

King Hall 281

Chapter 281: Mei Yinxue's Phone Call

Half an hour later, Mu Jinyu returned home.

As soon as he opened the door, Gu Xiyan, who was lying on the sofa, immediately jumped up and ran toward him in her slippers.

Looking wary, she circled around Mu Jinyu a few times, flaring her nostrils and sniffing him.

"What are you doing?"

Mu Jinyu felt bewildered and asked.

After sniffing for a while, Gu Xiyan didn't smell the perfume that Yu Linglong usually wore. She also noticed that Mu Jinyu hadn't taken a shower and even had an unpleasant smell of tar on him.

Disgusted, she furrowed her brow and put some distance between them, saying, "I thought you might have tricked my best friend into going somewhere. It seems you are quite honest, but what's with this smell of smoke?!"

Gu Xiyan knew that Mu Jinyu didn't smoke or drink much, only indulging when he was in a bad mood. Thus, she was quite curious about the smell of smoke on him.

Mu Jinyu honestly replied, "Oh, I took Linglong and her dad to the casino for some fun."

"What?!"

Upon hearing Mu Jinyu's words, Gu Xiyan's eyebrows shot up, and she stared at him fiercely, demanding, "What do you mean? Linglong is already so pitiable, and you still took them to the casino for fun?"

Mu Jinyu chuckled lightly and then explained, "Here's what happened ..."

After he shared the evening's events and arrangements with Gu Xiyan, she finally relaxed. Newest update provided by NOvelFire.net

Of course, he omitted the part about chopping off the card shark's hands. After all, it was too gruesome to mention.

Gu Xiyan asked, "Then her dad should be able to quit gambling, right?"

Mu Jinyu replied, "Yeah, he should behave now. If not, I might really have to chop off both his hands."

Gu Xiyan thought he was joking and didn't take it seriously.

If she knew that Mu Jinyu had actually chopped off someone's hands tonight, she probably wouldn't have taken it so lightly.

"You better take a shower; otherwise, don't even think about sleeping with me tonight!"

Now that Gu Xiyan was relaxed, she wrinkled her nose at the smell of smoke on Mu Jinyu and pushed him to go take a shower!

Mu Jinyu shrugged his shoulders and headed toward the washroom, calling out, "My hands are dirty, can you get me some clean clothes?"

"Got it."

Gu Xiyan responded and obediently ran to Mu Jinyu's room to fetch his undergarments and pajamas.

Then, she handed them to Mu Jinyu and blushed as she stepped out of the washroom.

Mu Jinyu didn't mind and tested the water temperature. The weather was getting colder, making a cold shower uncomfortable.

Feeling that the water temperature was just right, he was about to undress and bathe when the phone rang.

He picked it up to see.

It was Mei Yinxue calling.

Thinking of the card shark from the casino, Mu Jinyu raised an eyebrow and then answered the phone.

"Hello?"

Mu Jinyu called out.

Mei Yinxue's tone was softer than usual as she said, "You haven't gone to bed yet, have you?"

"Hmm," Mu Jinyu replied, "I was just about to take a shower. Is it about that card shark guy?"

Mei Yinxue confirmed, "Yes, that guy was sent by Gu Youlan to test me."

"Gu Youlan?" Mu Jinyu didn't quite understand the feud between Mei Yinxue and the others. He asked with some confusion.

"You still remember Huang Qihua, right?" Mei Yinxue asked without explaining first.

"Ah? The woman who caused me not to get the bounty from you, but instead tricked me out of several billion?" Mu Jinyu said.

"When did I trick you out of several billion?!" Mei Yinxue, initially confused by what Mu Jinyu meant, retorted, but after speaking, she also understood what Mu Jinyu was implying!

"Pah!" Mei Yinxue spat lightly and said, "You used to seem so dull, like some stubborn straight guy, and now you've started to be all slick and smooth-talking!"

Mu Jinyu responded lazily, "Where? Isn't it because you taught me badly? Besides, you know very well whether my mouth is oily or my tongue is slippery!"

Upon hearing this, Mei Yinxue suddenly remembered the day Mu Jinyu was curled up in a corner, shivering while staring at her. She picked up her phone, raised an eyebrow, knowing that Mu Jinyu only dared to be so audacious because she wasn't around, otherwise, he wouldn't dare.

With a light chuckle, Mei Yinxue said, "Then I'll come find you tomorrow!"

"No, no, no!" Mu Jinyu hurriedly declined, unable to cope.

Afterward, Mei Yinxue got serious and informed Mu Jinyu about the relationship between Huang Qihua, Gu Youlan, and Zhu Yeqing.

"Mei Lan and Zhu Ju, I see!"

After listening, Mu Jinyu nodded in understanding and then complained, "So Huang Qihua really represents chrysanthemum. That day when I told her to go see a proctologist, she actually got mad, really!"

"Pfft." Mei Yinxue chuckled lightly, feeling that Huang Qihua's downfall at the hands of Mu Jinyu was totally deserved.

The two chatted for a few more moments, and Mu Jinyu asked if she wanted him to help expose Gu Youlan, but Mei Yinxue declined, stating that she could handle Gu Youlan on her own.

If she really couldn't cope, she wouldn't stubbornly refuse to ask for his help.

After all, given their relationship, there was really no need to be so formal.

Like tonight, Mu Jinyu had helped her make four billion from Gu Youlan's hands at the casino, and he didn't take a penny, just went straight home.

As for the card shark old man, after being questioned by Mei Yinxue for information, his fate was uncertain, and Mu Jinyu did not inquire further.

Having handed the man over to her, how she chose to handle him was naturally not his concern anymore.

Cheating at the casino, one should always be prepared to pay the price of a hand.

But the amount involved tonight was too enormous; well over seven billion, and yet he dared to cheat and even falsely accused him of cheating—paying with one hand, how could that suffice?

According to the underworld rules, he should at least have all four limbs cut off and turned into a human stick, but usually, they just bag him up and dump him in the river!

And Mu Jinyu, by sparing him a single hand, was already being merciful.

But that didn't mean Mei Yinxue could tolerate the man slandering her man!

So, his fate was actually already sealed!

After hanging up the phone, Mu Jinyu placed it aside and began to bathe.

Soon, in ten minutes, Mu Jinyu finished bathing, wiped down his body, changed clothes, and walked out of the bathroom with his phone.

He returned to his own room.

"Why did it take you so long to shower today?"

Gu Xiyan, already changed and nestled under the covers, saw Mu Jinyu return to the room late and couldn't help but complain.

Normally, Mu Jinyu would finish showering in about ten minutes, but it took him twenty minutes tonight.

Mu Jinyu confessed honestly, "Sister Mei called to discuss some matters, so it took a bit longer."

Hearing this, Gu Xiyan couldn't help but give him a resentful look.

This guy, always so straightforward, he never knew how to lie a bit.

But then, if he had kept such things from her all the time, how could she have willingly fallen into his hands?

Chapter 282 Good News and Bad News

Half an hour later.

Gu Xiyan complained, "Aiyah, you never take precautions, and you won't let me take any medicine, what if I end up with a baby?!"

Although her tone was complaining, Gu Xiyan was actually quite looking forward to it; if she really got 'in trouble' because of Mu Jinyu, how could those fox spirits compete with her!

Mu Jinyu said in a calm tone, "Don't worry, nothing will happen; after all, I am just a child myself, how could I dare to cause such trouble!"

"Huh?!"

Upon hearing his words, Gu Xiyan immediately looked at Mu Jinyu with a terrified gaze, filled with deep worry.

"What's that look for?" Mu Jinyu, seeing the expression in Gu Xiyan's eyes, got annoyed and said grumpily, "I'm not sick. I just pressed the acupressure points, blocking the essence channels; I have taken precautions, you really need a lesson, woman!"

Gu Xiyan immediately felt relieved, after all, she did not really want to get 'in trouble' with Mu Jinyu at the moment, but that didn't mean she wouldn't want to in the future.

Afterward, recalling Mu Jinyu's last words, Gu Xiyan looked at him with a provocative gaze and said, "Then come teach me a lesson! Let's see who ends up teaching whom!"

...

The night passed without words.

The next day.

Mu Jinyu groggily got up to find that Gu Xiyan was already gone, leaving behind only a lingering scent.

He checked the time on his phone – it was after nine. It seemed Gu Xiyan and Wen Rou had already gone to work.

Rubbing his sore lower back, Mu Jinyu murmured, "It seems I can't be too lazy. Even if I'm not very fond of cultivation, I should still exercise more!"

After freshening up in the washroom, Mu Jinyu started eating the breakfast the two women had left for him.

After breakfast, he washed the dishes and then went out to meet Xiang Mantang, joining him for some exercise.

Alone, one tends to get lazy easily.

Arriving at Donghui Mansion, when Mu Jinyu got to Villa Number Three, he was informed that Xiang Mantang had left River City the day before to return to Capital City, seemingly to report something to the Old Dragon King.

"Everyone is quite busy."

Mu Jinyu felt bored, said goodbye to the butler, and went to a nearby park to exercise.

By noon, Mu Jinyu was planning to find a nearby restaurant to settle the grumbling in his stomach.

But then he thought of something, hailed a taxi on the road, and went back home.

Returning to the floor of his apartment, he looked at the empty corridor. After a slight pause, Mu Jinyu breathed a sigh of relief, but he also felt a hint of loss.

Shaking his head slightly, Mu Jinyu didn't dwell on it, opened the door, entered the house, prepared lunch for himself, ate simply, felt bored, went to the company first, and then to the underground gambling den to scare Yu Xiuwen.

The day passed just like that.

In the following days, what puzzled Mu Jinyu was that Xiang Mantang didn't return from Capital City, and that woman, Su Zijin, didn't come to bother him again.

It seemed she had also gone back to Capital City.

Mu Jinyu guessed that perhaps the Old Dragon King was truly in a dire state.

Mu Jinyu felt conflicted, not knowing whether the Old Dragon King was nearing his natural end or was lingering due to a grievous injury?

For the former, he could not defy fate and bring him back, but for the latter, he might be able to help.

However...

Mu Jinyu thought that if it were the latter case, Xiang Mantang, not knowing about his complicated relationship with the Old Dragon King, probably would have been pleased to see the Old Dragon King pass away, giving himself a chance to contend for the position of the Tiance True Dragon; but now, knowing those things, he likely wouldn't do so.

Therefore, he didn't offer to go to Capital City to treat the Old Dragon King.

So, was the Old Dragon King really facing his final moments?

Mu Jinyu felt somewhat lost and melancholic.

Mu Jinyu was not entirely at ease, and in the end, he made another call to Xiang Mantang, beating around the bush and subtly inquiring about the situation there.

Xiang Mantang straightforwardly informed him that the Old Dragon King was still in good condition and wouldn't breathe his last any time soon. His return to Capital City wasn't for this matter. Su Zijin felt the same. If the Old Dragon King truly reached his last moments, he would notify him and ask whether he wanted to come and see the latter one last time.

Mu Jinyu rebutted Xiang Mantang once, then hung up the phone, but he also felt a sense of relief in his heart.

Afterward, Mu Jinyu hummed a tune and went home for lunch.

After lunch, with nothing else to do, Mu Jinyu strolled over to the underground gambling den to check on Yu Xiuwen, who had been well-fed for several days.

In the past few days, Yu Xiuwen had indeed eaten very well. Having no money and a love for gambling, he previously lacked essence, Qi, and spirit, withering away to skin and bones.

After spending a few days under Mu Jinyu's care, he had gained a significant amount of weight.

However, although he felt much better physically, Yu Xiuwen was never happy, one could even say he was constantly anxious.

After all, he believed that Mu Jinyu had already harvested one of his kidneys and that his remaining kidney, as well as his heart, cornea, and so forth, could be taken from him at any time.

Despite eating and drinking well under these circumstances, he was perpetually in a bad mood!

With an air of nonchalance, Mu Jinyu made his way to Yu Xiuwen's room. Upon hearing of his arrival, Yu Linglong opened the door to her own room, looking at Mu Jinyu with eyes full of joy.

But to stay in character for Mu Jinyu, she forcefully suppressed her laughter, adopting a worried expression before entering Yu Xiuwen's room.

"Old man, you've been doing quite well lately, fattening up quite a bit. I've got two pieces of news, one good, one bad. Which do you want to hear first?"

Walking into the room and seeing Yu Xiuwen still lying in bed, with a look of utter despair as he gazed at the ceiling, Mu Jinyu lifted his foot and kicked him lightly.

Startled into alertness, Yu Xiuwen saw Mu Jinyu approaching, first displaying an expression as if on the verge of tears, before promptly forcing a smile of fawning flattery on his aged face and said, "Master Mu, you, you're here."

Yu Xiuwen felt truly stifled. To be downtrodden like his father-in-law, bullied by a son-in-law, worried about body parts being coveted, and still having to call someone else 'Master'!

Seeing that Yu Xiuwen hadn't heard him, Mu Jinyu frowned slightly and then repeated his question.

Yu Xiuwen replied, "The bad news. Better to endure the bitter before the sweet!"

He thought to himself, how much worse could it get? At worst, he would be dead today.

Mu Jinyu said, "Well, the bad news is, that rich man found a more suitable, younger heart; he thinks yours is too old and doesn't want it."

Upon hearing this, Yu Xiuwen was initially stunned, but then he was overjoyed, barely able to restrain himself from jumping up and exclaiming his good fortune.

How can this be considered bad news?

Isn't this fantastic news?

The thing he had been dreading these past few days, he didn't need to worry about it anymore.

His old life was saved once again.

Mu Jinyu watched Yu Xiuwen's face lit up with uncontrollable delight, grinned, revealing a row of neat teeth, his smile appearing utterly harmless.

"The good news? Someone else is interested in your heart."

At that moment,

"Ah?"

The previously ecstatic Yu Xiuwen suddenly became stone-still, as if a cold breeze had just whizzed past his feet.

Is... is this the good news?

So, the good news and the bad news were from your perspective!

Chapter 283: The Affairs of the Capital City

damn leather shoes!

Yu Xiuwen really felt like cursing.

Why were so many people after his old bones?

When Mu Jinyu arrived, Yu Linglong had already been informed by him, and now seeing Yu Xiuwen's expression of wanting to cry but having no tears, she felt a bit like laughing. She put on a hesitant look, and timidly started to plead:

"Young Master Mu, can... can you spare my father's life?"

Mu Jinyu turned around, his expression indifferent as he looked at Yu Linglong. After a moment of hesitation, he said, "Spare his life? Then who's going to pay back the fifteen million he owes me?"

"I can earn money to pay you back!" Yu Linglong said with determination.

"Really?" Mu Jinyu hesitated.

Yu Xiuwen picked up on the uncertainty in Mu Jinyu's words. With a strong will to survive, he quickly shouted, "I, I, I... Linglong doesn't have to earn the money to pay you back, I can earn it myself!"

Mu Jinyu turned to look at Yu Xiuwen, his eyes filled with contempt, and he disdainfully said, "You're just an old skeleton, and your brain isn't that sharp. What can you do besides selling some parts for money?"

Upon reflection, Yu Xiuwen realized that he really could only rely on his daughter to support them, and he felt completely defeated.

Letting out a heavy sigh, Yu Xiuwen looked at Yu Linglong, his eyes filled with self-reproach and regret. He was beginning to feel remorse, but it was too late.

"Linglong, I'm sorry. It's my fault that I've dragged you down. Well, if selling my parts to repay the debt is my fate, then so be it!"

Yu Xiuwen was tired and didn't want to struggle anymore.

Seeing this, Mu Jinyu felt it was no good. If Yu Xiuwen stopped struggling, was he really going to collect his worthless parts?

He quickly said to Yu Linglong, "Forget it, in consideration of your filial piety, I'll let you work at my company with Xiyan. You'll serve me together. As for your father, well, there's not much this old father-in-law can do. Just let him be a security guard. He can still make several thousand yuan a month. As for the salary, let's just forget it, no, let's follow the process. You'll receive it and then pay me back!"

Yu Linglong gave Mu Jinyu a covertly contemptuous glance, then revealed a thankful smile to him.

Yu Xiuwen, after experiencing several emotional ups and downs in a single day, still hadn't regained his composure and didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

He just stared dumbfounded at Mu Jinyu.

Mu Jinyu, noticing his state, approached the bedside, looked down at Yu Xiuwen lying on the bed, and said, "Old Yu, as your son-in-law, I've been pretty good and loyal to you, haven't I? Remember to repay me by serving me in your next life!"

Then, Mu Jinyu turned around, a playful and malicious smile on his lips. He winked at Yu Linglong and leisurely walked towards the door.

Yu Linglong glanced at Yu Xiuwen and called out, "Dad, get some rest."

She then turned and walked briskly to catch up with Mu Jinyu.

Only when both of them had left did Yu Xiuwen come back to his senses.

Thinking about Mu Jinyu's last remark, he felt a mix of emotions, not sure whether to cry or laugh.

Wasn't a lifetime of serving him enough already?

However, Mu Jinyu's sudden change of attitude corroborated his suspicions.

Yu Xiuwen had been somewhat suspecting these last few days that his kidney hadn't really been taken by Mu Jinyu, and that he and Yu Linglong were just frightening him.

However, every time he remembered how Mu Jinyu's face had turned cold that day, as he cut off the Card Shark's hand with a knife, the murderous intent made him shiver.

It left him uncertain about his own guesses.

After all, if he was wrong, he might meet an even more miserable end.

But now that Mu Jinyu had indeed let him off, he was sure that Mu Jinyu had just been scaring him these past few days.

He truly relaxed completely then.

Of course, his gambling addiction had also been truly kicked; he'd rather die than dare to gamble again.

Yu Linglong followed Mu Jinyu out of the room. After a few steps, Mu Jinyu heard movement and stopped, turning to look at her and asked, "Why are you still following me?"

Yu Linglong said, "Thank you."

"Don't mention it, go keep your dad company. I reckon he won't dare to gamble again, if he dares to tempt fate, just tell me, and I wouldn't mind truly accommodating him!"

Mu Jinyu said half-seriously and half-jokingly.

Yu Linglong rolled her eyes at him and then, mustering her courage, asked tentatively, "Hey, my birthday is in a few days, will you... will you come with Xiyan?"

"Sure, what date is it?" Mu Jinyu nodded and asked.

He was pretty bored anyway, and the prospect of mooching food and drinks naturally delighted him.

Yu Linglong said, "September ninth."

Mu Jinyu said, "Oh, that's in three days then. Let me know the place when the time comes, and I'll be there on time."

As he spoke, Mu Jinyu asked, "By the way, you won't mind if I bring a few more mouths, will you?"

Yu Linglong was slightly startled, but she quickly understood Mu Jinyu's intentions and said with a bright smile, "Of course not. I don't mind. Now, with my circumstances, all my friends have stopped contacting me. I only have Xiyan and you left. I was actually worried my birthday would be too quiet. If you could bring a few more friends over, I'd be really happy."

"Mm, then it's settled, I'm off now." Mu Jinyu turned around, waved his hand at Yu Linglong without looking back, and left with a cool composure.

Yu Linglong watched Mu Jinyu's figure disappear from sight, then she withdrew her gaze and, feeling a mix of excitement and jubilation, clenched her fists gently.

Yu Linglong had been a very confident and cheerful girl originally, but after the torment of these past days, she had become quite self-conscious.

Actually, with her conditions, once Yu Xiuwen's shackles were resolved, and especially since she didn't actually owe Mu Jinyu fifteen million, how many men would turn down an invitation to her birthday party?

Especially Mu Jinyu, who loved a good deal more than anyone.

Like two flowers on a stem, each showing off in its own way.

Let's put Mu Jinyu aside for now and talk about what was happening in the Capital City.

After speaking with the Old Dragon King, Xiang Mantang avoided the grateful and relieved gaze of the other, and said indifferently, "I will help him fight for the position of Tiance True Dragon, but if he is unwilling, no one can force him and me. Old Dragon Head, you don't have to do this."

"Whether it's a success or not, I have to thank you," the Old Dragon Head said, and with a soft sigh, lamented, "It's just a pity that I probably won't be able to see my grandson before I die."

Xiang Mantang, seeing the faint wisps of deadly Qi emanating from the Old Dragon King, knew that he would not last long, probably just a month or two. A sudden sadness welled up in his heart.

Then he sighed, "Take good care of yourself. I think once he comes to terms with it, he will come to see you."

Having said that, Xiang Mantang suppressed the sadness and stated, "I shall take my leave now."

Afterward, Xiang Mantang left the room and made sure to close the door properly for the Old Dragon King.

Standing at the door was Su Zijin.

When she saw Xiang Mantang coming out and after he closed the door, she then spoke softly, "Big Dipper Tianshu, I'd like to learn more about Jinyu's past."

In recent times, Su Zijin had had to return to Capital City for some reason. Knowing that Xiang Mantang had returned and that he was Mu Jinyu's junior brother, she often came to ask him about Mu Jinyu.

She wanted to understand how Mu Jinyu had been living these years after she and his father had left him behind, as if that would give her a sense of involvement!

"Mm." Xiang Mantang did not refuse.

He gestured towards the stone table in the courtyard and said, "Let's talk over there."

Chapter 284: The Seven Hall Masters

Xiang Mantang brought Su Zijin to sit by the stone table and whispered, "Is there anything else the Saintess would like to ask?"

These past few days, Su Zijin had asked him many questions regarding Mu Jinyu, and he had told her everything he could recall.

Yet after listening, Su Zijin still wanted to ask more. He was somewhat annoyed, but considering her status, he could only helplessly and tirelessly share things about Mu Jinyu with her.

With a slightly embarrassed smile on her face, Su Zijin asked softly, "I want to ask about the Beidou Tianshu, what does Jinyu like to eat now?"

After a pause, she added, "I don't know if his tastes have changed. I made him a table of his favorite dishes from when he was a child last time, but he didn't seem too interested. I'm not sure if it didn't suit his taste anymore. I want to clear that up with you, so when I go back to River City, I can try making it for him once more."

Upon hearing this, Xiang Mantang was also surprised that Su Zijin had already made meals for Mu Jinyu. This was news that he hadn't heard from her in the past few days.

Afterward, he thought for a moment, then gently shook his head and said, "I don't know what dishes he likes now, after all, it has been over ten years since I last saw him."

After a pause, Xiang Mantang spoke softly, "If the Saintess wants to understand more, the truth is, you should personally reach out and get to know my senior brother better."

Upon hearing this, Su Zijin's expression stiffened. Then, showing a somewhat awkward smile, she said, "But he is so resistant to me, he hasn't even spoken a word to me to this day."

Xiang Mantang replied indifferently, "If that were really true, why would he eat the meals you've made for him? The Saintess need not overthink it; he is just a man who talks tough but has a soft heart."

"Really?" Su Zijin's eyes brightened, feeling that there might be some truth to what Xiang Mantang was saying.

After talking with Su Zijin for a few more moments, Xiang Mantang was ready to take his leave.

Su Zijin hesitated, then cautiously and with a bit of probing asked, "Beidou Tianshu, you... also lost your parents, didn't you?"

Hearing this, Xiang Mantang's face suddenly darkened, his steps halted, and he turned back to look at Su Zijin with a fierce gleam in his eyes.

Seeing this, Su Zijin's face turned pale, and she involuntarily took a few steps back.

Noticing her reaction, Xiang Mantang reined in the surge of Evil Qi, but his gaze remained somewhat hostile toward her.

If it weren't for her connection to Mu Jinyu, the question she had just asked, regardless of whether she was the daughter of the Old Dragon King or the Saintess of Dragon King Hall, would have been enough to make her regret it for the rest of her life.

But because of her connection to Mu Jinyu, in the end, he couldn't bring himself to harm this woman!

Xiang Mantang said coldly, "The Saintess should be careful next time, about what can be asked and what cannot. Be wary of misfortune coming from the mouth, for not everyone is as kind and lenient as I am!"

Su Zijin nodded with a pale face, "I... didn't mean anything else. I just thought, since you and Jinyu are fellow disciples, as close as brothers, if you don't mind, I could also acknowledge you as... my godson..."

Xiang Mantang's hands, which were behind his back, trembled slightly, though his expression remained unchanged, as he replied indifferently, "I appreciate the Saintess's kind intentions, but I have only one set of parents. Even though they have passed away long ago, I wouldn't casually acknowledge anyone else."

"I'm sorry!" Su Zijin bit her lip, her eyes dulled with some regret.

She wanted to recognize Xiang Mantang as her godson partly out of pity for his truly pitiable life, wishing to give him some warmth, and partly because she thought that if she could have a maternal relationship with Xiang Mantang, given his relationship with Mu Jinyu, it would enable her to get closer to Mu Jinyu.

That way, when she went to cook for Mu Jinyu, he would surely find it more difficult to send her away.

However, with Xiang Mantang's strong rejection, it seemed this approach wouldn't work.

Xiang Mantang withdrew his gaze from Su Zijin, suppressing the craving in his heart, then turned and was about to leave this courtyard.

He didn't need the pity of others!

As soon as he stepped out of the courtyard, Xiang Mantang caught sight of several people walking straight towards him. His gaze sharpened, a cold light surging.

These people, both male and female, totaled six, and were the hall masters of the other six halls of the Dragon King Hall.

They were, respectively: Tianxuan Hall's Hall Master, Wu Shisan; Tianji Hall's Hall Master, Qin Qiaochu; Tianquan Hall's Hall Master, Shen Cangsheng; Yuheng Hall's Hall Master, Mu Hongchen; Kaiyang Hall's Hall Master, Di Yin; and Yaoguang Hall's Hall Master, Jian Ruyan!

Wu Shisan was an existence only slightly less terrifying than Xiang Mantang, merely a little behind him.

It was said that he chose his own name because he did not know his name, his parents, or his origin.

The meaning of his name is: Nameless, surnameless, fatherless, motherless, brotherless, sisterless, without a master, without disciples, without kin, without friends... and...

Invincible!

If it were not for Xiang Mantang's sudden rise, this position of Tianshu Hall's Hall Master would have been his.

Thus, the title of "Invincible" ultimately became an empty boast!

Qin Qiaochu, true to his name, was an outstanding person among men. Still in his prime, he had suppressed various Martial Arts Grandmasters, and leapt to become the Tianji Hall's Hall Master. Even though there was a significant gap between him and Xiang Mantang, he was not to be underestimated.

Shen Cangsheng, forty-four years old, had strength enough to rank in the middle of Dragon King Hall. If not for his greed for power that prevented him from wholeheartedly dedicating himself to cultivation, his strength could have advanced even further.

Most importantly, he was the man who had once been betrothed to Su Zijin!

Therefore, already having some grievances with him, Xiang Mantang's hatred grew even deeper upon learning that Mu Jinyu's solitary plight was due to Shen Cangsheng.

It could be said that in the entire Dragon King Hall, the person Xiang Mantang most wanted to kill was Shen Cangsheng!

"Big Dipper Tianshu, what a coincidence."

Wu Shisan spoke, his voice hoarse, sounding as if a fingernail were scraping a blackboard, highly unpleasant to the ear.

Xiang Mantang glanced at the group, speaking indifferently, "The Dragon Master has already rested. You all should go back first and not disturb him!"

"Hm?!"

Upon hearing this, Shen Cangsheng's eyes narrowed slightly, concealing the flash of cold light that passed, and he said, "Big Dipper Tianshu, do you really think that just because the Dragon Master takes good care of you, you can become arrogant and fancy yourself as the next Tiance True Dragon?"

"Hmph..." Xiang Mantang snorted, replying coldly, "I have never thought that. On the contrary, Big Dipper Tian Quan has been very active these past few days, trying to use the support from your sect to

revisit the past alliance through marriage with the Saintess. Do you still hope to vie for the position of Tiance True Dragon with this? That is likely to disappoint you."

The reason Xiang Mantang and Su Zijin returned to the Capital City was because Shen Cangsheng, seeing that the Old Dragon King's time was drawing near, coveted the position of Tiance True Dragon. He began contacting his sect in the Kunlun Ruins, using their influence to pressure and once again propose marriage to Su Zijin, to increase his leverage for succession to the Tiance True Dragon position!

Left with no choice, Su Zijin had to leave River City first and return to the Capital City to contend with the forces behind him!

Naturally, Xiang Mantang had to come to help as well!

Shen Cangsheng, upon hearing Xiang Mantang's words, flashed a look of shock and suspicion, asking, "What do you mean by that? Has the next Tiance True Dragon already been decided?! Is it you!"

Chapter 285: Just Four Words, Invincible in Battle!

As soon as Shen Cangsheng's cry of alarm sounded, Wu Shisan, Qin Qiaochu, Di Yin, Mu Hongchen, and the others also changed their expressions, their eyes flickering with an unusual light.

Although they knew their chances of vying for the position of Tiance True Dragon were not very high, hearing that Xiang Mantang, who had worked with them, was about to leap up and become the New Dragon King was still somewhat unsettling.

Jian Ruyan's expression, however, remained unchanged, still cold and detached, as if she didn't care at all whether Xiang Mantang would become the new Tiance True Dragon.

Xiang Mantang saw everyone's expressions, chuckled lightly, and said, "Although the New Dragon King has been decided, it is not me, rest assured, nor will it be any of you!"

"So you're saying it's someone new? What's their background?" Qin Qiaochu asked, his eyes flickering, speaking softly.

"You will naturally understand when the time comes."

Having said this lightly, Xiang Mantang did not reveal any more information, "All right, you can go back now!"

Shen Cangsheng's face appeared slightly grim as he glanced at Xiang Mantang a few times, trying to discern how much truth and how much falsehood were in his words. After looking a few times, his eyes narrowed slightly!

"You're injured?!"

Shen Cangsheng stared at Xiang Mantang's somewhat unusual right arm, his gaze blazing with wild fierceness, emanating an eager vibe.

Xiang Mantang's expression remained unchanged, he chuckled lightly, glanced at Shen Cangsheng, and said faintly, "What about it? Seeing me injured, do you want to make a move?"

Shen Cangsheng did not speak, but the already tense atmosphere in the area suddenly thickened.

Xiang Mantang flicked his sleeve, tucking his injured right arm behind his back, slightly raised his left hand, and stared down Shen Cangsheng with cold eyes, his tone haughty,

"Then you are welcome to try? Even though I, Xiang Mantang, am not fully healed and left with only one arm, wonder if I can still suppress your Beidou Tian Quan by myself!"

"Hmm? Beidou Tianshu, with that tone, are you really forcing me to take action against you?"

Shen Cangsheng's eyes flickered a few times as he said in a deep voice.

"Kill!"

Xiang Mantang couldn't be bothered with idle talk with Shen Cangsheng; he had long found him displeasing and was ready to beat him up for daring to challenge him, so don't blame me for being rude!

With a shout, Xiang Mantang stomped on the ground, and his whole body suddenly shot up into the air, then he lifted one foot, aiming his heel straight at Shen Cangsheng's shoulder!

"Hmph!"

The moment Xiang Mantang really made a move without warning, Shen Cangsheng let out a cold snort and quickly counterattacked, extending his arms to block Xiang Mantang's thunderous strike!

"Bang!"

Shen Cangsheng blocked Xiang Mantang's leg, capable of splitting rocks, his face flushed slightly as a flush spread across his cheeks, and then he quickly retreated several steps back!

Xiang Mantang landed, and the ground trembled violently as if a minor earthquake had occurred, and the ground beneath his foot cracked, spreading out in all directions like a spider web!

"Ha!"

With his strike finding its mark, Xiang Mantang, relentless, kept his right hand behind his back, charged toward Shen Cangsheng, and began to attack with his left hand, jabbing, slicing, lifting, chopping, and slapping violently against Shen Cangsheng's body!

"Puff!"

Xiang Mantang moved too fast; Shen Cangsheng could only desperately block a few moves before he was heavily struck in the chest, abdomen, back, throat, and other vital areas, immediately turning his face beet red and coughing up a mouthful of scarlet blood!

"Bang!"

Shen Cangsheng knelt on one knee, his face pale and gasping for breath heavily.

A ceaseless fear surged in his heart—during those moments of combat with Xiang Mantang, he felt as if he was walking in front of Yanluo Hall.

He knew that if Xiang Mantang hadn't considered their affiliation as colleagues of the Dragon King Hall, he would have lost his life to the Underworld within a mere moment!

'Why, why has it come to this?!'

Shen Cangsheng screamed frantically in his heart, unable to accept this reality.

Two years ago, he had also fought against Xiang Mantang. Although Xiang Mantang had defeated him then as well, the process wasn't easy at all. How had Xiang Mantang improved so much that he could now easily take his life?!

After defeating Shen Cangsheng, Xiang Mantang didn't even glance at Shen Cangsheng, who was half-kneeling on the ground. He directly lifted his eyes and coldly gazed at Wu Shisan, Di Yin, Qin Qiaochu, and the others, whose eyes were burning even more fiercely after his move. He coldly said, "Do you also want to give it a try?"

Wu Shisan stuck out his tongue, licked his dry lips, and hoarsely said, "If Beidou Tianshu is in the mood, Wu Shisan is also willing to accompany!"

Di Yin and Qin Qiaochu didn't speak, but their eyes similarly flashed with eagerness.

Seeing this, Xiang Mantang snorted lightly and said, "Seeing that you are all interested, in that case, I won't fight you one by one, wasting time. You all..."

He paused for a moment, his lips slightly curled into a defiant cold smirk. He raised his eyes, swept over the individuals with disdain and contempt, and continued, "Come at me together!"

Bang!

As soon as he said these words, it was like ice water poured into boiling oil, causing Wu Shisan, Di Yin, Qin Qiaochu, and the others to greatly change their expressions, filled with immense anger!

"Beidou Tianshu, do you think you are invincible, daring to challenge all of us alone?!"

"Aren't you being a little too arrogant? Even the Dragon Master wouldn't dare to boast about taking us all on alone. Who do you think you are?!"

"..."

Xiang Mantang's words were extremely arrogant, completely demeaning them to the dust!

Everyone was a Sub-hall Master of the Dragon King Hall. Although there were slight differences in strength, it certainly couldn't justify Xiang Mantang being able to sweep all six of them alone!

This was simply an insult to them!

Who was willing to submit to him?!

Listening to their immensely angry words, Xiang Mantang's expression remained unchanged, calmly said, "Xiang Mantang is not anybody special, nor is he invincible. What he represents are merely the four words, 'unbeatable in battle.'

"Humph, since that's the case, let's have a good taste of Beidou Tianshu's moves!"

Di Yin snorted coldly and took the lead, charging at Xiang Mantang like a cannonball!

Then, Qin Qiaochu, with a livid face, also joined the battle!

Wu Shisan hesitated for a moment, and seeing that even the combined strength of Di Yin and Qin Qiaochu wasn't enough for Xiang Mantang, his expression changed several times. He really didn't want

to see Xiang Mantang defeat the two with his unstoppable arrogance, and finally, he also set aside his pride and joined the battle!

Suddenly, Mu Hongchen chuckled lightly, her red dress fluttering as she too joined the fray!

Three minutes later!

"Bang!"

After forcing Wu Shisan back with a palm that made him spit blood, Xiang Mantang's face was pale, his hands behind his back. His uninjured left arm also trembled slightly, but his expression was unchanged, looking toward Jian Ruyan who had always stood indifferently in place, watching coldly from the side!

"Beidou Yao Guang, make your move!"

Jian Ruyan spoke indifferently, "I'm no match for you in one move when I'm at my peak, let alone now. You might not be able to withstand three moves from me in my current state, forget it!"

Having said that, she gracefully moved away, disappearing from the scene.

Chapter 286 Lin Qiaoxia Treats

After everyone had dispersed,

Xiang Mantang still stood in his original place; then, he exhaled lightly, and a strand of bright red blood spilled from the corner of his mouth.

Already seriously injured and not yet recovered, he had first defeated Shen Cangsheng, and then single-handedly faced off against the four Martial Arts Supremes. He was naturally very seriously injured.

Had the Yaoguang Hall Master Jian Ruyan made a move, he was sixty percent confident that he could still defeat her, but his injuries would likely be even more severe.

Fortunately, Jian Ruyan had no intention of taking action against him.

Which made things much easier for Xiang Mantang.

Xiang Mantang slowly walked back to the courtyard he resided in, entered his house, shut the door, and began to sit cross-legged on the ground. He took the healing medicine prepared by Mu Jinyu and started to nurse his injuries.

A few minutes later.

"Knock, knock, knock!"

A sudden knocking on the door echoed.

Xiang Mantang opened his eyes, but before he could say 'come in',

The door was pushed open directly.

The visitor wore a simple white long dress and had a cold beauty as she floated into the room.

It was Jian Ruyan.

Before Xiang Mantang could ask her what she needed, Jian Ruyan tossed the porcelain bottle she was holding to him, then left without a word.

Xiang Mantang caught the porcelain bottle and saw her leave without saying anything. He gave a bitter smile, reached out to pull out the cork, and then spread out his palm to pour out the contents.

Immediately, a dark and round pill rolled into his palm.

Upon seeing this, Xiang Mantang's expression changed slightly. He then pinched the pill, brought it to his nose for a light sniff, and his expression shifted again.

"Ancient Primordial Pills!"

In the current Martial Arts World, elixirs are extremely precious because the alchemists who know how to make them are, for the most part, long extinct, and their lineage cut off.

It can be said that with each pill used, one less remains; they simply can't be replenished!

One can imagine just how precious these pills are.

The Ancient Primordial Pill that Jian Ruyan gave him was a top-grade healing medicine for stabilizing and nourishing one's foundation. If sold, it could fetch at least five quadrangle dwellings in the Capital City!

And yet, Jian Ruyan had given it to him so freely...

Xiang Mantang gazed at the pill in his palm, his icy eyes gradually softening, and he sighed softly, "This girl..."

This wasn't the first time Jian Ruyan had sent him a pill, and he knew that even if he tried to return it to her, she wouldn't take it back. Instead, she would choose to throw it away!

Therefore, Xiang Mantang ultimately could only accept it reluctantly, and then make it up to her in other ways!

In this way, the personal relationship between the two was actually quite good!

With seven sub-halls in the Dragon King Hall, Xiang Mantang felt that the Hall Masters should support each other, but to his dismay, the only one who truly showed brotherhood was Jian Ruyan. The others spent their days only vying for power and profits, engaging in constant intrigue.

"Sigh..."

Xiang Mantang exhaled lightly, stopped dwelling on these thoughts, tossed the Ancient Primordial Pill into his mouth like a candy bean, chewed and ate it, then closed his eyes to cultivate, refine, and heal his injuries.

Soon, a light, white steam began to rise from the top of Xiang Mantang's head, and his pale complexion gradually regained a healthy flush.

...

Unaware of the events that had taken place in Capital City, Mu Jinyu had no clue.

After breaking up with Yu Linglong, he first went to see Mei Yinxue, whom he hadn't seen in a while, and spent the afternoon with her. After he was done, finding nothing else to do, he decided to pick up Gu Xiyuan and Wen Rou from work.

It wasn't until he arrived at the company that he found out Gu Xiyuan and Wen Rou, along with the person in charge from both Xu Group and Jiang Group, had gone to Lu City to scout out a location for a branch office.

They had tried to call him and had sent a text message after three in the afternoon, but at the time, he was with Mei Yinxue and simply didn't see them.

"A wasted trip, well, let's just go home for dinner."

After hanging up with Gu Xiyuan, Mu Jinyu chuckled bitterly and greeted Xu Qingya and Lin Qiaoxia before preparing to head home for dinner.

Xu Qingya was still busy with many things, so she had Lin Qiaoxia take Mu Jinyu home.

Walking out of the office with her head down, Lin Qiaoxia struggled internally for a while. Finally, she gathered the courage to look up at Mu Jinyu's profile and said, "Young Master Mu, I... um... got my salary..."

"Oh, that's great. How many salaries did you get?" Mu Jinyu turned to look at her and asked with a smile.

Although he had made Lin Qiaoxia become Xu Qingya's secretary, he hadn't specifically asked how much they were paying her. He figured they would just follow the usual practice.

So he genuinely didn't know how much Lin Qiaoxia was making a month.

Lin Qiaoxia said, "Eighteen thousand."

"Eighteen thousand, huh..." Mu Jinyu casually responded, thinking that Lin Qiaoxia was suggesting her job was too demanding and the pay too low, and wanted a raise. After thinking for a moment, he said, "That is a bit low. I'll talk to President Xu later to give you a raise..."

"No, that's not it..." Lin Qiaoxia quickly shook her head, saying, "I mean, I got my salary, and I was wondering if I could treat you to dinner? Don't I owe you a meal?!"

After speaking, her beautiful eyes hidden beneath the black glasses stared directly at Mu Jinyu, filled with hope and nervousness.

It was only then that Mu Jinyu remembered there had been such an occasion. Realizing it, he smiled and said, "Sure, I was just wondering where to go for dinner later. Since you've just gotten paid, you can treat me to dinner!"

Seeing Mu Jinyu agree, Lin Qiaoxia finally felt relieved and said, "Okay, I'll go tell President Xu..."

After saying this, she was about to run back to Xu Qingya's office to ask for leave to take Mu Jinyu out for dinner.

Mu Jinyu called out, "No need to run back, I'll just make a call."

"Oh." Lin Qiaoxia obediently stopped.

Mu Jinyu made a call to Xu Qingya and, after hanging up, walked out of the company with Lin Qiaoxia.

Mu Jinyu had originally planned to casually find a small restaurant on the roadside to save Lin Qiaoxia some money.

Even though Lin Qiaoxia's father's uremia had been cured and she didn't really need to skimp and save, Mu Jinyu couldn't bring himself to fleece her for a meal.

However, his suggestion was rejected by Lin Qiaoxia.

Citing the reason that she owed him a meal and wanting to thank him for curing her father, Lin Qiaoxia decided to take him to an upscale restaurant in River City.

In reality, this restaurant was only considered upscale by ordinary people, but it wasn't actually high-end at all...

Having followed Mei Yinxue and Gu Xiyan to a few restaurants that were not open to the public, Mu Jinyu found those places which were once quite upscale to him no different than street stalls now.

Mu Jinyu felt there was no need to waste the money, as those restaurants were simply wasting ingredients, but Lin Qiaoxia insisted on going, so in the end, he had no choice but to go along with her!

Upon entering the restaurant, because the private rooms had all been booked in advance, they had to sit in the main dining hall.

"I'm sorry, I didn't expect it to be so busy," Lin Qiaoxia apologized to Mu Jinyu as she took her seat.

"It doesn't matter, it's all the same," Mu Jinyu said nonchalantly, waving his hand with indifference.

At that moment, a couple walked in and happened to see Mu Jinyu and Lin Qiaoxia sitting to the side. The young woman suddenly exclaimed in surprise, "Hey, isn't that Lin Qiaoxia?"

Chapter 287 Malicious

The young woman's rather uncertain voice rang out, Lin Qiaoxia sensed it sounded familiar, so she turned around and immediately recognized the speaker.

It was her university classmate, Chen Jiahui!

And the man by her side, named Wang Chaoyong, made Lin Qiaoxia feel a bit embarrassed because he had once... been her fervent admirer.

Lin Qiaoxia had been quite self-conscious in university, and if Wang Chaoyong had persistently badgered her, she might have actually agreed to his pursuits, even though she felt nothing for him.

However, after learning about the situation of Lin Qiaoxia's father, Wang Chaoyong thought this was a bottomless pit that would lead to his demise, so he backed off, no longer daring to pursue Lin Qiaoxia.

Afterward, he ended up with Chen Jiahui, who was not particularly beautiful, even somewhat homely.

Because her family was wealthy, enabling him to struggle ten years less.

Lin Qiaoxia felt no regret that Wang Chaoyong stopped pursuing her; rather, she felt relieved, no longer alarmed from time to time by his surprises.

But Chen Jiahui harbored resentment towards Lin Qiaoxia due to Wang Chaoyong's past behavior!

At first, she didn't think Lin Qiaoxia was worthy to compete with her, but because of Wang Chaoyong, she looked into Lin Qiaoxia and realized that beneath that messy hair and large black glasses, her features were actually quite exquisite and beautiful, instantly filling her with both jealousy and hatred...

So, under Chen Jiahui's schemes, Lin Qiaoxia had a very difficult time in university.

Meeting Chen Jiahui and Wang Chaoyong in the restaurant now also made Lin Qiaoxia feel somewhat awkward and embarrassed.

Wang Chaoyong was observing the restaurant's decoration, and hearing Chen Jiahui's words, he turned his head and followed her gaze, pausing slightly at the sight of the embarrassed Lin Qiaoxia, his expression showing a hint of reminiscence.

Lin Qiaoxia was no longer dressed like the plain girl from university, although she still liked wearing those large black glasses that detracted from her appearance, the black business suit she was wearing made her look very crisp and efficient.

Even so, her beauty still far surpassed Chen Jiahui's broad waist.

Chen Jiahui had been carefully observing Wang Chaoyong's expressions and eyes, and seeing that his gaze was indeed peculiar, she discreetly pinched his waist a few times.

"Ouch... what a coincidence!"

Wang Chaoyong sucked in a breath of cold air from the pain, then forced himself to bear the pain and tried to appear unharmed as he greeted Lin Qiaoxia.

But in his heart, his dissatisfaction with Chen Jiahui grew even more.

This woman, neither good-looking nor without the penchant for jealousy - if not for her having some wealth at home, why would he have ever considered her?

All these years with Chen Jiahui, he had suffered quite a bit of hardship, yet now unexpectedly encountering Lin Qiaoxia, he could not help but fantasize what it would have been like if he had continued pursuing Lin Qiaoxia back then?!

But it was just a thought; had he truly been with Lin Qiaoxia, he could not afford the bottomless pit of her family's demands.

"Yeah, quite the coincidence," Lin Qiaoxia suppressed the discomfort and awkwardness in her heart and quietly greeted them as well.

Mu Jinyu sat on the side, watching the strange atmosphere among the three and vaguely guessing some of their conflicts, so he merely nodded slightly without saying much.

Although Wang Chaoyong knew he wouldn't be with Lin Qiaoxia, driven by masculine possessiveness, he couldn't help asking, "Qiaoxia, is this your boyfriend?!"

Chen Jiahui also showed some interest in Mu Jinyu, after all, his looks were far better than Wang Chaoyong's.

Hearing this, she perked up her ears to eavesdrop.

Lin Qiaoxia sneakily glanced at Mu Jinyu, then blushed and vigorously shook her head, saying, "No, he's my boss!"

As the secretary to Xu Qingya, she was naturally aware of the relationships between Mu Jinyu, Gu Xiyan, and the two vice-presidents, Wen Rou. How could she dare to claim Mu Jinyu was her boyfriend?

When she first learned about it, she was quite shocked and found it hard to accept, but later on, she felt somewhat envious.

"Boss? Doing what?"

Chen Jiahui asked curiously.

Mu Jinyu, not wanting to talk too much, replied casually, "In the cosmetics business, just small-time stuff."

"Oh." Chen Jiahui nodded, then inspected Mu Jinyu again from head to toe. Seeing that his clothing didn't seem to show any famous brand, she just assumed they were some non-branded clothes and took it that Mu Jinyu really didn't earn much money.

Little did she know, Mu Jinyu indeed used to wear non-branded clothes from street stalls, but after getting together with Gu Xiyun, it was she who bought advanced level fabrics and then personally worked with renowned tailoring masters to custom-make his clothes.

Each piece of clothing could sell for tens of millions!

How could such clothes possibly have any big-name brand tags?

Chen Jiahui withdrew her scrutinizing gaze from Mu Jinyu and then, recalling the picture of Lin Qiaoxia that was shared in the group chat the other day, her eyes shifted as she smiled and said:

"Hey, Qiaoxia, I remember a few days ago, someone posted in the group chat a picture of you in a Mercedes. That middle-aged man with male pattern baldness, is he your boyfriend? Or are you doing some part-time work to give your family some extra money?"

Her words were extremely vicious.

Chen Jiahui originally thought Mu Jinyu was Lin Qiaoxia's boyfriend, and was ready to tell Mu Jinyu that he was being cheated on; not only was his girlfriend having an affair, but she was also doing part-time jobs outdoors, and then to suggest Mu Jinyu break up with her, not treat her to a meal here, make her lose face completely!

But now that she knew Mu Jinyu was not Lin Qiaoxia's boyfriend but her boss, it obviously meant Lin Qiaoxia was Mu Jinyu's secretary.

Why would a secretary need to do part-time jobs? Isn't it obvious?!

Thus, Chen Jiahui thought this was even better, as Mu Jinyu would find Lin Qiaoxia repulsive knowing she was doing part-time jobs while working as his secretary.

This way, Lin Qiaoxia would lose face and her job, further fueling Chen Jiahui's sense of revenge.

As Chen Jiahui spoke up, Wang Chaoyong also thought of this and his expression grew complicated.

Alas, life had indeed crushed Lin Qiaoxia's spirit, leading her to make such a choice.

Luckily, he hadn't chosen to keep entangled with her back then, or else wouldn't he be panicking now?

"Hmm?" Mu Jinyu raised an eyebrow, saying, "Is that so?"

After saying this, he turned his head to look at Lin Qiaoxia.

He didn't believe Lin Qiaoxia would do such a thing; she didn't need to, really. She wasn't extravagant with money, her father's kidney disease had improved, and the several hundred thousand she owed to relatives wasn't being urgently demanded—she could just pay it off slowly.

Lin Qiaoxia really didn't need to, nor did she have a reason to take on such part-time jobs!

Thus, Mu Jinyu was just curious about what was going on, wondering if Chen Jiahui was spreading lies about Lin Qiaoxia. If so, he would teach this woman a harsh lesson!

Chapter 288: Are You Director Shen?

Although Lin Qiaoxia had joined society, she was still quite naive. She didn't catch the malicious undertones in Chen Jiahui's words and shook her head, saying,

"How could I? Uncle Shen is so much older than me. Why would I find a boyfriend that old? And I haven't been working part-time; my current salary is more than enough for my expenses."

Listening to Lin Qiaoxia's explanation, Chen Jiahui didn't believe she was just innocent and didn't understand the implications. Instead, she thought Qiaoxia was feigning innocence and making excuses. She was just about to take out her phone to show Mu Jinyu the photo that the bystander had happened to snap when...

At that moment,

someone from an upstairs private room finished their meal and came down the stairs. Chen Jiahui glanced over and saw one of them. She quickly called out to Lin Qiaoxia, "Hey, hey, hey, there he is! He's coming down. Look!"

She thought to herself that her luck was too good. This uncle just happened to bump into you all; let's see if you panic, let's see how you continue to feign innocence and make excuses.

Mu Jinyu and Lin Qiaoxia, hearing this, turned their heads to look towards the back staircase.

Shen Changchun, assisted by Shen Shuyao, was still contemplating how to connect with Mu Jinyu. Coming down the stairs, he saw Chen Jiahui pointing at them.

Shen Changchun frowned slightly, feeling dissatisfied, thinking this woman was a bit off.

Then, he saw Mu Jinyu sitting nearby.

Hmm?

Divine Doctor Mu was also here for a meal?

What a coincidence!

"Quick, quick, quick, Guangrong, Shuyao, help me over there," Shen Changchun called out to his son and granddaughter urgently.

He remembered how, one day at River City First Hospital, he had suddenly learned that a patient with uremia had miraculously recovered without medication in under an hour of critical condition.

He rushed to the hospital, and though he didn't encounter Mu Jinyu, from the surveillance footage he learned that the one who had indeed saved the patient was Divine Doctor Mu, who sold his skills for gold.

He was once again astounded by Mu Jinyu's medical skills, and at the same time, regretted missing another opportunity to cross paths with Divine Doctor Mu.

Not long after, at the new product release of Mu Jinyu, he had had a chance to be a guest, but alas, that day, a significant figure in Capital City had fallen ill, necessitating the presence of the National Medical Sages for treatment.

Thus, he missed another opportunity to see Mu Jinyu and could only send his granddaughter Shen Shuyao to support Mu Jinyu at the event.

For this, he had completely broken ties with Lin Pharmaceutical, at a substantial cost.

But unfortunately, after that, Mu Jinyu was like a Divine Dragon that showed its head but never its tail, and each time Shen Changchun hoped for a chance encounter, some twist of fate caused him to miss it.

As for directly appearing at his home to wait for him, he didn't dare to be so presumptuous, for fear of causing Mu Jinyu's disdain!

And thinking of Lin Qiaoxia's relations to Mu Jinyu, he often went over to Lin Qiaoxia's home by himself, using his status as the hospital director to invite her family for dinner, to chat about their post-treatment feelings, to bridge their relationship.

Sometimes, when too busy, he would have his son, Shen Guangrong, pick up Lin Qiaoxia after work.

"Hmm?"

Upon hearing her grandfather's words, Shen Shuyao followed his gaze and immediately saw Mu Jinyu and Lin Qiaoxia sitting at a certain table in the lobby.

She shook her head slightly, understanding why her grandfather was so excited.

Exchanging a resigned look with her father, she then assisted Shen Changchun down the stairs quickly and headed towards where Mu Jinyu and the others were seated.

"Divine Doctor Mu, what a coincidence, you're here for a meal too!"

Shen Changchun came over, warmly greeting Mu Jinyu.

Mu Jinyu had recognized them early on and smiled in response, "Yeah, quite a coincidence. Have you just finished eating?"

Shen Changchun laughed, "Yes, if I had known that Doctor Mu you would come here for dinner, I would've waited to eat with you, even if it meant being hungry for a bit longer!"

Mu Jinyu nodded, "Since you've all eaten, then I won't keep you for dinner."

Shen Changchun's expression stiffened. He thought to himself that he should have said he hadn't eaten. Even if it meant overeating later, he would have shamelessly stuck around and then sought Mu Jinyu's advice on medical matters!

But now that the words had been spoken, it seemed somewhat inappropriate.

Seeing this, Shen Shuyao smiled gracefully and then sat down next to Lin Qiaoxia, starting a casual conversation with her.

Shen Changchun often invited Lin Qiaoxia and her family to his home for meals or to dine out at restaurants, always including her, so over time, Shen Shuyao got to know Lin Qiaoxia and they became close friends.

Shen Changchun was naturally pleased with this development.

Chen Jiahui and Wang Chaoyong listened to their conversation, feeling somewhat dumbfounded!

What's going on?

They know each other?

Could it be that they, thinking Lin Qiaoxia couldn't withstand the pressure and had taken a part-time job outside, had completely misunderstood?

Chen Jiahui couldn't help but ask, slightly persistently, "You... all know each other?!"

She was mainly staring at the Mediterranean man, who was Shen Shuyao's father, Shen Guangrong.

Shen Shuyao was chatting with Lin Qiaoxia and ignored Chen Jiahui's words. Shen Changchun, still with a bitter face looking at Mu Jinyu, didn't hear her speak. However, Shen Guangrong, because Chen Jiahui had been staring at him with a strange gaze, responded, "Yes, what's strange about that?"

Mu Jinyu said with a light smile, "This woman thought that Qiaoxia, because of her father's situation, was very short on money, so she had taken on some kind of part-time job. That day she got into your Mercedes, and just now seeing you here, she thought we were going to have a fight!"

"Ho!" Shen Guangrong was startled by her words. Not to mention that he was far from having such dishonorable thoughts, even if he really wanted to have a relationship with a female college student, he wouldn't dare have such thoughts about Lin Qiaoxia!

If he dared to entertain such thoughts, not just Mu Jinyu, but even his father Shen Changchun would probably beat him to death with a cane!

Thinking this, Shen Guangrong quickly looked at Mu Jinyu and explained, "No way, no way. Miss Lin was in my car that day because my father had something to attend to and couldn't come personally, so he asked me to pick her up, and then we went to her house to pick up her parents before going out to eat together."

Finishing his explanation, he saw that Mu Jinyu was not angry and obviously did not take it seriously, which allowed him to relax and say, "Furthermore, even if Mr. Lin hadn't recovered from his illness, Miss Lin would not possibly consider doing such a thing."

"Her father's renal failure is cured?"

Chen Jiahui and Wang Chaoyong were still wondering why Shen Guangrong was so cautious around Mu Jinyu, but hearing his subsequent words, they were utterly astonished.

Shen Guangrong was furious with them. Their words had almost caused his downfall, and now he naturally felt too lazy to bother with them.

Seeing that Shen Guangrong was ignoring them, Chen Jiahui and Wang Chaoyong felt quite awkward. Chen Jiahui was cursing inwardly, annoyed at how she had overestimated her own importance.

Meanwhile, Wang Chaoyong had an inkling that Shen Changchun looked familiar. Staring at him for a few more seconds, he suddenly remembered his identity and exclaimed, "You are... Director Shen?!"

"What Director Shen?" Chen Jiahui turned to look at Wang Chaoyong, frowning as she asked.

"The Director of River City First Hospital!" Wang Chaoyong explained, informing Chen Jiahui of Shen Changchun's identity.

After hearing this, Chen Jiahui's eyes widened as she too hadn't expected that the old man held such a high position!

Chapter 289 Birthday Invitation

Shen Changchun glanced at them and felt a strong dislike for those who indulged in baseless gossip behind others' backs.

He softly began, "What? Do you have any objections?"

In front of Mu Jinyu, he behaved as obedient as a grandchild, but that did not mean he adopted the same attitude with them.

"No, no..." Chen Jiahui forced a smile and said, "I just didn't expect you two to know each other."

By now, she also understood that Lin Qiaoxia certainly hadn't gone out to work part-time jobs or kept a sugar daddy. The incident that day was just the photographer's wild guess and reckless spread of rumors!

Latterly, she also realized that Lin Qiaoxia's father's kidney disease must have been cured thanks to Shen Changchun, and she felt insanely jealous of Lin Qiaoxia's good fortune.

Why should this woman be prettier and luckier than herself?!

She was always favored by others!

Wang Chaoyong's expression was also complicated as he silently processed what Shen Guangrong had said earlier.

Lin Qiaoxia's father's kidney disease was cured, and she had always remained chaste, never misbehaving.

Moreover, the director of River City First Hospital and the director of the Traditional Chinese Medicine hospital at Jiangnan Province Medical University, Shen Changchun, his granddaughter, also knew Lin Qiaoxia and had become best friends with her.

Thinking about this, Wang Chaoyong felt some regret.

If he had known earlier about Lin Qiaoxia's circumstances, he would have persistently pursued her years ago and won her over!

However, he then consoled himself, thinking Lin Qiaoxia was just close friends with Shen Shuyao, not like she was Shen Changchun's granddaughter. Her family's financial troubles had just been resolved, and they weren't particularly wealthy!

Thinking of money...

Wang Chaoyong looked at Chen Jiahui next to him, his resolve strengthening once again.

Yes, his choice wasn't wrong!

Then, he couldn't help but secretly size up Shen Shuyao.

This woman really was a top-quality beauty and wealthy, way above Chen Jiahui in every aspect!

If he could marry Shen Shuyao, with her family's support, he could certainly skip thirty years of struggle.

His eyes flickered, pondering something.

Just then, the server brought the dishes Mu Jinyu had just ordered and said, "Excuse me, sir, please make some room!"

"Oh, of course." Wang Chaoyong quickly stepped aside.

Then, he glanced at the dishes in the server's hands, furrowing his brow slightly. The dishes were grouper, butter crab, Wagyu fillet, French foie gras... Just these first few dishes alone were costing more than thirty thousand, plus that Ace of Spades Champagne bottle selling for 8888 at this restaurant!

'It seems this guy is quite wealthy too!' he murmured to himself.

Wang Chaoyong surveyed Mu Jinyu's attire, wondering to himself, "But I wonder if he regrets spending so much while trying to impress girls like this."

Seeing that all the dishes were served at Mu Jinyu's table and that they weren't invited to join, Shen Changchun and others, who knew when to take a hint, stood up, bid farewell to Mu Jinyu, and left.

Chen Jiahui originally felt very awkward, especially since she had tried to defame someone based on baseless rumors and had been fact-checked to her face. Even with a thick skin, she felt uneasy, especially given Shen Changchun's commanding presence.

She was prepared to leave dejectedly, but seeing that Shen Changchun and his group had left before her, after thinking it over, she couldn't bear to just leave like this and chose to sit at an empty table nearby, then called a server over to start ordering.

However...

"Hiss!"

Chen Jiahui secretly took a deep breath, feeling that the dishes were a bit expensive, and Lin Qiaoxia and the others really dared to order!

However, not wanting to be outdone by them, Chen Jiahui gritted her teeth and still ordered a three-kilogram imperial crab and a four-kilogram wild yellow croaker... along with some other expensive dishes.

Just calculating casually, it had already exceeded more than sixty thousand.

Chen Jiahui was in agony, and only ordered a bottle of Lafite worth about ten thousand before passing the menu to the waiter who was standing by, saying, "That's all."

The waiter repeated the order and confirmed the dishes, and after Chen Jiahui nodded, he went off to prepare them.

Chen Jiahui kept stealing glances at Mu Jinyu and Lin Qiaoxia.

Seeing their expressions unchanged as they listened to the interpreter confirming the dishes and their prices, still cozily enjoying their food, she felt utterly dejected.

She had ordered so many expensive dishes just to avoid being overshadowed by them, but they didn't care at all about what she ordered or how much it cost, which felt like casting flirtatious glances at a blind person.

Soon, the waiter served the dishes she had ordered, and Chen Jiahui glanced again at Mu Jinyu's table, only to see they still weren't looking at her dishes, which nearly caused her an internal injury from the frustration.

How could Mu Jinyu possibly care about their little orders?

It was merely the money he made from selling a few boxes of Beauty Pills.

About ten minutes later, Mu Jinyu and Lin Qiaoxia finished their meal and called over the waiter to pay the bill.

The total was more than thirty thousand, and Lin Qiaoxia's salary was only eighteen thousand. How could that be enough? In the end, it was naturally Mu Jinyu who paid the bill.

Lin Qiaoxia felt somewhat embarrassed and looked at Mu Jinyu with a bit of resentment.

She had intended to spend her whole month's salary to treat Mu Jinyu to a meal, but Mu Jinyu had ordered too many expensive dishes, and she simply couldn't afford it.

Of course, she knew Mu Jinyu did it on purpose, he never intended to let her treat him to a meal.

Thinking about it, Lin Qiaoxia felt that she might as well have picked a casual restaurant from the beginning. Instead, it ended up costing Mu Jinyu more.

After Mu Jinyu paid the bill, the waiter took the POS machine and departed.

"Let's go," Mu Jinyu stood up, picked up his coat, and said to Lin Qiaoxia.

Lin Qiaoxia hesitated, unsure if she should invite Mu Jinyu to her birthday in three days, fearing a similar scenario might occur.

That might make her seem as if she was intentionally trying to take advantage of Mu Jinyu.

After thinking it over, Lin Qiaoxia finally invited him, "Young Master Mu, my birthday is in three days, are you free?"

"In three days!" Mu Jinyu paused upon hearing that, thought for a moment, and said, "Hey, it's also your birthday in three days!"

"Huh?" Lin Qiaoxia paused, puzzled, and asked, "Young Master Mu, is it also your birthday then?"

She suddenly felt a bit happy.

Mu Jinyu shook his head and said, "No, not me. It's General Gu's best friend, another city's general manager, and her birthday is also in three days..."

Hearing this, Lin Qiaoxia's expression darkened, knowing Mu Jinyu would definitely attend General Gu's best friend's birthday party.

Not only was the person General Gu's best friend, but given that Mu Jinyu had already promised her, it was impossible for him to cancel on her to spend it with Lin Qiaoxia.

Lin Qiaoxia felt she was being a bit greedy and softly said, "Sorry, I was being forward. Young Master Mu, you don't need to worry about me..."

Mu Jinyu would indeed not likely decline Yu Linglong's birthday invitation, but seeing Lin Qiaoxia's demeanor, he thought for a moment and said, "If you don't mind, how about combining both your birthdays together?"

Chapter 290 Insomnia Alone

"Together?"

Upon hearing this, Lin Qiaoxia hesitated a bit, slightly startled and somewhat uncertain.

It wasn't that she was averse to celebrating her birthday together with the others, especially since they were General Gu's close friends, she thought they ought to be nice people as well.

However, if she threw a joint party with Yu Linglong, the attendees would undoubtedly be all young people.

She had originally planned to invite Mu Jinyu to her home, where her family could simply celebrate the birthday together.

If they had a joint birthday celebration, her parents would not be able to participate.

So, Lin Qiaoxia was considering whether or not to have a joint birthday celebration.

"I will call my parents and ask them," she eventually said hesitantly, her lips pursed, speaking softly.

"Hmm, I should also check with my friend; she will probably agree," nodded Mu Jinyu. "If it doesn't work out, then I'll try to adjust the timing. I'll come over after my side has finished celebrating."

Having said that, Mu Jinyu sighed softly to himself—ah, it's really not all good being so popular.

Like his current situation, it was utterly exhausting!

Afterward, while Lin Qiaoxia stepped aside with her phone to make a call, Mu Jinyu also took out his phone and called Yu Linglong to ask for her opinion.

When Yu Linglong picked up, she wasn't adverse to the idea upon hearing about the situation. In fact, she thought it was quite nice that someone shared the same birthday as her.

Yu Linglong then told Mu Jinyu that if it was difficult, she could also join the celebration at Lin Qiaoxia's house; it was no problem.

Mu Jinyu said he understood and, after a few more words, hung up the phone.

After hanging up, he felt that Yu Linglong was specifically considering Lin Qiaoxia's feelings; if it really wasn't feasible, he would have to run back and forth himself, as it wouldn't be fair to inconvenience anyone.

Lin Qiaoxia soon finished her call and approached, visibly excited, clutching her phone and saying, "Young Master Mu, it's possible. My parents agreed. Let's have it together with General Gu's friend."

She hadn't expected that upon suggesting she'd go out with friends for her birthday, her parents would initially resist, disapprove, afraid she might be deceived by a man. But once she mentioned it was Mu Jinyu, they clapped their hands in approval, commenting that it's good not to celebrate at home, that young people should celebrate outside...

In short, if she wanted to celebrate at home, they might as well break her legs.

Feeling somewhat speechless about their reaction, she then told them she could celebrate with them at noon and then go celebrate with Mu Jinyu and General Gu's friend in the evening.

They happily agreed to this plan.

"Is that not difficult for you?" asked Mu Jinyu.

"Not at all," Lin Qiaoxia shook her head.

Mu Jinyu, seeing her cheerful expression, felt she probably wasn't lying and nodded in response, "Alright, then let's go. I'll inform you of the location once it's decided."

"Okay," Lin Qiaoxia nodded gently.

Then, the two of them headed out of the restaurant.

Chen Jiahui and Wang Chaoyong were still dining, and as they listened to the conversation, Chen Jiahui's brows slightly furrowed, her thoughts preoccupied with the birthday in three days...

What a coincidence!

Her grandmother was about to celebrate a significant 66th birthday!

Also in three days.

It was indeed quite the timing!

But Chen Jiahui didn't pay much mind to it. If it had been her own birthday coinciding with theirs, she would have made a point of asking where they were hosting the party and then compare—the status of the guests who came to wish them well, and the value of the gifts they received against hers.

However, since it was her grandmother's significant birthday, it didn't interest her.

Given her grandmother's connections and prestige, she would completely overshadow these young ones. To compare the received birthday gifts or the status of the attending guests would be to insult her grandmother!

So, there really wasn't any need to demean myself by comparing with Lin Qiaoxia and the others!

...

After Mu Jinyu and Lin Qiaoxia left the restaurant, he first took Lin Qiaoxia home.

After he dropped her off, her parents enthusiastically invited him to stay the night, but Mu Jinyu made all sorts of excuses and finally managed to escape awkwardly.

Then, Mu Jinyu gave Yu Linglong a call, told her Lin Qiaoxia's answer, and then asked where they would hold the event?

He wanted to let Lin Qiaoxia know as well.

Yu Linglong said that she hadn't decided yet.

The truth was she didn't have much money on hand.

She had originally only invited a few friends, including Mu Jinyu and Gu Xiyan, so there was no need for anything lavish, but since there was another person with the same birthday as hers, she didn't feel it was right to skimp.

So she thought of asking Gu Xiyan to borrow some money first, and then decide where to hold the event.

When Mu Jinyu heard Yu Linglong's intention, realizing Yu Linglong must be short on funds due to Yu Xiuwen's trickery, he straightforwardly said he would pay for the event as his birthday gift to them.

Before Yu Linglong could refuse, he hung up the phone.

After hanging up, Mu Jinyu called Gu Xiyan to ask if she would be back in three days?!

Gu Xiyan's voice was tinged with fatigue as she replied, "I might be too busy to come back. If you need anything, you can go to Sister Mei."

Mu Jinyu was speechless and said, "No, isn't it Linglong's birthday in three days? Aren't you two close friends? Have you forgotten?"

"Ah?!" With Mu Jinyu's reminder, Gu Xiyan suddenly realized and said, "Right, she mentioned it to me at noon. I'm wrapped up in things now, but I'll be back in three days."

They talked a bit more, but since Gu Xiyan was still very busy, they didn't linger on the phone and hung up.

Just as Mu Jinyu put away his phone, thinking of finding a hotel for their birthday party, his phone rang again.

He initially thought it was Yu Linglong calling to refuse something, but when he took out his phone, it was Xiang Mantang calling, so he answered.

"Hello, Ah-Xiang, what's up?"

"Big Brother, I'm not so pressed for time anymore, I'll be back in two days, and I've brought gifts for the sisters-in-law. This time you won't tease me about not bringing a gift again, right?" Xiang Mantang said.

Mu Jinyu replied, "Yeah, that's thoughtful of you."

After a pause, he said, "However, your sisters-in-law are out of town now and won't be back in two days. But in three days, there will be a friend's birthday, so you can come and give your gift then."

Xiang Mantang asked, "Is it Yu Linglong and Lin Qiaoxia?"

"How did you know?" Mu Jinyu asked, surprised.

Xiang Mantang responded frankly, "I checked how many sisters-in-law I had when I first came back. These two should be considered future sisters-in-law, I'm well aware. Ok, I'll prepare a few more gifts then."

Mu Jinyu hastened to say, "No, no, no, don't start saying nonsense, what if you scare them?"

"I've got a sense of what's appropriate," Xiang Mantang said softly, "You just seize the opportunity, I'm hanging up."

After that, Xiang Mantang hung up before Mu Jinyu could respond.

"Hello, hello..." Listening to the busy tone on his phone, Mu Jinyu was speechless.

Then, chuckling ruefully, he muttered under his breath, "What sense of measure do you have? If you mess around and I get chopped by Gu Xiyan, I won't forgive you!"

After cursing softly to himself, Mu Jinyu decided not to go home but instead went to find Mei Yinxue.

Firstly, he wanted to ask Mei Yinxue where would be a good place to hold a birthday party for Yu Linglong and Lin Qiaoxia, as a reference.

Secondly, he had grown accustomed to sleeping together with someone, and now that both Gu Xiyan and Wen Rou were not at home, he felt somewhat restless sleeping alone.