first three dishes to be finished.

Misinterpreting his remarks, Lin Qiaoxia thought they were indeed unappetizing, that Mu Jinyu didn't like them, nor did he want to take them home. At the aroma of the meat, she inadvertently swallowed her saliva, thinking how long had it been since she last had meat?

Should she try some? To see if it was as bad as Mu Jinyu claimed?

Lin Qiaoxia began to hypnotize herself.

So, she said, "Then I'll try some."

Then, she picked up a piece of appetizing, bright red braised pork with clearly defined layers of fat with her chopsticks.

As she picked up the braised pork, it trembled on her chopsticks. Lin Qiaoxia thought, it looked so appetizing; could it really be as greasy as Mu Jinyu had said?!

Why not try it?

It was as if a devil was whispering in her ear, urging her.

So, after glancing at the nonchalant Mu Jinyu, Lin Qiaoxia still opened her cherry lips and stuffed the piece of braised pork into her mouth.

"Mmm..."

The moment the braised pork hit her mouth, Lin Qiaoxia was enchanted by the long-lost aroma of the meat, involuntarily chewing; how could it be as greasy and unpalatable as described by Mu Jinyu? It was clearly rich but not greasy, melting instantly in the mouth, with distinct layers of meat...

It simply couldn't taste any better.

Reluctantly swallowing it down, Lin Qiaoxia quickly took a few bites of rice, then looked up at Mu Jinyu and said, "It's not at all as bad as you said, I find it extremely delicious, it's the best braised pork I've ever had."

Mu Jinyu gave her a glance and dismissively said, "Maybe it's because pork has been too expensive recently, and you haven't had much meat, so you think that way. Anyway, I find it quite horrible,"

He paused, then reminded, "If you think it's good, go ahead and eat it. If you don't, the waiter will just take it away and throw it in the slop bucket later."

Lin Qiaoxia was still hesitant about eating more, but Mu Jinyu's words immediately unsettled her.

Oh my, if she didn't eat it, it would later be taken away by the waiter and thrown into the slop bucket with such delicious braised pork...

Lin Qiaoxia found it unacceptable; that would be such a waste!

"Then I'll eat it."

Ultimately, Lin Qiaoxia was led by Mu Jinyu to accept the suggestion to eat his leftovers.

Following that, Lin Qiaoxia indulged in eating the dishes that Mu Jinyu particularly disliked.

To her, these dishes were clearly delicious!

Why would he dislike them?

Oh, perhaps the dishes were indeed unpalatable and not to Mu Jinyu's taste, but since she herself rarely had these dishes, she might find them delicious.

Lin Qiaoxia wasn't quite sure, and she faintly felt that maybe Mu Jinyu was deliberately taking care of her, but that didn't seem quite right. Mu Jinyu had indeed eaten a lot of dishes and should have been full...

Perhaps, he had intentionally ordered extra dishes from the start, so after he was full, he could still take care of her and make sure she got enough to eat?

Unable to figure it out clearly, Lin Qiaoxia also knew that if she asked Mu Jinyu, he probably wouldn't tell her the truth, so she just buried her head and ate earnestly.

Finally, she finished eating, and not a single dish was left.

Lin Qiaoxia rubbed her somewhat round stomach, feeling really stuffed.

She hadn't eaten this well in a long time.

Then, she looked up, her eyes firm as she said to Mu Jinyu, "Let's go Dutch."

"Huh?!" Mu Jinyu looked at her with a surprised expression, puzzled, "Didn't we agree to pay for our own? Why go Dutch? Oh, do you find you have too much money and want to treat me to a meal? Then why go Dutch at all, just say it outright."

Lin Qiaoxia's face turned red, she fidgeted with the corner of her clothes, somewhat embarrassedly, "I...I don't have enough money to treat you, going Dutch is very..."

Mu Jinyu immediately waved his hand to interrupt her, "If you don't have that much money then why even suggest going Dutch? It was just the leftover dishes I didn't eat, why spend the money? You really are silly!"

Lin Qiaoxia felt quite embarrassed by his comments, stammering, "But, after all, I did eat quite a lot..."

"Then you can treat me to a meal another day." Mu Jinyu interrupted again and made a decision.

Having said that, he did not waste words with Lin Qiaoxia. He got up and walked to the cashier, and they paid the bill together, without splitting the costs.

After all, they had agreed that next time she would treat, and since it was only about ten yuan for the meal, there was no need to pay separately.

Seeing this, Lin Qiaoxia pursed her lips and remained silent, no longer insisting on paying separately.

She just decided in her heart that once she got her salary and was a bit more financially comfortable, she would definitely repay him for this meal.

"Let's go, time to head back."

Mu Jinyu saw that she hadn't made a fuss, and smiled satisfiedly as he spoke.

"Yeah."

Lin Qiaoxia hung her head and murmured in response, then followed Mu Jinyu out of the restaurant.

They hailed a taxi at the roadside and returned to the company.

By the time they got back to the public relations department.

Everyone in the public relations department was also eating takeout; upon seeing them come in, they showed expressions of surprise.

"Huh, why are they fine?"

"Did they get scared of being beaten up, so they just took a round outside and came back?"

"..."

The crowd murmured among themselves.

When Manager Chen, who had assigned them the task, heard the buzz of conversation, her expression darkened. She walked over to them and demanded, "Did you get back the overdue debt from Hongmao Pharmaceuticals? Don't tell me you just went out for a stroll!"

"We didn't..." Lin Qiaoxia hurriedly explained.

Mu Jinyu simply and clearly answered, "We've already gotten it back."

"Got..." Manager Chen was about to scold them properly, then when General Gu inquired about it, she could shift the problem to them, but hearing Mu Jinyu's words, she paused, then scoffed and questioned, "Got it back? Where is the money then?!"

Mu Jinyu looked at Manager Chen with a cool expression, then pulled out the five hundred thousand yuan check that Liu Zhengguo had given him from his pocket and handed it to her.

Manager Chen reached out to take it, muttering to herself about how they were showing off, then glanced casually at the check.

Her eyes instantly widened, and she exclaimed in disbelief, "You...you really got it back?"

Chapter 168: Welcome Banquet

Mu Jinyu chuckled and said, "Of course I really brought it back. Otherwise, do you think I'm joking with you?"

The moment his words fell, a sycophant immediately chimed in with criticism:

"How can you talk to the manager like that?"

"Exactly, you don't even know if the check you've brought is real or fake, and yet you dare to speak to the manager like that!"

"That's right, even if you've managed to recover the final payment from Hongmao Pharmaceuticals, at most it would be considered a decent performance. You're still not qualified to act all high and mighty in front of the manager!"

"..."

After they scolded Mu Jinyu for a while, they turned to Manager Chen and warned, "Manager, you'd better check it carefully. It would be hugely embarrassing for us if it turns out to be a fake check when you submit it to the finance department..."

Mu Jinyu coldly watched them, not saying much.

Manager Chen completely ignored their chirping and scrutinized the check. He recognized Liu Zhengguo's signature, then returned to his own seat, logged onto the bank's website, and verified that the check was indeed real.

Manager Chen suddenly looked up at Mu Jinyu with shock under everyone's dubious gaze, and said again, "You actually managed to recover this final payment?"

She was really too surprised not to ask repeatedly.

In her view, dealing with the desperate situation at Hongmao Pharmaceuticals without the big leverage, they hardly had a chance to recover the money.

However, unexpectedly, they had initially sent two newcomers to collect the debt with the intention of passing the responsibility, and it miraculously worked out and they really recovered the bad debt.

"How did you manage that?"

Manager Chen's eyes were sharp, staring intently at Mu Jinyu, trying to see through him.

"Is it really Hongmao Pharmaceuticals' check?"

"They really managed to recover that bad debt? Impossible!"

"..."

While everyone was whispering among themselves, Mu Jinyu shrugged his shoulders and explained, "Maybe I was just lucky. Hongmao Pharmaceuticals just had some good news today. Liu Zhengguo's son decided to turn over a new leaf, and they were celebrating in a big way, so when I asked him to settle the final payment, he gave me the money right away."

"Just like that?" Manager Chen, unable to believe it, asked again in disbelief.

Mu Jinyu shrugged his shoulders and said, "If you don't believe me, ask Sister Qiaoxia."

After speaking, he turned his head to look at Lin Qiaoxia, smiling and winking at her.

Knowing the truth of the matter, Lin Qiaoxia listened to Mu Jinyu's explanation and was speechless.

What does it mean that Hongmao Pharmaceuticals had some good news today?

What does it mean that Liu Zhengguo's son decided to mend his ways?!

Where were they celebrating?

It's true that Liu Zhengguo repaid the money quite readily...

But would he dare not to?

Lin Qiaoxia was speechless, but since Mu Jinyu did not want to reveal that he knew those people, or the real situation, she decided not to divulge anything either.

Thus, when she saw that Manager Chen and the office colleagues were all looking at her with doubts, Lin Qiaoxia steeled herself, summoned a faint smile, and nodded, "Yes, it really happened like that...."

Lin Qiaoxia had been in the Public Relations department for some time, and the people in the department had come to realize that she was quite honest and hardly ever lied.

So, they also believed Mu Jinyu's words.

"Tch, what the heck, it was that simple? If I had known earlier, I would have gone myself. The bonus is tens of thousands, they got such a good deal!"

Snake Spirit Face pouted her lips and said in an annoyed tone.

They didn't seem to mind that they were right there.

"It's not necessarily a bargain for those two, after all, they just arrived, who knows if they can pass the probationary period?"

Someone chimed in,

"That's true..."

Snake Spirit Face nodded, then looked at Mu Jinyu and said, "Hey, what about Jinyu? How about this, you give this credit to Sister, and when I get the bonus, I'll take a third, and the rest is all yours!"

Mu Jinyu looked at her as if she were an idiot.

"What is that look?!" Snake Spirit Face got somewhat annoyed and infuriated by Mu Jinyu's gaze and snapped, "I'm not taking advantage of you, after all, you're just an intern. Even if you have this performance, you won't get much bonus. If you give it to me, I can get a lot more. Even if I give you two thirds of the bonus, it would still be much more than what you guys would get on your own..."

"Heh..." Mu Jinyu chuckled and shook his head, "Forget it, I'm afraid if I give this performance to you, when the time comes to turn permanent, it would just be bad luck if I'm short just this bit of performance."

"Alright, stop bullying the newcomers!"

At that moment, Manager Chen spoke to Mu Jinyu, "Besides, this kind of performance isn't something you can just give away!"

Once the manager spoke, Snake Spirit Face, though unwilling, no longer pressed aggressively.

Meanwhile, others started to stir things up, "Hey, handsome Jinyu, you helped the company recover this bad debt, and the bonus is quite substantial. Why not consider treating us sisters to a night out at the 'Night Cat' bar?"

"Exactly, you've made so much money, you definitely have to treat us all to play."

Several people echoed this sentiment.

Mu Jinyu listened to their words and felt disgusted.

Damn, when it was time to collect the debt from Hongmao Pharmaceuticals, each of them reveled in their misfortune, waiting to watch a good show, never really caring about them.

And now after they had recovered the bad debt, everyone was trying to cozy up, expecting him to treat them!

Was he even close with them? Each of them so shameless!

Compared to them, Lin Qiaoxia was really too adorable.

However, having been down the mountain for so long, Mu Jinyu had also matured a lot, and wouldn't just curse out loud whenever he saw something he disliked.

With a cold, almost mocking smile, he spread his hands, "Sorry, I don't have much money on me, the bonus hasn't been issued, so I really can't treat you all to some fun!"

"Tch!"

Upon hearing this, the crowd looked at Mu Jinyu with disappointment and disdain, then didn't bother to say anything else.

Then, they turned to look at Manager Chen and said, "Manager, why don't you treat us?"

As a manager, and with Mu Jinyu having resolved the bad debt of Hongmao Pharmaceuticals, Manager Chen naturally had a bonus too, although not as much as Mu Jinyu and Lin Qiaoxia, but enough for a night out.

Moreover, for Manager Chen, this bonus wasn't that significant. The important thing was, she had finally completely resolved this bad debt, and thus was regarded highly by the ministry leader and had the opportunity for a promotion, which was truly something to celebrate.

Hearing everyone's instigation, Manager Chen smiled and said, "Alright, tonight I'll treat everyone to a fun night at the 'Night Cat' bar!"

"Hooray! Long live the manager!"

"Long live the manager!"

"..."

Manager Chen watched their excitement, laughed and shook her head, then withdrew her gaze, looking at Mu Jinyu and smiled, "Consider it your welcome party."

'Seeing I'm of value now, starting to garner favor, huh?'

Mu Jinyu scornfully laughed to himself, but on the surface, he smiled and said, "Then I'll trouble you, manager."

Chapter 169 Wen Yan

Time flew by in the blink of an eye.

Soon, it was four fifty in the afternoon.

Work was almost over.

Mu Jinyu had not had much to do, so he read the book on corporate culture that Lin Qiaoxia had given him that morning.

As it was almost time to leave work,

Wen Rou sent him a message asking what he wanted to eat tonight.

Mu Jinyu replied to her that he was going out to party with colleagues tonight since a leader was treating them, so he wouldn't be home for dinner.

Wen Rou was quite surprised and asked him which leader, which colleagues?

Mu Jinyu replied with pride, telling her about his plans.

After reading his reply, Wen Rou responded, telling him not to overdo it.

Mu Jinyu replied, "Of course," and then put away his phone.

At this time, the people in the Public Relations Department, seeing that it was almost time to leave work, started getting up from their seats, stretching their bodies, moving around, and chatting,

"Wow, finally time to get off work!"

"Yeah, I'm going to go home first to change clothes, then head to 'Night Cat' bar to party. What about you?"

"Of course I need to change clothes. How can we blend into the bar scene dressed like this?"

"..."

The group chattered on.

Just then, the door to the Public Relations Department was pushed open, and a man's head popped in, asking cheerfully,

"What's all the excitement about?"

Seeing the man, several Snake Spirit Faces first flashed a look of disgust, then quickly put on a keen smile to flatter him, saying eagerly,

"Brother Wen, what brings you here?"

"Brother Wen, we were just discussing going to the bar later. Do you want to join?"

"Brother Wen, come with us. A bunch of us girls going to the bar alone, we'd feel safer with a man there."

"..."

Mu Jinyu, overhearing this, felt extremely uncomfortable. Damn it, why do you exclude me from being considered a man just to please that guy?

Then, he looked up towards the door, trying to see who they were eager to please.

And what do you know, it was someone he knew.

Wen Yan,

Wen Rou's cousin.

Mu Jinyu frowned slightly.

He couldn't understand why they were so eager to please him.

He wasn't particularly capable, had gotten into the company through connections, and wasn't even good-looking, quite ugly, to be exact.

Compared to Wen Rou's beauty, Wen Yan was truly ugly, with small eyes, a bulbous nose, thick lips, and only about five feet six inches tall, far from a charming prince.

Unable to understand why they were so eager to please Wen Yan, Mu Jinyu turned to ask Qiaoxia, "Hey, who is this guy? Why are they all flocking to talk to him?"

Qiaoxia looked up towards the door, recognized Wen Yan, and turned back to whisper to Mu Jinyu, "His name is Wen Yan, Director Wen's cousin. He became a manager in the Purchasing Department as soon as he joined the company. Try to avoid conflicts with him."

After Qiaoxia's explanation, Mu Jinyu suddenly understood.

Oh, no wonder everyone in the public relations department was eager to talk to him. After joining the company, he not only refused to keep a low profile, but he also brazenly exploited Wen Rou's reputation to throw his weight around in the office.

Mu Jinyu's expression turned cold, thinking that this guy refused to stay quietly in the company and play dead, instead pulling the tiger's skin to make a big banner. He would cause trouble sooner or later; it seemed necessary to get rid of him quickly.

Meanwhile, it was time to clock out.

The women in the public relations department checked the time, then apologetically said to Wen Yan, "Brother Wen, it's time to get off work. We're going to change our clothes first. See you at the bar's entrance later."

"Yeah, go ahead, I'll come over later..." Wen Yan smiled and nodded.

Afterward, everyone in the public relations department greeted Wen Yan and went to punch out.

Lin Qiaoxia tidied up the documents at hand and also got up to leave.

"Off work now, see you tomorrow."

Lin Qiaoxia smiled at Mu Jinyu.

"You're not going to the bar?"

Mu Jinyu asked, surprised.

"No." Lin Qiaoxia smiled apologetically, "I don't like that kind of environment, so I won't go."

As soon as she finished speaking, someone behind her said:

"Not going, how can that be?!"

Lin Qiaoxia was startled and turned around to look, only to find that Wen Yan had unknowingly approached her and overheard her conversation with Mu Jinyu.

Wen Yan looked at Lin Qiaoxia with a smile, a hint of greed flashing through his eyes, and said, "Everyone's going out to have fun, and if you don't join, won't it make you seem out of place? You should come along; a bit of relaxation is necessary."

Wen Yan had noticed Lin Qiaoxia, who seemed unremarkable but was actually much prettier than anyone else in the office, a few days after he joined the company. Her figure and looks were not inferior even to his own cousin.

Thus, he had been scheming to get her, and when he heard that their public relations department was going to the bar tonight, he felt it was a great opportunity. How could he let Lin Qiaoxia miss out on the fun?

Lin Qiaoxia nearly cried when she heard Wen Yan's words.

Knowing she couldn't afford to offend him, Lin Qiaoxia said with a trembling voice, "I... I understand..."

Mu Jinyu frowned and interjected, "If Sister Qiaoxia doesn't want to go, why are you forcing her?"

"Hm?" Wen Yan, who had not paid much attention to Mu Jinyu tucked away in the corner until now, turned his head upon hearing his words and at first found him somewhat familiar, then frowned slightly.

Then he remembered. Wasn't this guy the pretty boy his cousin was keeping at home?

Realization dawned on Wen Yan's face, and he scoffed disdainfully, "Oh, it's you, you little—"

He quickly stopped himself.

He was originally going to say, what right does my cousin's kept pretty boy have to talk back to me?

But just as he was about to say it, he suddenly remembered that such words should not be said in front of everyone.

It wasn't that he wanted to preserve any dignity for Wen Rou and Mu Jinyu, but because he still needed to leverage the power of Wen Rou's position as company vice president. If he damaged Wen Rou's image in everyone's eyes and let them see that their relationship was not harmonious, he feared it wouldn't be as easy to have a comfortable life like now.

Thinking of this, Wen Yan changed his tone and said irritably, "How did you get into the company?"

Mu Jinyu responded coldly, "Why can't I join the company? But you, someone from the procurement department, sneaking into my public relations department even before work hours are over, is this your work attitude?"

Wen Yan's face stiffened.

During his few days at the company, he truly hadn't done any real work, just idled around.

Since he was new, there were many things he didn't understand, and he was too lazy to learn. Besides, the people at the procurement department were wary of his identity as Wen Rou's cousin and naturally didn't dare to do anything to him.

Thus, Wen Yan, having nothing better to do, roamed around the company and found that there were quite a few beauties in the public relations department, so he often wandered over there. This was how he accidentally discovered the real beauty of Lin Qiaoxia under her ordinary appearance. Tonight, after work, he had planned to come over and ask her out...

But unexpectedly, coming over early caught him out by Mu Jinyu, making him somewhat wary, worried that the guy would go and complain to Wen Rou.

Chapter 170: Return to Night Cat Bar

Just when Wen Yan was feeling that things were getting tricky,

the few colleagues who hadn't left the office yet, upon hearing their conversation, couldn't help but mock Mu Jinyu:

"Why ask so many questions? Brother Wen is the purchasing department manager, and the company's deputy director is his cousin, so what if he leaves work early? Who are you, the newcomer, to meddle in his business?"

"Exactly, you've just joined the company yourself, and it's still a question whether you'll pass the probation period. Yet here you are, daring to meddle in the affairs of your seniors."

"Be careful, or Brother Wen might have a word with Director Wen, and you'll lose even the bowl of rice you've got. Shouldn't you hurry up and apologize to Brother Wen?"

"..."

Hearing them eagerly flattering and praising Wen Yan, Mu Jinyu couldn't help feeling speechless.

So what if he's the purchasing department manager? So what if his cousin is the deputy director? This company is mine anyway!

But now wasn't the time to lay all the cards on the table, let them continue their arrogance; let's see who has the last laugh.

Wen Yan, hearing the good things everyone was saying on his behalf, also lit up.

Indeed, he was the purchasing department manager, and also Wen Rou's cousin. Why would he be afraid of a freeloader like him?

Even if the freeloader dared to tattle to Wen Rou, would Wen Rou dare to do anything to him?

You must know, he was not like Mu Jinyu, who got into the company through Wen Rou's backdoor. He was employed by the company on his own merit.

Then Wen Yan sneered and said, "How I conduct myself is none of your business. Better mind yourself."

After speaking, he couldn't be bothered with Mu Jinyu, the clown, and turned to Lin Qiaoxia. He said with a smile, "What's it going to be, are you coming tonight or not? Don't be selfish and cause everyone else to get moody, huh!"

The few still in the office, knowing Wen Yan seemed to have a thing for Lin Qiaoxia, felt somewhat jealous. Yet they still verbally supported him:

"Yeah, Qiaoxia, we're all going out together. If you're the only one not going, how will the rest of us have fun?"

Mu Jinyu frowned and said, "If she doesn't want to go, then she doesn't go. Must she accompany you just because you want everyone in on it?"

Out of concern for Mu Jinyu, Lin Qiaoxia hurriedly gestured and said, "It's fine. I just didn't feel like going because I'm not used to that kind of environment. Manager Wen is right, as a member of the public relations department, it wouldn't look good if I didn't go along when everyone else is..."

Mu Jinyu furrowed his brow and said, "You shouldn't force yourself to get used to it."

"Oh come on, if someone already said she would go, why are you still rambling?"

Wen Yan glared at Mu Jinyu impatiently and said, "Society has always been about people adapting to it, not the other way around. If you want to wallow in mediocrity, don't drag down someone else's ambition."

"It's okay. Going out and seeing the world can be good," Lin Qiaoxia said to Mu Jinyu with a forced smile.

Lin Qiaoxia indeed did not want to go, but after listening to their conversation, she feared being ostracized by her colleagues if she appeared too unsociable, which could impact her work.

So she decided to go.

Seeing he couldn't persuade Lin Qiaoxia, Mu Jinyu said, "Fine then, let's go together."

He thought, as long as Lin Qiaoxia was going, it was no problem; after all, he could protect her.

When Wen Yan heard that Mu Jinyu was also coming along, he immediately frowned, thinking, why bother tagging along?

But remembering the reason he had given Lin Qiaoxia for going to the bar together — that everyone from the PR department was going and it was mandatory — if he didn't let Mu Jinyu come now, wouldn't that give away that he actually had the hots for Lin Qiaoxia?!

So, he could only suppress his impatience, not quite willing to bluntly tell Mu Jinyu to get lost.

Afterward, Wen Yan said to Lin Qiaoxia, "Let's go, take my car over, and I'll take you to dinner first. Otherwise, drinking on an empty stomach means you won't be able to last long."

"No need!"

Lin Qiaoxia immediately refused but seeing the grim expression on Wen Yan's face, she hastily explained, "It's not necessary to trouble Manager Wen, I've already agreed to go with Jinyu..."

Several women still in the office who overheard this quickly chimed in, "Oh, Brother Wen, since Qiaoxia and Jinyu have agreed to go together, let's just let them go and we'll take your car."

After speaking, they cast a coquettish glance at Wen Yan, with enticing eyes.

Wen Yan, feeling itchy in his heart, thought for a moment and decided that Lin Qiaoxia was indeed a bit tough to crack, and maybe it'd be better to get her drunk at the bar before making a move, thus he smiled at them and said, "Alright then."

He then turned to Lin Qiaoxia, reminding her, "Be careful, and don't be late!"

Finishing his words, Wen Yan, without even glancing at Mu Jinyu once, walked out of the office surrounded by the crowd of women.

Everyone left.

Lin Qiaoxia turned to Mu Jinyu with an apologetic look, "I'm sorry..."

Mu Jinyu waved his hand carelessly, "It's fine, I know you didn't really want to go, but were afraid of not fitting in and being ostracized, which is why you agreed. Even if you ignore them, they wouldn't dare to be rude to you in the future. But since you decided to go, I respect your choice."

Upon hearing this, Lin Qiaoxia's eyes showed gratitude, then she said, "Let's go, we should go to dinner first."

They then clocked out from work and went downstairs to find a small diner nearby for their meal.

The diner was small, similar in size to the one that Wen Rou used to run; naturally, the meal was much cheaper. This was chosen by Mu Jinyu who feared that Lin Qiaoxia might encounter the same situation as at lunch.

Lin Qiaoxia knew that Mu Jinyu was looking out for her. Warmed by the gesture, after they finished their meal, she insisted on paying the bill as a gesture to reciprocate for the lunch he had covered.

Of course, she knew that this meal was much cheaper than what Mu Jinyu had paid for at lunch. She openly admitted that she wasn't in a great financial position at the moment and would formally reciprocate after she received her salary.

Mu Jinyu didn't mind; having spent the whole day with Lin Qiaoxia, he found her very agreeable and had plans to ensure she wouldn't be at a loss.

After letting Lin Qiaoxia settle the bill, neither of them planned to go home to change clothes. Mu Jinyu was too lazy to change, and Lin Qiaoxia didn't know what to wear, nor did she have any provocative clothing suitable for a bar. Even if she did, she likely wouldn't feel comfortable in it, so they simply decided to go directly in their work outfits.

The two hailed a taxi, but as it was the peak of rush hour, they encountered some traffic. By the time they arrived at the Night Cat Bar, it was already after six o'clock.

"You guys really took your time!"

When Mu Jinyu and Lin Qiaoxia approached the entrance, a Snake Spirit Face came out to greet them upon notification. Seeing that they were still in their original attire, she frowned,

"Coming so slowly, and you didn't even change your clothes? I really don't know what you two have been up to!"

Having said that, she scrutinized Mu Jinyu and Lin Qiaoxia with a suspicious look.

Flushed, Lin Qiaoxia quickly explained, "Jinyu and I went for dinner first, then we got stuck in traffic, that's why we are late."

"Alright, enough with the explanations. Just come in with me!"

Snake Spirit Face was too lazy to listen to her explanations, and with a swing of her slender waist, headed into the bar.

She must have not bothered to go for dinner after work but went straight home to change before heading over.

At that moment, she was wearing a black camisole and light blue hot pants, showcasing her voluptuous figure to the full extent, drawing the gaze of many as she walked into the bar.