

The Beauty 181

Chapter 181 The Great Singer

Waking up, Ling Chen glanced at the clock—it was 6:30 in the morning. After washing up, he dialed the hotel's front desk, and soon a server brought a lavish breakfast to his room.

While he was eating, Zhong Wei knocked on the door and came in, handing a schedule to Ling Chen, "This is the chairman's plan for today, take a look."

Ling Chen bit into his bread and looked over the schedule, the corners of his mouth instantly curving up. Today's work was quite relaxed; Nanrong Wanqing was scheduled to visit friends at several places. As long as it wasn't somewhere crowded, there wasn't much to worry about.

"Captain Zhong, you haven't eaten yet, have you? Come, join me." As he spoke, Ling Chen casually picked up the remote control and turned on the TV, flipping through channels ceaselessly.

At that moment, the duo hosting an entertainment show suddenly caught his attention.

"In two days, the pop music scene's rising star Tang Shiyun will be holding her first concert at the Beijing Sports Stadium. Speaking of Tang Shiyun, I believe there are few who haven't heard of her. Although it's been just over a month since her debut, her songs have already spread across major music stations and she's topped the new song trending charts for four consecutive weeks. I just checked, and the second place is 67 million in popularity behind her—an unprecedented situation."

"You're right, becoming a nation-wide sensation in just one month, and turning into a familiar pop star isn't an easy feat. Apart from opportunity, what's more important is her talent. I won't lie, I'm also a devoted fan of hers. From the moment I heard her first song, I was immersed in her voice, unable to extricate myself. The first thought that popped into my head was that this girl would surely become wildly popular—a big star in the limelight."

"I heard that the concert tickets went on presale two weeks in advance and they got snapped up overnight. Originally priced at 1,800, the tickets have now been scalped for 30,000, and are still hard to find. It's a phenomenon in the music scene that we haven't seen for years."

"Just this point alone suffices to highlight the extent to which Tang Shiyun is sought after domestically. My girlfriend even joked with me the other night if I don't manage to get concert tickets, she would break up with me."

"..."

Tang Shiyun has come to Beijing?

Staring blankly at the TV, Ling Chen seemed deaf to the hosts' discussion, his mind filled only with the thoughts of Tang Shiyun's youthful and vibrant smile.

The last time he saw Tang Shiyun was when she started school. After a long conversation with her, he decided not to disturb Tang Shiyun's life anymore. Tang Shiyun's mother looked down on him, thinking he had no prospects, and forbade Tang Shiyun from associating with him. Therefore, he didn't want to cause any discord between them because of this.

"Wow, she's actually going to hold a concert," Zhong Wei said to himself as he ate.

Ling Chen, surprised, asked, "You know her?"

"How could I not? Don't tell me you don't? Over the past month, the television, newspapers, the internet—everywhere was filled with news about her. From 80-year-old seniors to 6 or 7-year-old kids, I guess nobody doesn't know her."

Uh...

Ling Chen inwardly gave a wry smile as he genuinely wasn't aware of this. He rarely watched TV or read newspapers, and when he had free time, he would either wander around outside or sleep at home.

"Captain Zhong, is she really that famous?"

Zhong Wei shook his smartphone, laughing, "I paid to download her songs, as support for her."

Hearing this, Ling Chen widened his eyes, feeling quite incredulous. Zhong Wei, a man in his thirties, usually stern-faced and serious, was also captivated by Tang Shiyun's voice.

Initially, he'd known that Tang Shiyun would become popular, but he never imagined she would reach this level of fame, appealing to audiences young and old.

"Captain Zhong, lend me your phone to listen."

Plugging in the earphones, Ling Chen found the playlist and quietly listened to the touching music. As Tang Shiyun's sweet voice rang out, Ling Chen's thoughts were drawn back to the times they spent together months ago, every detail flooding his mind.

That girl... she must be happy now.

With a slight smile, he returned the phone to Zhong Wei, turned off the TV, and stood up saying, "Let's go, it's almost time."

Arriving at the hotel lobby, Ling Chen sat alone on a couch, quietly waiting for Nanrong Wanqing to appear. He knew Nanrong Wanqing was still upset, so he tried as much as possible to avoid being in her sight.

Just then, his phone rang, and he quickly answered, "Hello, Old Tang, what's up?"

"It's because of that Song Qing you caught yesterday. Damn it, that guy's lips are sealed. I've interrogated him all night and got nothing valuable."

"With your methods, none of them worked?"

"Don't even mention it, I've tried everything, and he didn't react at all."

"Is that so?" Ling Chen was somewhat surprised, but then again, he realized that the man was a high-level practitioner from the Inner sect, not someone easy to deal with.

"Hey, old virgin, you're usually full of tricky ideas, why don't you come up with a plan?"

"Well... let me think."

He knew Tang Yuan wouldn't ask for help unless he had no other choice.

"Old Tang, how about this? I'll find some time to come over today for a face-to-face talk with him. In the meantime, you can take my place and ensure the chairman's safety. How does that sound?"

"Okay, that's settled then."

After ending the call, Nanrong Wanqing made her appearance, escorted by Zhong Wei and several others, emerging from the elevator in a wheelchair.

Passing through the lobby, Nanrong Wanqing didn't glance sideways and seemed to not notice Ling Chen sitting on the couch. She went straight through the main entrance and into the car.

Seeing her indifferent expression, Ling Chen smiled helplessly, stood up, and walked out. He got into a Land Rover arranged by Zhong Wei, following behind the convoy.

Midway through the journey, Ling Chen heard a sequence of 'beep beep' horn sounds from behind. Looking in the rearview mirror, he saw a Volkswagen car following behind the Land Rover. Then, a hand stretched out of the window, gently waving.

Seeing this, he immediately understood and slowed down to break away from the convoy. At the same time, the Volkswagen caught up, taking his place. The driver of the Volkswagen was none other than Tang Yuan.

After leaving the city, Ling Chen drove to the outskirts to the gate of a country mansion.

This mansion covered almost a thousand square meters, with two-meter-high walls piled around. In the middle stood a three-story white villa, surrounded by lush green lawns. A winding path made of bluestone meandered among them, with artificial hills and flowing water features all available.

Pulling over in front of the iron gate, Ling Chen poked his head out, looking at the surveillance camera above the door. Then, he made eight hand gestures.

Not long after, the iron gate slowly opened.

Chapter 182: Visit familiar places again

Entering the manor, Ling Chen parked the car and walked straight toward the villa. When he reached the door, it was already opened from inside, and a middle-aged man in home clothes smiled warmly at him.

"Little Ling, welcome back."

"Uncle Mu, it's been a while," Ling Chen greeted.

The middle-aged man in front was Mu Zhiyuan, the owner of the villa.

"Is it Little Ling who has come?" As the voice sounded, a beautiful woman in her forties with charm still lingering, came quickly. Her slightly wrinkled face was filled with a friendly smile, "Little Ling, come here, let me have a good look at you. I've missed you so much over the past few months."

Ling Chen grinned, "Mrs. Chen, you really shouldn't miss me, otherwise Uncle Mu might get jealous."

This beautiful woman, Chen Ping, was Mu Zhiyuan's wife. They used to live together when he wasn't on missions, so they were quite close. Mu Zhiyuan and Chen Ping had no children and always treated him like their own, often buying him food and clothing.

He planned this visit to Beijing early to see this couple. In his heart, they were like family though not by blood.

"Little Ling, come, sit down, and have a good chat with Mrs. Chen."

"Alright, don't hold him up. Let him finish his work first."

"Mrs. Chen, I'll come and join you later." With that, Ling Chen followed Mu Zhiyuan into the study.

After closing the door, Ling Chen automatically walked to the desk and nodded at Mu Zhiyuan. The latter took out his cell phone, pressed it gently, and the bookshelf in front of Ling Chen immediately slid to the side, revealing a bright corridor.

Walking through the corridor, there was an elevator at the end. After a complicated identity verification, the elevator slowly started and descended.

As the elevator doors opened, Han Bing was already waiting outside for his arrival.

"Mr. Han."

Han Bing smiled and patted his shoulder, "Come with me."

This secret underground base was the headquarters of the Ghost Organization. No one would expect that this mysterious organization was built under a villa.

There are five levels in the Ghost Base, equipped with cutting-edge technology and comprehensive facilities. When Ling Chen first joined Ghost, he underwent a year of closed training here and was very familiar with it.

In a short while, the two walked side by side to the outside of an interrogation room.

"The person is inside, do you need me to accompany you?"

"No need, I'll go meet him alone." After speaking, Ling Chen pushed the door and walked in.

In the interrogation room, Song Qing was seated in a specially made chair, his hands and feet bound by thick chains. Since he was a master from the Tiger List, Han Bing had given him special treatment.

"Song Qing, we meet again."

Ling Chen smiled and brought a chair over, sitting in front of him and staring into his eyes.

Song Qing coldly said, "Don't waste your efforts, I won't say anything."

"It's your choice to speak or not, I won't force you. You are a master from the Tiger List, and I always respect masters, so rest assured, I won't use any despicable means to interrogate you. However, you should think carefully. You have openly stolen government property and already committed a felony, death is inevitable. You look no older than thirty. It must have taken a lot of effort to be ranked in the Tiger List at such a young age. Are you willing to let these years of effort go to waste?"

Song Qing kept his head down, silent, as if he hadn't heard him.

Seeing this, Ling Chen slightly smiled and said to himself, "I am also a martial artist, and we learn morals first, which I believe your Master has taught you. You've struggled for decades, barely making it onto the Tiger List, for what? Nothing more than fame and fortune. You might have gained the fortune, but what about the reputation? Among more than a billion people in Huaxia, only a few can make it onto the Heaven and Earth Dragon and Tiger Four Rankings. Just being ranked sixth on the Tiger List should have been enough for you to be proud. Yet, what you are doing now is gradually destroying the reputation you worked hard to build. If Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion hears about this, how do you think they will judge you? A traitor? A corrupt villain driven by greed? You know Heavenly Mechanism Pavilion well; once this news reaches their ears, it won't be long before every martial artist knows of your deeds. By then, if not reviled for eternity, you will be universally detested. Is this the outcome you want, to ruin your reputation overnight?"

Hearing this, a flicker of emotion finally surfaced in Song Qing's usually unflappable eyes.

He slowly raised his head, his voice hoarse, "If I confess, will you keep this matter from being leaked?"

Ling Chen promised, "I assure you, not a word will be disclosed. As long as you confess truthfully, I will plead with my superiors to reduce your sentence, so you spend fewer years in prison. Once you are released, you would still be a renowned master on the Tiger List."

Song Qing hesitated for a moment, then appeared to make a decision, nodding, "Alright, I accept your terms. What do you want to know?"

"Don't hurry, I'm not the one to ask these questions. Someone else will come here to see you shortly, just cooperate with them." Finished speaking, Ling Chen turned and walked out of the interrogation room.

"Young man, you're quite something," Han Bing praised generously outside the door. He had just listened to their conversation through the monitoring equipment in the interrogation room. Seeing Song Qing relent obviously pleased him.

The corner of Ling Chen's mouth lifted slightly; he too wasn't very sure of himself. But martial artists place great importance on their reputations, especially those who are well-known masters. That's why he used this point to try and break through Song Qing's psychological defenses.

"Mr. Han, I'll leave the next steps to you. I'm going to check on the General."

"He's in the lab."

After Han Bing entered the interrogation room, Ling Chen made his way to the lab within the base.

In the spacious lab, besides Qiao Zhen, several researchers were studying the exoskeleton armor.

"General," greeted Ling Chen.

Seeing him approach, Qiao Zhen's stern face rarely showed a smile, "You rascal, your timing is perfect. I was about to call you to thank you. You have done a great service for our nation this time. With this exoskeleton armor, our country's military power will absolutely surpass other nations. Tell me, what reward would you like, you rascal?"

"General, you can skip the reward. The country raised me, and it's only right for me to contribute to the country."

"Not bad, you have high awareness. But your contributions are clear, and a deserved reward must be given. Just name it, as long as it's not too excessive, I will fulfil it."

Ling Chen's eyes twinkled, and he grinned, "General, you mean what you say?"

"Nonsense, when have I ever gone back on my word?"

"Alright then... since that's the case, how about you introduce me to your granddaughter? I've been single for so long, I can't just... Ouch! General, you told me to make a request, why are you hitting me?"

"Get lost!" Qiao Zhen laughed and scolded, "Don't even think about my granddaughter."

Chapter 183 Zhang Family

In casual conversation, Han Bing walked in from outside the lab.

"General, Song Qing has confessed everything."

When it came to serious matters, Qiao Zhen immediately put on a stern face and asked, "Has the mastermind behind the scenes confessed?"

"Not yet. General, according to what Song Qing described, the organization we're investigating is very complex."

"Complex? In what way? Explain."

"Our previous guesses weren't wrong, the mysterious force behind Song Qing is indeed the God Organization that has been revived. However, the current God Organization is more secretive and vast than decades ago. Moreover, God Organization controls many smaller forces, including foreign

mercenary groups and international criminal groups. Song Qing confessed that in their organization, there's a strict hierarchy. The level determines one's status within the organization."

"What level?"

"Bronze, Silver, Platinum, Gold, and Jade Gold, five levels. Jade Gold represents the head of the organization, and the others follow in descending order."

Ling Chen asked, "What's Song Qing's level within the organization?"

"He has no rank. Only ranked individuals are core members of the organization; the rest are peripheral members. I just asked Song Qing, and he's merely a hired thug for them, and there are many more like him."

Hearing this, Ling Chen was puzzled, "People like him wouldn't oppose the government just for some money, would they?"

Han Bing nodded and said, "You're right, his aim isn't money, but special drugs. According to him, taking those drugs can significantly enhance his strength. As per their agreement, every time Song Qing completes a task, he is given a bottle of the drug as a reward. Song Qing himself confessed that he wanted to use the drugs to boost his strength and challenge others on the Tiger List."

So that's it!

Ling Chen nodded inwardly; the saying 'greed is a bottomless pit that exhausts the person in an endless effort to satisfy the need without ever reaching satisfaction' was indeed true.

Looking back through history, human desires are never satisfied; after conquering one peak, people always seek the next, it's never-ending. Throughout the thousands of years of history, there have been many such people, and none had a good end.

As a human, the most important thing is to learn to be content.

"General, Song Qing only has direct contact with those people, he has never met them in person, and all transactions are done via mobile phones; there's nothing to trace."

"I didn't expect to figure out much." Qiao Zhen said with folded arms, "God Organization operates cautiously, not giving anyone an opportunity to exploit. Furthermore, Song Qing is just a peripheral member, so the information he knows is certainly limited."

"General, how do you plan to deal with this person?"

"Proceed according to the law; since he cooperated, we can consider reducing some of his criminal responsibility."

"Understood."

"General, Mr. Han, if there's nothing else, I'll be leaving first."

Qiao Zhen waved his hand, "Hurry up and scram, I didn't plan to keep you for lunch."

"Okay, then I'm leaving. General, take care."

Han Bing patted Ling Chen's shoulder and smiled, "Let's go, I'll walk you out."

Back in the study, Ling Chen had intended to meet up with Nanrong Wanqing and switch back Tang Yuan. However, Mu Zhiyuan and his wife, Chen Ping, insisted on having him stay for lunch.

It was an offer he couldn't refuse, and after such a long time, he too wanted to spend some time with Chen Ping.

Mu Zhiyuan and Chen Ping were both former members of Ghost Base, fighting side by side for many years and deeply in love, they got married ten years ago. Later, persuaded by the General, they became the guardians of Ghost Base.

Despite their scholarly elegance and tranquil virtue, they were both tough characters in the past, with probably hundreds fallen at their hands.

After the meal, Chen Ping reluctantly let Ling Chen go.

On his way back, Ling Chen made a call to Zhong Wei to ask for their current location and then drove over.

After an hour's drive, the Land Rover slowly drove into a luxurious villa complex.

Each of these high-end villas came with a separate courtyard, very spacious, and close to the city center. To settle here would cost tens of millions at least.

Those who are friends with Nanrong Wanqing definitely wouldn't lack resources.

At that moment, seeing Tang Yuan waving from a distance, Ling Chen immediately drove towards him.

"You finally came back, kiddo. How did it go, did that bastard spill anything?" Tang Yuan asked eagerly.

Ling Chen grinned, full of pride, "With me involved, what can't be handled?"

"I knew you could do it. Alright, I'm heading back, we'll catch up when we have time."

Watching Tang Yuan drive away, Ling Chen stepped into the nearby villa. In the living room, he saw Nanrong Wanqing sitting in a wheelchair, chatting leisurely with a young couple, her lips revealing a faint smile.

Ling Chen tactfully didn't interrupt them and instead approached Zhong Wei and spoke to him in a low voice.

"Captain Zhong, are these two people directors' friends?"

"The woman is named Zhang Qianqian, a college classmate of the director from the past, and the man is Zhang Zekai, her older brother. I heard the Zhang Family is involved in the entertainment industry and quite famous in Beijing."

Ling Chen nodded and stood obediently aside, waiting for Nanrong Wanqing to be done with her visitors.

"When will you be going back, Wanqing?" Zhang Qianqian asked.

"I haven't decided yet, there's a lot going on at the company, I might leave tomorrow."

"Tomorrow? How about you postpone for two more days? There's Tang Shiyun's concert the day after tomorrow, let's go together."

Zhang Zekai chuckled, "My sister isn't usually into idol-chasing, but ever since she listened to Tang Shiyun's songs, she instantly switched lanes and became her devoted fan. Miss Nanrong, it's a rare opportunity for Tang Shiyun's first concert, why not stay an extra couple days and let us do our part as hospitable hosts."

"This..."

Nanrong Wanqing hesitated, she was very interested in experiencing Tang Shiyun's concert. Having listened to Tang Shiyun's songs on the car radio a while back, she had grown to like them.

Tang Shiyun's voice was like a magnet that firmly attracted her, irresistible. Listening to Tang Shiyun's songs in the quiet of the night was a great pleasure, as if bringing solace to a lonely heart.

"I heard her concert tickets are hard to get, won't it be too troublesome to arrange it at the last minute?"

Zhang Qianqian burst into laughter, "You don't have to worry about that at all, Wanqing, you might not be aware, but our Zhang Family is one of the sponsors for Tang Shiyun's concert, and Silver Star

Entertainment Company, which she signed with, has shares of our Zhang Family. In a sense, we're her bosses. Also..."

As she spoke, she cast a meaningful glance at Zhang Zekai beside her, her tone ambiguous, "That Tang Shiyun seems to have taken a liking to my brother, always coming over to our house after rehearsal these days, cozying up to him. Right, big brother?"

Chapter 184 Zhang Zekai

Hearing this, Zhong Wei and the others looked at Zhang Zekai with envious eyes.

Being favored by Tang Shiyun was not a treatment just anyone could enjoy. If it were a month ago, probably no one would care. But now it's different, Tang Shiyun had become a red-hot singing star, and the crown of the future queen of the music scene would undoubtedly fall on her head.

Feeling Nanrong Wanqing's gaze on him, Zhang Zekai curled his lips, slightly proud, "Shiyun is a good girl, but I don't want to hinder her future because of feelings, moreover, I need to prioritize my career now. As for what's between us, let's talk about it later."

"Big brother, Shiyun is so beautiful and talented, if you don't make a move now, be careful that someone else will snatch her away," Zhang Qianqian joked.

"Sister, you underestimate your brother's charm. What's mine will eventually be mine; why should I worry?"

Ling Chen, standing to the side, curled his lip. Although he didn't take it to heart, he still felt a bit annoyed inside. This guy really thinks highly of himself. What kind of person Tang Shiyun is, how could he not know? By the sound of Zhang Zekai's words, it seemed as if Tang Shiyun had set her heart on him.

However, despite what he thought, who didn't know that the entertainment industry, while glamorous on the surface, is actually the filthiest place? His biggest worry was that Tang Shiyun would be contaminated. After all, Tang Shiyun is quite young, not even twenty years old. She went from an unknown girl to a nation-famous singing star overnight. This change was too huge for her.

In just over a month, he didn't know if she had changed.

"Wanqing, how about this, stay for dinner tonight, and then I'll get my brother to call Tang Shiyun over, so everyone can get acquainted. How about it?" Zhang Qianqian suggested.

Nanrong Wanqing was immediately intrigued. Ever since hearing Tang Shiyun's songs, she had been curious, wanting to see what kind of girl could sing such beautiful songs.

Seeing her not speaking, Zhang Qianqian could guess her thoughts and smiled, "Big brother, give Tang Shiyun a call later and invite her for dinner."

"Sure, no problem, leave it to me."

Ling Chen, listening to the trio's conversation, his eyes slightly lit up. If Tang Shiyun was coming, wouldn't that mean he could see her? At this thought, he couldn't help but get excited.

It had been so long since they saw each other; to say he didn't miss her would be a lie. In his heart, Tang Shiyun always held great importance.

In the blink of an eye, it was evening.

In the living room, Zhang Qianqian glanced at the time and said dissatisfied, "Big brother, it's almost dinner time, why hasn't Tang Shiyun arrived yet?"

"No rush, I've called her already. There's a concert in two days, she definitely needs to focus more on rehearsals, it's normal for her to be late."

While talking, a man dressed like a butler approached Zhang Zekai and whispered a few words in his ear.

Not knowing what was said, Zhang Zekai's face changed slightly, and a trace of anger could be seen in his eyes. Zhang Qianqian, sitting next to him, asked, "Big brother, what's wrong?"

"Nothing." Zhang Zekai forced a smile, stood up, and said, "Qianqian, keep Miss Nanrong company for a while, I've got something urgent, I'll be right back." After speaking, he followed the butler towards the stairs.

Upstairs, Zhang Zekai's smile faded, and he said coldly, "Talk, what happened?"

"Mr. Zhang, Tang Miss's agent just called, saying she's occupied with rehearsals tonight and can't make it to the dinner."

"No time?" Zhang Zekai scoffed, "She really knows how to find excuses, tell her if she dares not to come, I'll make sure she'll have no good days ahead. Hmmph, doesn't she realize her current fame is all because of who supported her? I made her famous, and I can make her worthless."

The butler nodded, understanding, "Yes, Mr. Zhang, I know what to do."

"Tell her to hurry up, she must show up in front of me within half an hour, I don't want to offend the distinguished guests."

"Yes."

Back in the living room, Zhang Zekai beamed with a spring breeze and said, "Miss Nanrong, sorry for the wait, I just contacted Shiyun, she's already back at the hotel, she'll be here in half an hour."

"No worries, I'm not in a rush." As she spoke, Nanrong Wanqing waved towards Zhong Wei. He quickly walked over and leaned forward, "Director, any instructions?"

"You've worked hard too, go have dinner first, and don't stay by my side later. This is the Zhang Family, there won't be any danger."

"Understood, Director."

At once, Zhong Wei withdrew all the security, including Ling Chen.

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In Beijing's sports arena, the stage was already set up, and over twenty staff members were assembling lighting equipment.

On the stage, a youthful and beautiful girl stood vividly in the center, holding a microphone, coordinating with the surrounding band for the final rehearsal for the concert in two days.

At this moment, a middle-aged man hurried onto the stage and gestured to everyone, "Stop, everyone stop."

The girl looked at the man, puzzled, "Mr. Zhu, what's wrong?"

"Shiyun, President Zhang's side just called again, asking you to hurry over."

"Again?" Tang Shiyun's face tensed, displeased, "Didn't I just refuse?"

"Sigh, there's no helping it, he insists you go," Zhu Yansong said helplessly. "Shiyun, if you ask me, you should just go. After all, he's the boss, and we can't disregard his wishes."

"Mr. Zhu, you know that Zhang Zekai always finds excuses to invite me to his place, trying to take advantage of me. I really detest this type of person."

"Look, I know you don't want to deal with him, but this industry is like this, many things are done out of necessity. You are a newcomer and haven't secured your standing yet, it's best not to offend those people, otherwise, it could negatively impact your future career."

"Mr. Zhu, I just want to sing my songs well and make this concert a success."

"I understand your feelings; you're a good girl, and I don't want you to be tarnished by the industry's bad culture, but sometimes reality is just like that. Every new artist goes through this. Don't worry, it's

just a dinner with guests, if he dares to touch you or act inappropriately, even if I lose this job, I'll stand up for you."

Amidst this discussion, a middle-aged woman approached. The woman, around forty, was somewhat overweight, with a thick layer of makeup on her face, wearing expensive clothes, a gold necklace, and a pair of gold bracelets.

However, her attire did not enhance her elegance but rather conveyed the crudeness of a nouveau riche.

"Mom, weren't you resting at the hotel?"

This middle-aged woman was none other than Tang Shiyun's mother, Yao Li.

Chapter 185 Keeping the Appointment

"I know you've been working hard on rehearsals, so I came to see you and have dinner together. Mr. Zhu, you join us too, you've been tired these past few days."

"Mrs. Yao, you're here just in time, help me to persuade Shiyun."

"What's wrong?"

"Well, President Zhang would like to invite Shiyun to dinner to meet an important guest, but Shiyun is unwilling to go."

"President Zhang?" Yao Li recalled, "Isn't he that shareholder of Silver Star Entertainment?"

"Yes, that's him. He even hosted a welcome for you the other day when you were in Beijing. You've met him."

Hearing this, Yao Li frowned and lectured, "Daughter, President Zhang is inviting you over because he values you. How can you refuse?"

"Mom, that Zhang Zekai is not a good person, he's always handsy with me, and he even... he even made those unreasonable demands." Tang Shiyun was both aggrieved and angry.

Ever since she came to Beijing to prepare for the concert, Zhang Zekai had been calling her frequently, saying it was to discuss the concert. However, after a few visits, she realized that Zhang Zekai was far from a gentleman. Not only was he physically inappropriate with her, but he also said very lewd things and asked her to spend the night with him. Zhang Zekai even promised her that as long as she obeyed, he would ensure her huge success.

She often watched entertainment news and knew the industry was full of dirty deals and unwritten rules, but she never expected to experience it herself, nor that it would be proposed so blatantly, which was incredibly humiliating for her.

These past few days, Zhang Zekai had been calling her frequently to meet, but she ignored him. She no longer wanted anything to do with such scum.

Seeing her daughter's strong resistance, Yao Li patiently said, "You haven't even met him, how do you know he's not a good person? Daughter, he's a big boss, young and handsome, and comes from a wealthy family. It's your good fortune that he's interested in you, why not give it a try, perhaps..."

"Mom, stop talking, I'm not going." Tang Shiyun turned her head away impatiently, very determined.

Yao Li frowned and said, "You child, do you think you're so grown that you don't listen to your elders anymore?"

"Mom, I'm not a child anymore, I want to make my own decisions, please don't interfere so much."

Zhu Yansong, seeing Tang Shiyun not heeding advice, couldn't help but say, "Shiyun, I didn't want to mention this, but... alas, let me be clear, President Zhang has said that if you don't go, not only will this concert not happen, but he will also collaborate with other companies to ban you. The Zhang Family has been in the entertainment industry for many years and has built up many connections; just by his word, no one would dare to employ you. You already have such great fame; abandoning it halfway would be such a waste. Shiyun, you have to understand, once you are banned, you'll be left with nothing. The car, house, and money the company arranged for you, will all be taken back."

Tang Shiyun replied nonchalantly, "Let them ban me, I won't sell myself for money and fame, I can just live as an ordinary person."

"Daughter, that's not acceptable." Yao Li quickly took her hand, persuading, "Our family has only just escaped from hard times, you can't be so capricious. Do you want to go back to living in that old broken house? And your father is still in the hospital receiving treatment; if you lose your job, who will pay for all the medical bills? If you don't think for yourself, think about your parents. We're old and can't endure hardships anymore. If you have any filial piety, let us enjoy a few peaceful years. Listen to mom, go, it's just a dinner."

"Mom..." Tang Shiyun's eyes welled up, still somewhat hesitant.

"If you're worried, then I will accompany you," Zhu Yansong said.

Tang Shiyun looked at him, then at Yao Li, who had a nervous and hopeful face, sighed silently, and gently nodded her head.

"Good, that's my obedient daughter." Seeing her agree, Yao Li immediately turned her worries into joy and kissed her on the face.

"Mr. Zhu, thank you for your help."

"No worries. I personally trained Shiyun, and I don't want her to ruin her own future."

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Currently, in the resting room arranged by the Zhang Family, Zhong Wei and a few teammates are having dinner prepared by the chef. While chatting, Liang Zhao Hui sees Ling Chen holding a bowl of rice, standing in front of the window, occasionally looking outside, seemingly distracted, barely touching his food.

"Ling, what's wrong? Not hungry?"

"It's nothing." Ling Chen withdrew his gaze and sat back down with the rest.

Zhong Wei patted his shoulder and said, "It's okay. The president is a good person. Whatever conflict you have with her, it will eventually pass. Besides, if the president was really angry with you, she would have driven you away by now."

Ling Chen smiled faintly. Zhong Wei probably misunderstood; he was not thinking about his issues with Nanrong Wanqing, but about Tang Shiyun. He had no other thoughts but just wanted to take a distant look at her. As long as she is doing well, he is utterly content.

Before long, a luxury Mercedes-Benz slowly drove into the Zhang Family's residence and stopped in front of the mansion.

Upon receiving the notification from the butler, Zhang Zekai hurried to the front door, saw the car stopping, and immediately went to open the rear car door.

As the door opened, Tang Shiyun dressed in a white casual outfit paired with jeans, stepped down from the car. Although she is a widely popular singer, her attire was still modest and simple, without any flashy decorations. Her delicate face was also makeup-free, bare for all to see.

However, even without makeup, her natural beauty could not be concealed. Her soft skin, slightly prominent cute nose, beautiful features, and a pair of bright and sparkling eyes exuded a youthful aura.

Seeing Tang Shiyun's attire, Zhang Zekai frowned and dissatisfiedly said: "Why are you dressed like this, didn't I tell you the guests we are meeting are very important?"

Tang Shiyun glanced at Zhang Zekai, then shifted her gaze elsewhere and responded indifferently, "You asked me to come here within half an hour, I didn't have time to change."

"You..."

"President Zhang, hello, sorry to disturb you."

Zhang Zekai was about to scold her but then saw Zhu Yansong following out from the car.

"What are you doing here?"

"I..."

"Alright, it's none of your business, go back first." Before Zhu Yansong could finish, Zhang Zekai impatiently interrupted him. Saying this, he grabbed Tang Shiyun's hand and started walking towards the house.

"Be polite in front of the guests later, don't embarrass me," he whispered.

Tang Shiyun bit her lip corner and struggled a bit. However, the more she struggled, the tighter Zhang Zekai gripped, causing her hand to hurt, leaving her no choice but to comply as he held onto her.

Chapter 186 Coercion

Upon entering the living room, Zhang Qianqian saw Tang Shiyun and Zhang Zekai holding hands and couldn't help but burst into laughter, teasingly saying, "Big brother, do you really need to be all lovey-dovey in front of Wanqing and me? We're both single, you should at least consider our feelings."

"I'm used to it," Zhang Zekai smiled and let go of Tang Shiyun's hand gracefully, "Shiyun, let me introduce you. This is Nanrong Wanqing, an honored guest of the Zhang Family. You've been living in East Sea City for so many years, you must have heard of Miss Nanrong's reputation. She is the chairman of Hongyu Group."

Hearing this, Tang Shiyun couldn't help but take a few more glances at Nanrong Wanqing, her gaze carrying a hint of curiosity.

She was certainly familiar with Hongyu Group. It was precisely where Ling Chen used to work. She did not expect the chairman of Hongyu Group to be so young and stunningly beautiful. However... when she saw the wheelchair under Nanrong Wanqing, her eyes could not help but reveal a trace of surprise and pity.

Seeing Tang Shiyun hesitating to greet her, Zhang Zekai frowned slightly, full of apologies, "I'm sorry, Miss Nanrong, Shiyun is a bit reserved. Please don't mind her. Shiyun, hurry up and greet Miss Nanrong."

Upon hearing his reproachful tone, Tang Shiyun came back to her senses and spoke with a soft greeting.

"Miss Nanrong, hello."

"Hello, a pleasure to meet you," Nanrong Wanqing said with a faint smile, shaking hands with Tang Shiyun.

"Alright now, we're all friends here, no need to be too formal. Let's go, dinner is ready." After saying this, Zhang Qianqian pushed Nanrong Wanqing's wheelchair into the dining room.

Zhang Zekai, following after them with Tang Shiyun, said unhappily, "Smile more for me, don't look so stern in front of our guests, as if I've mistreated you."

Tang Shiyun had a cold expression, seemingly ignoring his words, and simply quickened her pace.

Seeing this, Zhang Zekai grabbed her hand, pulling her forcefully to his side, and said with a smile, "Since you're here, don't go back tonight. Stay and keep me company."

Hearing this, Tang Shiyun's face showed a touch of anger and she retorted indignantly, "Don't push your luck."

Zhang Zekai let out a cold laugh, "Your willingness to come shows that you care a lot about what you now have, so don't pretend to be pure with me. I've seen too many women like you — as long as you take good care of me, I will never treat you badly in the future."

"Don't even think about it, don't lump me with those women. I accepted the invitation because you are the boss, and I respect you for your position. If you think I would sell my body for material pleasures, then you are sorely mistaken."

"Shiyun, don't be naive. In this world, you have to give something to get something back. You women are actually very fortunate, because you have natural assets."

"Then go find other women, and leave me alone. I have things to do, goodbye!" She dropped the words and turned to leave.

"Stop right there! If you dare to step out this door, I'll make sure you never have a good day again. If not for yourself, think about your parents."

"Big brother, Shiyun, why aren't you coming over?"

Hearing Zhang Qianqian's voice coming from the dining room, Zhang Zekai spoke with as gentle a tone as he could muster, "If you really don't want to, then I won't force you. Go back after dinner, and we can talk about other things later."

"Really?" Tang Shiyun looked at him suspiciously.

"A twisted melon isn't sweet; I understand that principle. Come on, let's not keep them waiting too long."

Tang Shiyun hesitated for a moment and then gently nodded her head. It was best to let Zhang Zekai give up on his own; she did not wish for their relationship to become too strained.

Watching Tang Shiyun turn and walk towards the dining room, Zhang Zekai sneered coldly. She was indeed just a naive young girl, too easy to deceive.

Give up? For the woman that Mr. Zhang had his eyes on, how many could escape from the palm of his hand?

Arriving at the dining table, the chef had already prepared a lavish dinner.

Zhang Qianqian accompanied Nanrong Wanqing as they sat to one side, pointing to two adjacent seats and smiled, "Big brother, you sit with Shiyun, so you can't blame me for not being considerate."

Nanrong Wanqing looked at Tang Shiyun, who was taking her seat, and asked with interest, "Miss Tang, which part of East Sea City is your home in?"

"The Old City." After saying this, Tang Shiyun opened her mouth as if she wanted to say more but stopped herself, a hesitant look in her eyes.

Nanrong Wanqing noticed her expression and smiled, "Is there something you want to say, Miss Tang?"

"I... it's nothing." Feeling Zhang Zekai's gaze, Tang Shiyun swallowed back the words she was about to say. She had wanted to ask about Ling Chen's current situation, as they had lost contact since their last meeting at East Sea University, and she didn't know how her 'Brother Ling' was doing.

Besides, Nanrong Wanqing was the chairman of Hongyu Group, and with so many employees in the company, she might not recognize every single one.

"Miss Nanrong, you're about the same age as Qianqian, and Qianqian is already engaged. You must have someone in mind too, right?" Zhang Zekai picked a topic at random and asked.

"Not at the moment."

"Wanqing, you can't be so busy that you don't even have time to date, can you? Hey, I know quite a few handsome guys in Beijing, do you want me to introduce a few to you? Although they don't match up to you in terms of background, they're not too bad either."

"That won't be necessary, I'm currently focusing all my energy on the company and have no interest in thinking about such matters."

Zhang Zekai chuckled, "Qianqian, you need not worry about Miss Nanrong, with her qualifications, there's no man she can't find."

Nanrong Wanqing shook her head and gave a self-deprecating laugh.

No matter how rich she was, she was still a disabled person. In fact, these days she could not figure it out anymore and did not blame Ling Chen for being fickle. Everyone has the right to choose, and between herself and Zhu Xiaozhu, although her assets were greater than those of the Zhu Family, Zhu Xiaozhu's appearance and temperament were on par with her own, and more importantly, Zhu Xiaozhu had a healthy body.

In this regard, she could never compare to the other party. Thus, she could understand why Ling Chen was fond of Zhu Xiaozhu.

After some idle chatter, Nanrong Wanqing noticed that Tang Shiyun had her head down, face expressionless, and hadn't said a word as if she was quite averse to the dinner party. Not just her, Zhang Qianqian also noticed something off about Tang Shiyun and asked with concern, "Shiyun, why aren't you talking?"

"I..."

Zhang Zekai laughed as he took over the conversation, "She's been rehearsing for several days in a row, she must be tired." Finishing his sentence, he turned toward Tang Shiyun, "Why don't you go rest in my room for a bit."

"No need." Tang Shiyun stood up. "I'm going to the restroom, please continue without me."

Standing in the restroom, Tang Shiyun washed her face, gazing at her reflection in the mirror, feeling inexplicably exhausted.

She was just an ordinary girl, and becoming overnight sensation was something she had never imagined. Now having finally gotten used to this lifestyle, the ensuing issues were causing her endless troubles. Sometimes, she really wished to go back to the past; even though life was hard then, at least she could retain the innocence in her heart.

"If Brother Ling were here, he surely wouldn't let me be bullied," she quietly thought to herself.

But she knew clearly in her heart, that wish could never become reality.

After composing herself and thinking of the people waiting for her back at the table, she didn't dare to delay any longer, so she left the restroom and prepared to head back to the dining room.

However, at that moment, a young man suddenly emerged from a room along the corridor.

Seeing the person, Tang Shiyun was momentarily stunned, her lips parted slightly with an incredulous expression on her face.

Chapter 187 Long-Awaited Reunion

Watching the woman in front of him, Ling Chen was equally stunned. He had only wanted to go to the restroom and hadn't expected such a coincidence to run into Tang Shiyun.

Feeling the disbelief in Tang Shiyun's gaze, he couldn't help but grin: "Girl, don't you recognize me anymore?"

Hearing that familiar voice, Tang Shiyun finally realized that she wasn't dreaming; her beloved Ling was truly here.

"Ling!" She couldn't hold back and quickened her pace, opening her arms and trotting towards Ling Chen, wrapping her arms around his waist and burying herself in his embrace.

The warm hug, long missed, brought tears to her eyes, glistening and on the verge of falling.

Ling Chen gently patted her back and smiled: "Alright, alright, no crying, we should be happy to finally meet."

"Mhmm." Tang Shiyun, nestled in his embrace, replied softly, holding him tightly, unwilling to let go for a long time. Seeing Ling Chen was not just joy and excitement for her, but more importantly, it was a feeling of reliance. As long as she was in his arms, the grievances of the past days seemed to vanish into nothing.

Just then, the room door next to them was suddenly opened, and Zhong Wei, who had just stepped out, was startled to see this scene.

"Captain Zhong." Ling Chen coughed lightly, smiling sheepishly.

Seeing someone nearby, Tang Shiyun quickly lifted her head, leaning cutely against Ling Chen with a blush on her cheeks.

Zhong Wei hadn't clearly seen her face when she was leaning on Ling Chen earlier, so he hadn't reacted. But when he saw the familiar face that had appeared countless times on TV, his eyes widened instantly.

"Miss... Miss Tang..." He stammered, his voice full of disbelief.

"Girl, let me introduce you. This is Zhong Wei, my captain."

"Hello." Tang Shiyun greeted him politely.

"Hello... Hello, Miss Tang, I really enjoy your songs."

Tang Shiyun smiled sweetly: "Thank you!"

At this time, the people inside the room heard the commotion outside and squeezed their way to the doorway. Seeing Tang Shiyun, a group of burly men instantly turned into fanatical fans, excited about getting photos and autographs.

Since they were all friends of Ling Chen, Tang Shiyun naturally obliged and accommodated each one of their requests.

While Tang Shiyun was taking pictures with the other teammates, Zhong Wei pulled Ling Chen aside and quietly asked, "Bro, did you know her from before?"

"Yes."

"Then why didn't you tell me sooner?"

"You didn't ask."

"What was that... just now?" Zhong Wei didn't finish his sentence, but the suggestive smile in his eyes said it all.

Ling Chen blushed, "Why ask so many questions."

"Ling."

Tang Shiyun returned to his side with a smile, habitually wrapping her arm around his. This intimate gesture made Zhong Wei and the others green with envy, looking at Ling Chen with envy, jealousy, and resentment.

Ling Chen didn't mind and waved his hand, "We are going to step out first."

Leaving the room, Ling Chen suddenly thought of something and asked, "Didn't you come to have dinner? Are you done eating?"

"Not yet."

"Then why aren't you going back? You are still a guest after all, don't stay away for too long."

"I don't want to go."

"Why?"

"There's someone really annoying." Thinking of Zhang Zekai, Tang Shiyun pouted, her face full of displeasure.

"You mean Zhang Zekai?" Ling Chen immediately grasped her meaning.

Tang Shiyun nodded slightly.

Ling Chen's brows knitted as he asked, "What's wrong with him, did he bully you? Tell me about it."

"He..." Tang Shiyun's lips parted slightly, hesitation flickering through her bright eyes.

Seeing her hesitate to speak, Ling Chen couldn't help but urge, "What exactly did he do?"

"It's nothing, just a small matter." Tang Shiyun forced a smile, "Ling, let's talk about you instead, how have you been lately?"

She originally wanted to tell Ling Chen what Zhang Zekai had done to her, but after another thought, she decided against it. Although her Ling was skilled, Zhang Zekai had money and power, and she didn't want to cause trouble for Ling because of herself.

Watching the smile on her face, Ling Chen sighed internally, then took her hand and led her to the balcony, looked into her eyes, and said word by word, "Girl, if you still consider me your Ling, then tell me honestly, what exactly happened."

He might not be old, but his experiences far surpassed those of Tang Shiyun. Tang Shiyun's forced cheerfulness didn't fool him; he could see that the girl definitely had something on her mind but was afraid to speak. The more she acted this way, the more he believed that Tang Shiyun must have been wronged.

Under Ling Chen's gaze, Tang Shiyun's eyes started to dodge, "Ling, I... I haven't..."

"If you keep this up, it means that I'm not important in your eyes, you never used to hide things from me."

"No, that's not it." Tang Shiyun quickly shook her head, "Ling, I... can I talk now?"

Then, she collected her emotions and narrated the incident she had encountered. Upon hearing her story, Ling Chen's face turned ashen, and a nameless anger shone from his eyes.

Tang Shiyun had his full support on her chosen path, but he was equally worried. Everyone knew that the industry was treacherous, full of dirty dealings and unspoken rules, and the last thing he wanted was for Tang Shiyun to fall victim to such things.

But still, Tang Shiyun couldn't avoid it.

Zhang Zekai! He sneered inwardly, a glint of sharpness in his eyes. Quite the nerve, to bully Tang Shiyun.

He took a deep breath to quell the rage in his heart, gently stroked Tang Shiyun's hair, and said gently, "Girl, don't be afraid, Ling will stand up for you in this matter. If anyone dares to bully you in the future, just tell me, and I'll make sure they regret it."

"Don't. Ling, I heard from Mr. Zhu that Zhang Zekai's family is very powerful. Better not to provoke him. Zhang Zekai also promised me just now that he will not bother me anymore, let's just forget about this, shall we?"

"Silly girl, you believe his words? In this industry, you can't be too naive, or you'll suffer a great loss."

"But..."

"Enough!" Ling Chen cut her off, "Don't keep on with the 'buts.' I'll handle this matter and make him not dare to harass you anymore." After a pause, he added, "I know you're worried about me, but rest assured, it's always been your Ling who bullies others; no one can bully me."

"Okay." Tang Shiyun nodded softly, her delicate face showing a sweet smile, feeling delighted within.

Her Ling was still the same Ling, who would always stand up for her no matter what.

"Girl, you go back first, and I'll come over to find you later."

Chapter 188 A Rage for a Beauty

Reluctantly parting from Ling Chen, Tang Shiyun returned to the restaurant.

"Sorry to keep everyone waiting."

"Shiyun, are you feeling unwell? Why did it take you so long?" Zhang Zekai asked with concern on his face.

"It's nothing." Tang Shiyun sat down again, her pretty face always wearing a sweet smile.

Nanrong Wanqing couldn't help but take a few more glances at her. She could feel the change in Tang Shiyun, especially her smile. As the chairwoman of Hongyu Group, she was adept at reading people, and Tang Shiyun's smile before seemed forced, but now it was genuinely heartfelt.

She was curious about why Tang Shiyun underwent such a significant change.

After dinner, the four returned to the living room.

Zhang Zekai called the butler and instructed, "Have the driver take Miss Tang back first." After finishing, he explained to Nanrong Wanqing, "Shiyun has rehearsals tonight and cannot stay long."

"It's okay, I am already very happy that Miss Tang could come. Miss Tang, when you return to East Sea City, you are welcome to visit my home anytime. My sister also really likes your songs," Nanrong Wanqing invited.

"Thank you!" Tang Shiyun smiled faintly and then turned to Zhang Zekai, "I don't want to go back yet, can I stay a little longer?"

Hearing this, Zhang Zekai immediately beamed with joy, his eyes filled with excitement as he quickly nodded, "Of course, no problem. You can stay as long as you like."

In his view, Tang Shiyun's willingness to stay likely meant she had considered his conditions and was willing to accept them. The thought of possibly spending a romantic evening together made him restless inside.

After chatting for a while, Nanrong Wanqing suddenly saw Zhong Wei approaching. He came to her side and whispered, "Chairwoman, when are you planning to go back to the hotel?"

"Is there something wrong?"

"Nothing's wrong, just... Ling Chen asked me to relay a message; he suggests you return soon."

"Why?"

"He said you might not want to see what happens next. It's better to avoid it."

Hearing this, Nanrong Wanqing slightly furrowed her brows. Asking her to avoid, what exactly does he intend to do?

"Go back and tell him, I will arrange my return to the hotel myself, he doesn't need to make decisions for me." After saying this, she couldn't help but instruct, "Tell him from me, since we are guests at someone else's house, ask him to behave and not stir up trouble."

"Yes," Zhong Wei nodded and left.

Not long after Zhong Wei left, Ling Chen appeared alone in the living room.

Seeing him approaching, Tang Shiyun's smile deepened, her eyes unblinkingly fixed on him.

Nanrong Wanqing's gaze followed Ling Chen, wondering inside, what is he up to?

While pondering, Ling Chen had already walked up to the sofa and sat down as if no one else was there.

Zhang Zekai recognized him as Nanrong Wanqing's security, so he did not get angry because of his rudeness, instead, he looked at Nanrong Wanqing with a questioning look in his eyes.

"You don't need to look at her. I am not here as a security personnel of Hongyu Group, but in a personal capacity to find you."

"To find me?" Zhang Zekai was puzzled, "What do you need me for?"

Ling Chen chuckled and patted his shoulder, grinning, "President Zhang, you're really something, using your status to mess around with quite a few celebrities, huh?"

As soon as these words were spoken, Zhang Zekai's face changed instantly, a hint of hidden anger in his frown as he said, "You better watch your mouth."

"I'm already being very polite."

"Ling Chen, don't be rude," Nanrong Wanqing chided softly.

Ling Chen glanced at her and said indifferently, "Didn't you hear what I just said? I'm not talking to him as an employee of Hongyu Group, so you have no right to tell me what to do."

After saying that, he completely ignored the anger in Nanrong Wanqing's eyes and turned to look at Zhang Zekai, smilingly said, "President Zhang, a man should own up to what he does. Are you afraid to admit the things you have done? Okay, let's not talk about distant things; let's talk about what just happened. You must be very familiar with Miss Tang. You must be very clear about the unreasonable

demands you made on her before. I'm someone who always stands up against injustices and can't help but get involved when I see things that displease me."

"What do you mean by that?" Zhang Qianqian said angrily, "My elder brother and Miss Tang have mutual affection. He has never forced her into anything, don't falsely accuse him."

Zhang Zekai waved his hand, signaling his sister to be quiet.

"You think you can control me?" He sneered disdainfully, "Do you think you're qualified to control me? If you weren't Miss Nanrong's security, you wouldn't even have the qualification to enter this door, yet you dare to be so presumptuous in front of me. Hmph! Since you repeatedly claim you came here in a personal capacity, I have nothing to discuss with you. Butler, kick this man out."

Watching several men in suits quickly approaching, Ling Chen's mouth slightly raised, appearing undisturbed, his gaze fixed on Zhang Zekai.

"President Zhang, I came here to reason with you, it's best not to resort to violence."

Zhang Zekai scoffed and turned his head, not interested in giving Ling Chen another glance. However, realizing that Nanrong Wanqing was nearby, he quickly halted the men in suits and said, "Miss Nanrong, I hope you don't mind how I handle this?"

Nanrong Wanqing replied expressionlessly, "As you wish."

At this moment, aside from being furious, she was more puzzled, not understanding why Ling Chen was standing up for Tang Shiyun. From what Ling Chen had said earlier, she roughly understood the reason.

The entertainment industry is notoriously chaotic and filled with hidden rules. As a leading figure in the entertainment industry, Zhang Zekai undoubtedly engaged in many of these sordid transactions using his status.

Yet, if what Ling Chen said was true, that Zhang Zekai harbored ill intentions towards Tang Shiyun, then this man was indeed detestable. Treating a girl who had just turned eighteen like that, what's the difference between him and a beast?

Seeing Nanrong Wanqing's stance, Zhang Zekai immediately breathed a sigh of relief and gave a signal to the men in suits.

Seeing those men in suits fiercely approaching Ling Chen, Tang Shiyun suddenly became worried, gripping her clothes tightly.

But Ling Chen seemed to not even see the suits closing in, his gaze still locked on Zhang Zekai.

"Get up."

One of the men in suits barked, reaching out to grab Ling Chen's shoulder.

But at that moment, the still-seated Ling Chen suddenly made a move, fiercely grabbing the back of Zhang Zekai's neck and forcefully pulling forward.

Bang!

A crisp sound.

Zhang Zekai's face heavily smashed onto the transparent glass coffee table, shattering the glass completely.

This sudden turn of events stunned everyone present. No one had expected Ling Chen to actually attack Zhang Zekai directly, and with such severity.

Zhang Zekai clutched his face, continuously crying out in pain, as blood gushed from his nostrils, quickly flowing through his fingers and staining his white shirt red.

Chapter 189 Accusation

"Ling Chen, you... you dare to hurt my big brother." Zhang Qianqian looked at Ling Chen with a face full of shock and anger, yelling at her own bodyguards: "What are you waiting for? Hurry up and throw him out."

Ling Chen raised an eyebrow, grasped Zhang Zekai's neck again, and pressed his head down towards the shattered coffee table. Although the glass was broken, there were still countless tiny shards scattered around.

"Whoever dares to touch me, try it. I'll let him taste what it's like to have his face ruined," he said, sweeping his gaze over the suited men. Sure enough, they hesitated and stepped back, not daring to come forward.

Zhang Zekai endured the pain in his face and roared fiercely: "Ling Chen, do you know who I am? If you dare to touch a hair on me, I'll make you regret it for the rest of your life."

"Do you think I'd be afraid?" Ling Chen said, putting a bit more pressure on his hand, pressing Zhang Zekai's head closer to the coffee table and even nearer to the glass shards.

"Ling Chen, don't... don't be impulsive. Let's talk this out," Zhang Qianqian said in panic, afraid that Ling Chen would ruin her big brother's face. After saying that, she looked at Nanrong Wanqing for help, "Wanqing, he's your subordinate. Tell him to let go of my big brother right now."

Nanrong Wanqing let out a bitter smile and shook her head gently, "I'm sorry, my words are useless, he won't listen to me at all."

After all the events she had been through, she understood Ling Chen's character too well. Whatever he wanted to do, it would be impossible for her to stop him. After thinking for a moment, she advised, "President Zhang, he means what he says. It's best not to antagonize him."

Hearing this and looking at the glass shards within arm's reach, Zhang Zekai secretly swallowed hard, feeling somewhat fearful. He believed that Nanrong Wanqing wouldn't lie to him. This man before him was someone who didn't play by the rules—if he dared to start a fight in his own home, what wouldn't he dare to do?

"What do you really want?"

"I already asked you, did you or did you not make indecent propositions to Miss Tang?"

"I... I didn't, you must be mistaken. You can ask her."

Ling Chen looked amused, "Still refusing to admit it? Girl, tell him if I have wronged him."

"He threatened me, said that I should spend a night with him. If I didn't agree, he would work with other companies to blacklist me, ensuring that I'd never succeed."

After hearing Tang Shiyun's words, Zhang Zekai immediately shouted: "No, that's nonsense, I didn't..."

Ling Chen shrugged, "Since you won't admit it, there's nothing more to be said. The Zhang Family is so wealthy, spending a few million on plastic surgery must be trivial for you." After saying that, he pressed his large hand on Zhang Zekai's head, ready to push it down.

"No, no..." Zhang Zekai was terrified, quickly saying, "I... I admit it, I did make that request."

"Big brother, how... how could you do such a thing?" Zhang Qianqian looked at him incredulously.

Nanrong Wanqing didn't say anything. She just looked at Zhang Zekai with a hint of disgust.

Ling Chen smiled, released his hand, helped brush the glass shards off of him, and said with a grin, "You should have admitted it earlier, it would have saved you so much pain. President Zhang, remember this. If you dare to disrespect Miss Tang again, don't blame me for not warning you beforehand. If you end up missing limbs, don't blame me."

With that, he got up and walked out with Tang Shiyun.

"Stop right there, Ling!"

Hearing Zhang Zekai's furious voice from behind, Ling Chen turned and asked, "Is there anything else?"

"After injuring me, do you think you can just walk out that door?" Zhang Zekai's face turned ashen with sinister glints in his eyes.

Ling Chen glanced over the suited men and said indifferently, "If you want to fight, I'm game. But with just these few, you can't keep me here. You might as well call for more people."

"Don't worry, they won't touch you. I'm not so crass as to settle things by fighting. This is Beijing, where everything is subject to the law. I've called the police, and you wait to be held responsible. At the police station, there will be someone to 'take care' of you properly," said Zhang Zekai, his lips curling with a smug sneer.

Ling Chen laughed, "So President Zhang also knows the law. That's good; we'll have company at the police station. I intentionally harmed someone, and you are threatening and intimidating. If we're lucky, we might end up in the same detention cell."

"Hmph! You just laugh now, but I doubt you'll be laughing later."

"Fine, since you've called the police, I'll wait and see how the police handle it. Girl, come, sit here."

Tang Shiyun worriedly said, "Ling, let's... let's just go." She was afraid Ling Chen would get arrested by the police.

Ling Chen patted her hand with a smile, indicating that she needn't worry.

Soon after, more than a dozen police officers finally arrived at the Zhang Family residence.

"Director Liu?"

Seeing the middle-aged man leading the way, Zhang Zekai was slightly surprised, and hurriedly went up to greet him, politely saying, "Director Liu, this is just a small matter. Why trouble yourself to lead the team in person?"

The man before him, Director Liu, was a high-ranking official at the municipal office. He had to be respectful even when encountering him, not daring to be impolite. To personally show up tonight was truly surprising.

"If there is trouble at the Zhang Family residence, of course, I have to take it seriously."

Hearing this, Zhang Zekai said with a smile, "Director Liu, you're giving too much face."

"Alright, let's get down to business." Director Liu looked around at the crowd and asked, "Where's the person you're talking about?"

Zhang Zekai pointed at Ling Chen and said fiercely, "It's this guy. I want to charge him with intentional injury. Director Liu, you must help me handle him properly."

"Don't worry, I will handle it impartially."

Director Liu nodded, turned to Ling Chen, looked him over, and asked, "Are you Ling Chen?"

"Yes, that's me. May I ask how I should address you?"

"Liu Geng."

Ling Chen pulled Tang Shiyun closer, grinned, and said, "Director Liu, Miss Tang would like to file a complaint against President Zhang for threats and intimidation. I hope you can help with the issue and give Miss Tang some justice."

"No problem." Liu Geng signaled to several police officers, "Take Ling Chen and Miss Tang away, and also bring Mr. Zhang back to the police station."

Seeing two police officers approaching him, ready to escort him away, Zhang Zekai was dumbfounded and quickly said, "Director Liu, did you arrest the wrong person?"

"I didn't make a mistake. Miss Tang just filed a complaint against you for threats and intimidation, and I'm taking you back for further investigation. Is there a problem?"

"It's not... Director Liu, can you delay my matter and deal with Ling Chen first?" Zhang Zekai was frustrated; Liu Geng was not following the unspoken rules and even arresting him.

Liu Geng ignored him and said sternly, "When someone charges you, I have the right to arrest you. If you have any problems, we can discuss them back at the police station. Take him away!"

Chapter 190 Reversal

Zhang Zekai wanted to say something more, but the two police officers had already forcibly escorted him to the door.

"Wait a minute! Wait a minute! Director Liu, may I have a word with you in private?"

"Sorry, whatever you have to say, we can discuss it back at the station. Take him away." After speaking, Liu Geng turned to look at Ling Chen and Tang Shiyun, making an unexpectedly courteous gesture, "Mr. Ling, Miss Tang, this way please!"

Seeing Liu Geng's attitude toward Ling Chen, everyone present was momentarily stunned. Especially Zhang Zekai, who could hardly believe his own ears. In front of himself, Liu Geng was extremely strict, but in Ling Chen's presence, he suddenly became polite, an obvious case of differential treatment.

Thinking of this, he looked at Ling Chen with a hint of surprise in his eyes. It wasn't just him; even Nanrong Wanqing was incredibly astonished. She was certain that Liu Geng and Ling Chen had only just met; otherwise, they wouldn't have needed to exchange names.

On one side was Zhang Zekai being pushed by two police officers, and on the other was Liu Geng courteously accompanying Ling Chen and Tang Shiyun. The treatment seemed to imply that Zhang Zekai was the criminal, while Ling Chen and Tang Shiyun had become guests of the police station.

Zhang Zekai was at a loss; having been in the entertainment industry for so long, he had picked up the skill of reading people to an extent. Liu Geng's attitude served as a signal, but for him, it was undoubtedly a dangerous one.

The Zhang Family was wealthy, but their influence and connections were mainly in the business world, with little involvement in political circles, as the topic between officials and merchants was sensitive, and nobody dared to tread lightly.

But after all, the phrase is "officials first, merchants second," signifying that officials have never feared businessmen throughout history.

If it were not for this fact, with Zhang Zekai's status, he wouldn't be so respectful and polite to a city police chief.

He thought of himself as having several dealings with Liu Geng, enough to be considered acquainted, and assumed that the latter would certainly take his side. Who could have expected Liu Geng to side with Ling Chen? Could it be... he suddenly thought of something and shuddered.

"Director Liu, Director Liu!"

"What's the matter now?" Liu Geng seemed somewhat impatient.

Zhang Zekai said with an apologetic smile, "That... Director Liu, I... I won't press charges."

"You're not pressing charges?"

"Yes, yes, I won't press charges. It was a misunderstanding just now; I don't blame them."

Liu Geng, with hands clasped behind his back, asked with a semi-smile, "Then where did those injuries on your face come from?"

"I... I accidentally tripped over."

"Really?" Liu Geng smiled faintly but then his expression suddenly turned stern, and he scolded: "If it was indeed yourself who caused the injury, then why did you accuse them of intentional injury? That's defamation, and that itself is a criminal act, do you understand?"

"I...I..." Zhang Zekai's forehead was sweating, unable to find any words to defend himself.

Seeing his flustered manner, Ling Chen said with a relaxed smile, "I suppose President Zhang just wanted to have a little fun with us. That's it, right, President Zhang?"

Zhang Zekai quickly nodded, "Yes, yes, just having fun. Director Liu, it was really just a misunderstanding."

"Fine, since you admit it's a misunderstanding, I won't pursue the matter with Mr. Ling. But about Miss Tang... Miss Tang, you just accused Mr. Zhang of threatening and intimidating, is that also...?"

Tang Shiyun glanced at Ling Chen, saw him giving her a sign with his eyes, and quickly said, "Actually, that matter was also a misunderstanding. Director Liu, I'm sorry for causing you trouble."

"Trouble, not really, but in the future make sure you're clear on matters and don't create problems out of nothing. I don't have that much free time to deal with your issues. Alright, that's it!" After the speech, Liu Geng prepared to leave with his subordinates.

Reaching the doorway, Liu Geng suddenly came back to his senses and gestured to Zhang Zekai, who understood and quickly walked over.

"Director Liu, is there anything else?"

Liu Geng sternly warned, "Be careful from now on, and don't bring trouble upon your Zhang Family. Do you hear me?"

Zhang Zekai was inwardly shocked and said in a low voice, "Director Liu, you've known my father for so many years, for my father's sake, can you hint to me, is it because of that Ling Chen...?"

"Don't ask what you shouldn't ask. There are things you are not yet qualified to know," Liu Geng cut him off, "You better watch yourself."

Watching Liu Geng leave, Zhang Zekai wiped the cold sweat from his forehead, inwardly lamenting. Liu Geng's last words, although not explicit, indirectly confirmed his guess.

If Ling Chen did not have a significant background, Liu Geng would never have shown such wariness. Even Director Liu dared not openly speak of Ling Chen's identity, which indicated his significant backing. Thinking of this, Zhang Zekai wished he could slap himself for offending a big shot for no good reason, and the future fallout for the Zhang Family could be severe.

Back in the living room, Ling Chen sat on the sofa with his legs crossed, silent, his gaze playfully watching Zhang Zekai as he entered.

"President Zhang, have a seat. Our conversation isn't finished yet."

"Yes, yes." Zhang Zekai didn't dare to be negligent and sat down properly, constantly shifting, clearly uneasy. Especially upon seeing Ling Chen's half-smiling expression, he felt apprehensive.

"Mr. Ling, I was too impulsive just now. Please don't take it to heart," he hesitated and chose to apologize proactively.

The attitude of Director Liu just now had convinced him that Ling Chen was someone of significance. Liu Geng was a man of the political scene, and only the son of a high-ranking political official could be treated with such decorum. At that moment, his mind was racing, recalling families that matched the surname Ling.

Seeing Zhang Zekai's anxious demeanor, Ling Chen could easily see through his thoughts and secretly chuckled.

Before causing trouble for Zhang Zekai, he had called General Qiao Zhen, seeking some help. Qiao Zhen would typically not involve himself in such minor matters. However, a few days ago, he had stated that he wanted to reward Ling Chen for his merits, which Ling Chen had tactfully declined.

Taking advantage of this opportunity, he asked for a favor from General Qiao Zhen, believing that the General, out of respect for his services, wouldn't refuse.

As for the police's arrival, it was within his expectations. He knew well that making a scene would inevitably alert the police because of the Zhang Family, hence he asked the General to give the police station a prior notice. He did not expect the General to be so generous, to send the city police chief himself, giving ample face to Ling Chen.

"Enough of that, how do you intend to handle Miss Tang's case?"

"That... May I know what Mr. Ling suggests?"

"It's quite simple. Terminate Miss Tang's contract with Silver Star Entertainment, restoring her freedom, and as for future issues, you don't need to worry, it's none of your business. Also, after the contract is canceled, the concert will proceed as planned. If I find that you're conspiring with other companies to trip up Miss Tang, what happened today will seem like child's play. Understand?"

Zhang Zekai hastily replied, "Mr. Ling, I've realized my mistake, I promise I won't harass Shiyun again, could you please..."

"Stop, don't call her Shiyun, call her Miss Tang. You two aren't at that stage yet," Ling Chen interrupted him disapprovingly.