

The Beauty 991

Chapter 991 Rehearsal

Ling wandered around the base camp for a moment and saw that everything was well-organized, which relieved him. This was thanks to Zhou Qi's help, as the experienced housekeeper made sure Ling didn't have to worry about any daily matters.

Seeing that there was nothing else to do, Ling bid farewell to Tang Guolun and left the base camp alone.

On the drive towards Wealthy Manor, Ling suddenly passed the sports arena of East Sea City. Seeing the huge posters outside, he immediately pulled his car over to the side of the road. Last time he called Tang Shiyun, it was her agent who answered and informed him that Tang Shiyun had been rehearsing at the arena for the concert taking place in half a month.

Since he was passing by the arena and had nothing else to do, why not visit Tang Shiyun? It had been a while since he last saw the girl, and Ling missed her a lot.

After getting out of the car, Ling bought some fruit from a nearby stall and carried two large bags towards the arena entrance. Before he even reached the entrance, he saw a large crowd of fans gathered outside, holding banners and posters of Tang Shiyun. It seemed they were waiting for her appearance.

Wow!

Ling couldn't help but marvel at the allure of a celebrity.

As he pondered this, he arrived at the entrance but was stopped by several security guards stationed outside. Ling had no choice but to call Tang Shiyun. As expected, it was still her agent who answered.

After waiting outside for about five minutes, a woman in high heels, about 1.7 meters tall, came out from inside the arena.

The woman was dressed in a mature style, appearing to be around thirty years old. Although her looks were ordinary, she exuded a certain intellectual air unique to sophisticated women.

"Mr. Ling, I'm very sorry to have kept you waiting." The woman quickly approached Ling and apologized with embarrassment.

"It's alright." Ling smiled slightly, "I should be the one apologizing for disturbing your work."

"Not at all, Mr. Ling coming to see Shiyun's rehearsal will surely make her very happy. Oh, I forgot to introduce myself, I'm Xu Hong, Shiyun's agent. It's nice to meet you, please take care of me."

"You're too kind, Miss Xu." Ling politely shook hands with her.

"Mr. Ling, let's go. I'll take you inside."

Watching Xu Hong walk ahead, Ling nodded lightly. She was indeed a nice person, polite and modest, much easier to get along with than Tang Shiyun's previous agent.

With Xu Hong leading the way, Ling soon arrived at the center of the arena. Since the concert was set to take place in half a month, the main stage had already been set up, and staff were installing lights and screens on it.

In the center of the main stage, Tang Shiyun, dressed in loose casual clothing and holding a microphone, was rehearsing a dance with a group of dancers. It seemed like the rehearsal had been going on for a while, as sweat was streaming down her forehead, and her singing voice was slightly breathless.

Watching Tang Shiyun's earnest rehearsal, Xu Hong smiled and said, "Miss Tang is a very talented and hardworking artist. Even though her talent is several times stronger than others, she never slacks off and always strives to improve herself and become more perfect." With that, Xu Hong turned to look at Ling, "Mr. Ling, do you know what Shiyun usually talks to me about?"

"What does she talk about?"

"You."

"Me?" Ling pointed to his own nose and asked, confused, "What's there to talk about me?"

"Every time Miss Tang talks about you, she becomes very happy, as if you're the only one who can bring a smile to her face. To be honest, Miss Tang's life is rather dull, often flying across the country to attend various events. Sometimes, she genuinely feels tired of it, but there's nothing she can do to refuse. After all, she's already stepped into this world and must abide by its rules; many things are unavoidable for her. Also, Miss Tang's personality has become somewhat reclusive, not very fond of socializing with others. Of course, you can't blame her entirely; many men approach Miss Tang with ulterior motives. Over time, she's grown tired of it. Instead of faking interactions with others, she'd rather stay alone at home."

After hearing Xu Hong's words, Ling couldn't help but feel somewhat guilty. Recently, he'd been caught up with his own matters, seldom paying attention to Tang Shiyun's life. He thought since she was now successful and famous, she must have been living happily. But after listening to Xu Hong, he realized that Tang Shiyun's life wasn't as good as he thought; maybe materially it was rich, but her spiritual life was very empty.

"Why didn't you let her call me?"

"I suggested it, but Miss Tang said you were busy, and she didn't want to disturb your work."

"I..." Ling opened his mouth but then swallowed his words. He vaguely remembered Tang Shiyun had called him twice, but at those times, he was dealing with important matters and didn't have the time to chat, so he hung up after a few brief words. Probably because of this, Tang Shiyun didn't want to call him again.

Thinking this, Ling couldn't help but silently curse himself. It was all his fault that Tang Shiyun ended up this way.

As they spoke, the rehearsal on the main stage had come to an end. Xu Hong walked forward, clapping her hands, "Alright! That's it for today, everyone worked hard. Let's go have a break."

"Sister Hong, it's only been two hours, isn't it too early to rest?" Tang Shiyun said while wiping the sweat off her forehead.

"Shiyun, look who's here." Xu Hong smiled and pointed at Ling.

Seeing Ling standing beneath the stage, Tang Shiyun was dumbfounded and didn't regain her senses for quite a while.

Seeing this, Ling took the initiative to step onto the stage, looking at the stunned Tang Shiyun, and said with a smile, "What, don't recognize me anymore?"

"Ling... Ling!" Tang Shiyun mumbled, rubbing her eyes hard, as if she couldn't believe Ling was really there.

Ling gently patted her head with affection and said with a smile, "Silly girl, you got it right, it's me."

"Ling, you finally came to see me." Tang Shiyun opened her arms wide, tightly hugging Ling's waist, burying her head in his chest with a happy smile blooming on her delicate face.

Ling smiled slightly, gently patting Tang Shiyun's back, and said, "Why didn't you tell me when you returned to East Sea City? I always thought you were still away."

Tang Shiyun said shyly, "... I was afraid of bothering you."

"Silly girl." Ling used his finger to flick Tang Shiyun's nose and said with feigned annoyance, "Even if you did bother me, I'd still be happy."

Chapter 992 The Greedy Mother (1)

"Ling, are you free today?"

"Not much to do. When I passed by the gymnasium earlier, I thought about you rehearsing here, so I came to check on you. How about it, do you have time? Maybe we can grab dinner together tonight?"

"Sure!" Tang Shiyun nodded happily, "But there's still a lot of time until dinner. You... you're not planning to leave, right?"

Ling Chen smiled slightly, "Don't worry, I'm not going anywhere today. I'll stay by your side and keep you company. How about that?"

Hearing this, Tang Shiyun linked arms with Ling Chen, beaming with joy, "I knew you were the best, Ling." She then rolled her eyes and whispered, "Ling, why don't we go shopping this afternoon? I haven't been out for ages."

"No problem." Ling Chen nodded and said, "You're the boss today. Whatever you say goes, I'm all ears."

"Yay!" Tang Shiyun excitedly made a peace sign, then turned to Xu Hong and said, "Hong, I'm skipping rehearsal this afternoon. Can you organize things for me?"

"Sure," Xu Hong replied, "Shiyun, if you're heading out, it's best to be prepared first to avoid any chaos later on."

"Got it!"

With crowds of fans gathered outside the gym, to avoid attracting attention, Tang Shiyun, Xu Hong, and Ling Chen took a special passage to the underground parking lot and directly left the gym by car.

Returning to Tang Shiyun's residence, Ling Chen was a bit taken aback. She used to live in a rented small apartment, old and cramped, sharing it with her parents. Now, her place was in the most luxurious area of East Sea City, a villa with a swimming pool, a backyard, and a mini-golf course.

Not to mention, the villa alone was worth at least hundreds of millions. It's impressive how much wealth Tang Shiyun had accumulated in such a short time since her debut.

Sitting in the living room for a while, the housekeeper brought in tea and freshly cut fruit with great courtesy. Xu Hong explained that all the help at Tang Shiyun's place were meticulously selected by the company and were very dependable.

After half an hour, Tang Shiyun, freshly showered, came downstairs in clean clothes. Ling Chen fixed his gaze on her, momentarily stunned.

Tang Shiyun was dressed in a purple floral half-skirt over dark jeans and wore a casual jacket. Her hair was tied in a ponytail that bounced with each step, exuding youthful energy.

In the past, living in the Old City and still attending school, Tang Shiyun appeared full of innocence, much like an unripe apple. But now, after experiencing a lot, she had shed her naïveté. She was now like a ripe peach, exuding fragrance that left a sweet impression in people's hearts.

Seeing Ling Chen in a daze, Tang Shiyun blushed, but there was a hint of joy in her bright eyes. A woman dressed up for the one she loves, and seeing Ling Chen's attention, Tang Shiyun felt her effort was rewarded.

Standing before Ling Chen, Tang Shiyun spread her arms and twirled around, shyly asking, "Ling, how do I look?"

Ling Chen gave a thumbs up, praising, "You look great. You're naturally beautiful, so anything you wear looks good. Are you all ready?"

"Almost." Tang Shiyun held Ling Chen's arm and asked, "Where are we headed, Ling?"

"You're in charge today. Wherever you want to go, I'll accompany you."

"Then..." Tang Shiyun batted her sparkling eyes, smiling, "How about going shopping? I haven't been to the mall for a long time. Let's shop first, then have dinner outside, and then watch a movie. What do you think, Ling?"

"Alright, I'll follow your plan." Ling Chen glanced at the time and said, "Let's not delay too long."

As they spoke, Xu Hong walked in from outside.

"Shiyun."

"Hong, Ling and I are heading out. We'll be back in the evening."

Xu Hong glanced at Ling Chen, then walked over to Tang Shiyun and whispered something in her ear. Whatever it was, Tang Shiyun's smile faded quickly, her eyebrows furrowed slightly, and a hint of annoyance flashed in her eyes.

Noticing the change in Tang Shiyun's expression, Ling Chen asked, "Shiyun, what's wrong? Is something the matter? If you're busy, we can reschedule."

"I'm fine, just that..." Tang Shiyun hesitated, looking as if she wanted to say something but couldn't.

"What is it?" Ling Chen pressed.

Tang Shiyun softly replied, "My mom is here."

Hearing this, Ling Chen immediately understood Tang Shiyun's concern. Her mother, Yao Li, always held prejudices against him and didn't like him. If Yao Li found her with Ling Chen, she would likely get angry at Tang Shiyun again. Thinking of this, Ling Chen pointed upstairs and said, "Maybe I should avoid her. You go see your mom first."

"Ling, you don't have to hide. My mom... she's not here to see me."

"Then why is she here?"

Tang Shiyun opened her mouth, her eyes flickering, unsure if she should speak. Seeing her hesitance, Xu Hong spoke up, "Mr. Ling, Miss Yao is here to ask Shiyun for money."

"For money?" Ling Chen was slightly stunned, then laughed, "You're her daughter. Giving money to your mom is a natural thing. What's there to hesitate about?"

"Mr. Ling, it's not like that," Xu Hong interjected, "Miss Yao comes every two or three days to ask for money, and each time it's a large amount, ranging from tens of thousands to over a million. In a month, she's taken at least six to seven million from Shiyun."

"That much?" Ling Chen was shocked and asked, "What does she need that much money for?"

Though Tang Shiyun wasn't short of money, spending like this wasn't sustainable. Spending millions in a month was beyond even the wealthiest of wives compared to Yao Li.

"And that's just Miss Yao's personal requests. Including other expenses, it's almost tens of millions. Shiyun earns only a few million a month. At this rate, her wealth will be drained in no time," Xu Hong said indignantly, "Mr. Ling, Shiyun is too kind-hearted. Every time Miss Yao praises her, she softens. Please help her."

Ling Chen nodded, then asked the silent Tang Shiyun, "Shiyun, tell me what's going on? Why does your mom ask for so much money?"

"She... she has a lot of debt outside. If I don't give her money, she might be in danger."

Chapter 993 The Greedy Mother (2)

"Debt?" Ling Chen asked with a frown, "How could your mom, an ordinary woman, owe so much money?"

"All due to gambling and high-interest loans," Xu Hong replied irritably. "Tang Shiyun initially provided regular support to her parents—five hundred thousand a month, which isn't a small amount. However, because of Shiyun's status, Miss Yao's social standing rose, and she met many wealthy housewives, often hanging out with them, buying luxury goods, gambling—she picked up all those bad habits of the rich. With her daily expenses, five hundred thousand a month wasn't enough, it barely lasted her a few days."

"Shiyun previously gave Miss Yao a credit card with no limit, and in less than a week, she spent over ten million on it. There was no choice but to stop the card. But even then, it didn't stop Miss Yao from squandering money. With no cash on hand, she went to borrow from high-interest lenders. Knowing she was Shiyun's mother, those people were more than happy to lend her money, and each time it was in the millions. Whenever the repayment deadline came, and Miss Yao couldn't pay, she dragged those people to Shiyun's place to have her pay off the debt. Shiyun tried to persuade Miss Yao, hoping she'd

cut back on her spending and not be so extravagant. In front of her, Miss Yao always repented, promising not to waste money again, but as soon as she turned around, she borrowed another few million from outside, and nothing anyone said mattered."

"Can't you just stop giving her money?"

Xu Hong replied helplessly, "It's not that simple. If they can't collect, they threaten Shiyun that they will break Miss Yao's limbs. Shiyun is worried Miss Yao will get hurt, so she's forced to compromise. Now, Miss Yao has brought another group of ruffians to the door; this is already the fourth time this month. Mr. Ling, Shiyun is too kind-hearted and doesn't know how to handle this. The company can't interfere in her personal matters, so we can only ask you to help."

"Alright, I understand." Ling Chen nodded and said, "Leave it to me." After speaking, Ling Chen turned and walked toward the door.

"Ling," Tang Shiyun caught up to Ling Chen's pace, holding his hand, and said, "She... after all, she's my mom, you..."

Before Tang Shiyun could finish, Ling Chen gently patted the back of her hand and said, "Don't worry, I know how to handle this."

At the door, Ling Chen opened it to see Yao Li standing outside with a few ruffian youths, chatting with a smile, as if she were quite familiar with them.

Upon hearing the villa door open, Yao Li turned back, ready to speak. However, when she saw Ling Chen standing at the door, her face immediately darkened as she coldly asked, "What are you doing here?"

"This is Shiyun's home, she invited me. Why can't I be here?"

"Bullshit." Yao Li spat out, saying, "This is my daughter's home, and I forbid you to harass her, do you hear me? If you dare show up again, do you believe I won't call the police to arrest you?"

"Arrest me?" Ling Chen sneered, "Do you have the power to do that?" Pausing, Ling Chen continued, "You have the nerve to say this is your daughter's home. Miss Yao, do you really treat Shiyun as your daughter? I'd say you're treating her like a cash cow. If you cared even a little about mother-daughter feelings, you wouldn't burden her."

"Oh really!" Yao Li retorted with a cold laugh, "This is my family matter, what right do you have to meddle, as an outsider? Listen, get lost, and don't let me see you again." Having said that, Yao Li turned to the youths and said, "Help me get rid of this bastard."

"Stop!"

Before the youths could move, Tang Shiyun and Xu Hong rushed out of the house. Looking at Yao Li outside the door, Tang Shiyun said angrily, "Mom, what exactly do you want? Ling is my guest, you mustn't be rude to him."

Yao Li tried to reason, "Daughter, I've told you before, to stay away from people like him. Why don't you listen to me?"

"I..."

"Enough!" Ling Chen raised his hand to stop Tang Shiyun and said, "Don't get upset first, I'll handle this matter." As he spoke, Ling Chen's gaze swept over the youths one by one.

Feeling Ling Chen's gaze, the youths instinctively lowered their heads, appearing frightened, not daring to meet his eyes. Seeing their reaction, Ling Chen felt reassured.

"You should know me," Ling Chen spoke calmly.

"Chen... Chen," one youth stammered.

"Good. Since you know me, things will be easier. Tell me, whose men are you? Jiang Hao? Nanrong Hao? Zhao Zhengxiong?"

"We're Xiong's men."

Ling Chen nodded, "I've had some issues with Zhao Zhengxiong recently, but that's between me and your boss, it doesn't involve you. At any rate, I was once your boss too, let's see if you'll do me this favor."

One youth, with a flattering smile, said, "Nothing you say, Chen, we wouldn't dare not give you face."

Seeing the youths' submissive demeanor towards Ling Chen, Yao Li's expression changed, and she said urgently, "What are you doing, don't forget who pays you."

However, ignoring Yao Li's rebuke, the youths looked at Ling Chen and asked, "What do you need us to do, Chen?"

Ling Chen gestured towards Yao Li and asked, "Did she borrow high-interest loans from you? How much? Tell me the truth."

"Well..." one youth hesitated for a moment before saying, "She did borrow high-interest loans from us, three million, but it's already paid off, Miss Tang helped repay it."

Hearing this, Ling Chen frowned and asked, "If it's been repaid, why are you still with her, and I heard this isn't the first time."

"She hired us, pretending to be debt collectors to get money from her daughter. After getting the money, she planned to share a few ten thousand with us," a youth admitted sheepishly.

"I see." Ling Chen glanced at Yao Li, whose face had darkened, and sneered, "You've got some nerve, joining outsiders to swindle your own daughter."

"Mom!" Tang Shiyun looked at Yao Li in disbelief and exclaimed angrily, "I trusted you, worried about your safety, paid off your debts, and you conspired with outsiders to deceive me."

"No, it's not..." Yao Li protested hastily, "Daughter, let me explain, I..."

"Enough!" Tang Shiyun waved her hand, turning away, "I don't want to hear your explanation, the facts are in front of me, how can I trust you now? Mom, I never thought you would treat me this way. Fine, if so, don't blame your daughter for being ruthless."

Chapter 994 - 1001: The Money-Hungry Mother (Part 3)

"Daughter, mom knows she's wrong. Please forgive mom this time, okay?" Yao Li quickly said when she saw Tang Shiyun was really angry, "I promise you, I won't deceive you again in the future."

"It's too late." Tang Shiyun said, holding back the tears in her eyes, "Mom, no matter how much money you used to ask from me, I never refused you. In my view, no amount of money could match the bond between us as mother and daughter. But now, I know I was wrong. I shouldn't have indulged you, letting you deceive me more and more. From today on, besides the fixed living expenses each month, I won't give you another cent. As for the debts you've incurred outside, they have nothing to do with me. I won't help pay them off with a single cent."

After speaking, Tang Shiyun walked inside without looking back.

"Daughter, don't you, don't you care that your mom is being bullied by others?" Yao Li called out in a hurry and wanted to rush inside. However, Ling Chen stretched out his hand, blocking Yao Li's way at the door.

"Miss Yao, you've heard Shiyun's words. I hope you won't disturb her anymore. To be honest, you're really not a qualified mother." With that, without waiting for Yao Li to say anything else, Ling Chen closed the door, leaving Yao Li outside.

No matter how Yao Li shouted, no one paid attention to her.

Returning to the living room, Ling Chen glanced around and asked, "Miss Xu, where's Shiyun?"

"She's gone to her room. Mr. Ling, please try persuading Shiyun. I'm worried that this matter might affect her."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Don't worry, I know what to do." With that, he went straight upstairs.

Upon reaching outside Tang Shiyun's bedroom, he heard sobbing from inside. Ling Chen gently knocked on the door, then pushed it open. As he entered, he saw Tang Shiyun sitting on the bed, her eyes red, with tears still streaked on her cheeks.

Seeing her in such a state of sadness, Ling Chen sighed inwardly. Having a mother like that, anyone else would feel the same.

"Shiyun." Ling Chen walked to Tang Shiyun's side, pulled out two tissues from beside, and gently wiped her tears.

"Ling." Tang Shiyun reached out, hugging Ling Chen's waist, burying her head in his chest, sobbing softly, her tears instantly soaking Ling Chen's clothes.

"Alright, don't cry anymore." Ling Chen patted Tang Shiyun's shoulder and comforted her, "I know you're heartbroken. Your mom's actions are indeed infuriating. But, as you said earlier, no matter what, she's still your mom. Even if she's wrong, you have to learn to forgive."

"I... I just feel it's not worth it for myself." Tang Shiyun murmured, "From childhood to now, mom always took care of me so attentively. Those days were hard but happy, with our family in harmony. But now, Ling, as you can see, ever since having money, mom has changed. Sometimes I can't believe if she's still that person, why can't I feel a trace of familial love from her?"

"Alright, stop overthinking. Your mom is just confused for a moment, and she'll have a clear mind later. However, you shouldn't see her during this period, lest you go soft again."

"I know." Tang Shiyun nodded gently and said, "I've decided not to give her any more money. Before, because my parents went through hardships for me, I hoped they could enjoy comfort. As long as they asked, I'd never refuse. But now I know, sometimes too much indulgence isn't good. Besides, I didn't pick my money off the ground. From debut until now, apart from this villa being my fixed asset, the rest of the money was squandered by my mom. Ling, I was even planning to save up enough to support you, but it seems I'll have to wait a while longer."

Upon hearing this, Ling Chen couldn't help but laugh, feeling a mix of emotion and a little heartbreak.

This was a joke he made years ago, not expecting this girl to remember it so well.

"Girl, by the time you've saved enough money, you probably won't see me worth it anymore." Ling Chen teased with a smile.

"How can that be?" Tang Shiyun quickly raised her head and said, "I'd never look down on you. It's you I'm worried about looking down on me."

"Alright, alright, just joking, no need to take it seriously. Hey, it's getting late, do you still want to go shopping?"

"Let's go! Ling, you hardly have time to accompany me, I don't want to miss the chance."

"Then what are you still sitting for, let's go."

"I'll just touch up my makeup real quick."

Half an hour later, Ling Chen and Tang Shiyun drove out of the villa in a car.

Not long after, they arrived at the most bustling shopping street in East Sea City. After parking the car, Ling Chen closed the door, only to see Tang Shiyun wearing a cap and mask, almost completely covering her face. If they hadn't left together earlier, Ling Chen wouldn't have recognized her.

"This girl..." Ling Chen smiled helplessly. Tang Shiyun's current identity is different from before. Being a nationally famous pop star, if she appeared in public, the entire street might become paralyzed. There's nothing to be done; these days, the power of music fans is too great.

"Ling, where shall we go?" Since no one could recognize her, Tang Shiyun boldly held onto Ling Chen's arm, walking among the crowd.

"Weren't you the one who wanted to shop? I'm not familiar with this area, maybe you should tell me where to go."

Tang Shiyun looked around and pointed to a large mall not far away, "Let's go there, Hong took me there before, the stuff inside is pretty good, affordable and of decent quality, too."

"You're worth billions, and you care about a little bit of money?" Ling Chen teased.

"Even with money, you shouldn't spend recklessly. Come on, let's go buy some clothes."

After shopping in the mall for less than an hour, Ling Chen was already holding seven or eight large bags.

Seeing Tang Shiyun in high spirits, Ling Chen smiled wryly and said, "I say, girl, why are you buying everything for me? It's not like I'm lacking in clothes."

Tang Shiyun replied cheerfully, "Ling, I'm the one who's going to support you, of course, I have to buy clothes for you. There's a watch store over there, come on, let's take a look." With that, Tang Shiyun quickly ran into the store.

Ling Chen touched his nose, having no choice but to follow.

At that moment, among the bustling crowd in the mall, a few people wearing caps were lurking around the store, occasionally picking up their cell phones and cameras, aiming and snapping in the direction of the watch store.

Ten minutes passed, and Tang Shiyun held Ling Chen's hand as they walked out of the watch store. The two were close to each other, behaving intimately like a couple in love.

At this point, Ling Chen stopped walking, looked at the crowd not far from his side, and whispered, "Shiyun, there are people taking pictures with their phones over there. Did they recognize you?"

Tang Shiyun pointed to her face mask, smiling, "Ling, you're too cautious. Even you couldn't recognize me, how could others possibly find out?"

Chapter 995 - 1002: Candid Photos (1)

Ling thought about it and realized that he and Tang Shiyun were already so familiar. But with her wearing a mask and a baseball cap, even he couldn't recognize her, let alone others.

Thinking of this, Ling felt much more at ease. Moreover, the person who was taking pictures earlier had already disappeared without a trace. Ling, carrying large and small bags, continued shopping in the mall with Tang Shiyun.

This time, Ling finally experienced the misery of shopping. For him, accompanying a woman shopping was more exhausting than finding someone to fight, as it was less tiring.

Watching the bags pile up in his hands, Ling hurriedly said, "Shiyun, I think that's enough. I'm hungry. Why don't we go eat something first?"

Tang Shiyun seemed somewhat reluctant, but seeing that Ling was hungry, she dismissed the idea of continuing to shop.

"Ling, let's go find a place to eat."

"Alright, I'll head back to the car first and put these things in," Ling said.

After shopping with Tang Shiyun for less than two hours, she almost bought all her clothes for spring, summer, autumn, and winter. If they continued shopping, who knows what else she might buy for herself.

Arriving at the underground parking lot, Ling went to the car, opened the door, and tossed all the bags into the trunk. After storing everything, Ling checked the time; it was a little past five, so it was time to find a place to eat.

However, just as the two were about to return to the surface, more than a dozen young men and women suddenly rushed out from beside the nearby vehicles, each holding a camera or phone, photographing Ling and Tang Shiyun while calling out Tang Shiyun's name.

Seeing the suddenly appearing reporters, Ling's face changed slightly, not expecting them to actually recognize Tang Shiyun's identity.

At this moment, faced with so many reporters, Tang Shiyun quickly hid behind Ling, held his hand, and quietly urged, "Ling, let's go!"

Seeing Tang Shiyun about to run, the group of reporters hurriedly chased after them, asking as they pursued, "Miss Tang, what is your relationship with this gentleman? Is he your boyfriend?"

"Miss Tang, can you tell us how long you've been dating?"

"Miss Tang, when do you plan to get married?"

Hearing the reporters' questions, Tang Shiyun pressed her lips tightly shut and said nothing as she ran forward desperately.

Ling protected Tang Shiyun from behind, running while looking back to explain, "You've got the wrong person, she's not Tang Shiyun."

However, the group of reporters completely ignored Ling's explanation.

Not long after, Ling and Tang Shiyun quickly returned to the car. Getting in, Ling started the vehicle, preparing to escape the reporters' encirclement. But because they were in a parking lot, with too many turns, the car couldn't accelerate quickly. In no time, a dozen reporters surrounded the vehicle.

Phones and cameras were all aimed at the car.

Ling honked the horn, trying to drive away the group of reporters, but it had little effect.

Since her debut, Tang Shiyun had always appeared as an innocent girl in public, never involved in any negative news, let alone gossip. This time, having finally caught Tang Shiyun with a male companion, behaving intimately, these reporters wouldn't miss such a great opportunity.

Once this scoop is out, promotions and raises are just around the corner.

Fuck!

Seeing these relentless and annoying reporters, Ling was immediately furious.

"Shiyun, stay in the car and don't go out. I'll deal with these bastards first." With that, before Tang Shiyun could stop him, Ling had already pushed open the car door and stepped out.

As soon as he got out, the reporters surrounded Ling in an instant, bombarding him with all kinds of questions.

"Haven't you had enough?" Ling coldly snapped, "Delete all the photos you secretly took just now, or else I could sue you for invasion of privacy."

Facing Ling's scolding, a group of reporters had no fear at all. They had encountered such situations too many times and were already used to it.

Seeing no sign of restraint from the group of reporters, a sharp glint flashed in Ling's eyes.

Looking at the flashing cameras in front of him, Ling snatched a camera from someone's hand, slammed it to the ground fiercely and stomped on it twice, shattering the camera instantly.

Seeing Ling's actions, the reporter whose camera was snatched couldn't help but shout, "What are you doing? I..."

"I'm hitting you!" Ling interrupted, swiftly throwing out a punch, knocking the reporter to the ground.

Ling's sudden violent action shocked the other reporters, who hurriedly retreated for fear of being implicated. Yet, even so, the reporters didn't stop filming and instead became even more excited.

Hitting people, this was big news.

Fuck!

Ling cursed inwardly, these reporters really were asking for a beating. At this point, Ling couldn't be bothered to be polite with them. He employed the Nine Yang Qiankun Step, transforming into a shadow, swiftly moving through the crowd, changing positions.

In the blink of an eye, some reporters suddenly felt their hands empty, all their cameras and phones gone.

When they came to their senses, they could only see Ling standing in the middle of the crowd, holding all the cameras and phones in his hands.

"I warned you," Ling said coldly. With that, he threw all the recording equipment to the ground and stomped on them several times, destroying the memory cards inside as well.

Seeing their hard-earned news destroyed in an instant, the reporters' eyes turned red. That was their future!

Some hot-tempered young men couldn't hold back any longer. They rushed forward to confront Ling.

However, how could they be a match for Ling? In no time, all the young men were laid out on the ground.

"Anyone else?" Ling glanced coldly at the remaining reporters.

At this moment, the reporters finally realized Ling's formidability and dared not seek trouble, hastily retreating for fear of being targeted by Ling's fists.

Looking at the reporters lying on the ground, Ling asked, "How did you know Miss Tang was here?"

Ling and Tang Shiyun had been extremely careful when they went out, and with his experience, if someone had been following them, it wouldn't have escaped his notice. So he was very curious about how these reporters found them here.

After asking, seeing no response from the crowd, Ling casually dragged up one reporter from the ground, pinned his back against the wall, and raised his fist, ready to strike.

"No, don't hit me, I... I'll talk!" the reporter hurriedly stopped Ling's action, urgently saying, "Someone called us."

"Who?"

"We don't know, that person said she could provide explosive news tips, but wanted a high reward. Because the news involved Miss Tang, we agreed to their request."

Chapter 996 - 1003: Candid Photos (2)

"Was that person a man or a woman? And how much did you pay?"

"A woman, sounded older. She initially asked for two hundred thousand, but we bargained it down to one hundred thousand, worrying about the news's value. We've already paid twenty thousand, and if the news proves valuable, we'll pay the remaining eighty thousand."

Hearing this, Ling Chen frowned slightly and asked the other reporters, "And you all did the same?"

Everyone nodded.

"Did she leave any contact information?"

"Yes, yes." The young man quickly reached into his pocket, took out a small note with a phone number, and handed it to Ling Chen, saying, "This is the contact she left. She also told me she has a lot of exclusive news and photos about Miss Tang and is willing to sell them as long as the price is right."

Gazing at the phone number on the note, Ling Chen let go of the young man and said calmly, "You can leave now."

"But..." A group of reporters looked at the pile of broken cameras and phones, somewhat unwilling.

"But what?" Ling Chen raised his eyebrows and said sternly, "I warn you not to harass Miss Tang again. Otherwise, next time, it won't be just a bunch of broken machines, but your arms and legs. Got it?"

"Yes, yes, we understand." The reporters nodded fearfully and hurriedly left towards the parking lot.

"Wait!"

Ling Chen stopped the reporters, turned to open the car door, and leaned inside. After a while, he straightened up, walked to a reporter, handed them a check, and said, "Here's two hundred thousand. It should cover your losses, and the rest can be considered medical compensation."

Pausing, Ling Chen continued, "I apologize for earlier. I lost my temper. I hope you understand. Also, I'm Miss Tang's brother, not her boyfriend. Please don't fabricate stories that would affect Miss Tang."

Seeing Ling Chen so generous and polite, the reporters felt much better.

After sending the reporters away, Ling Chen returned to the car and looked at Tang Shiyun, who had removed her mask and baseball cap, and asked, "How are you, okay?"

"I'm fine. These reporters are really impressive. Even with my disguise, they still recognized me."

"Shiyun, see if this phone number looks familiar." Ling Chen handed the small note to Tang Shiyun.

Upon seeing it, Tang Shiyun immediately exclaimed, "Hey, isn't this my mom's number? Ling, how do you have my mom's phone number?"

Just now, Tang Shiyun was sitting in the car. She only saw Ling Chen getting rough but didn't hear the conversation between Ling Chen and the reporters.

Indeed, it really was her!

Ling Chen frowned silently. When the reporter mentioned that person earlier, he immediately thought of Yao Li. Only Yao Li would know enough about Tang Shiyun.

"Ling, what are you thinking about?" Seeing Ling Chen's delay in responding, Tang Shiyun couldn't help asking.

"Nothing." Ling Chen snapped out of it and replied casually. It's better not to let Tang Shiyun know the truth about this matter; otherwise, it would only hurt her more. As a mother, Yao Li treating her daughter like this is truly infuriating. If Ling Chen had any hope that Yao Li might change for the better, he was now utterly disappointed in her.

A person like that can no longer be called a 'person' but a scum.

In contemplation, Ling Chen quietly made up his mind to help Tang Shiyun resolve this issue. He didn't want her future and career to be destroyed by Yao Li.

"Shiyun, still want to go eat? Or should I take you home?" Ling Chen worried that the earlier incident might have affected Tang Shiyun's mood, so he suggested taking her home.

"No." Tang Shiyun refused without hesitation, "Let's eat first and then go to the movies." She pouted and held onto Ling Chen's arm, saying, "Ling, you promised to spend the whole day with me today. You can't go back on your word."

"Alright, alright," Ling Chen laughed and replied, "As long as you want, I'll definitely be with you. Let's go find a place to eat first."

In the evening, Ling Chen drove Tang Shiyun to the Old City. This was where they first met and held many beautiful memories for them. Back then, Ling Chen would always take Tang Shiyun to eat at the roadside food stalls when they had nothing to do.

Now, one has become a nationally renowned singing star, and the other has a net worth of billions. They are no longer the naive youngsters they once were.

However, the Old City is no longer what it used to be. Since the government initiated, and Hongyu Group invested, the Old City has entered a comprehensive redevelopment project. Many old buildings and houses have been demolished, and skyscrapers are slowly being built. It's estimated that in about five years, the entire Old City will be completely transformed.

With Tang Shiyun, Ling Chen walked around the places they once lived. Unfortunately, the building they rented has been demolished, leaving only rubble and construction debris.

"Those days were better," Tang Shiyun sighed.

Ling Chen smiled and said, "That's because you were still pure. It's hard to keep an innocent mindset once you're in the real world. Alright, stop dwelling on the past. Let's check out the old food stalls."

"Alright!" Tang Shiyun agreed cheerfully.

Their luck wasn't too bad. Though many buildings were gone, the roadside food stalls were still there, and business was even better than before. With so much construction going on, there are about hundreds of workers in the Old City. After a day of hard work, they enjoyed gathering at night for some barbeque and a few drinks.

Ling Chen and Tang Shiyun went to the food stall they frequented and ordered a private booth and a few dishes.

The food stall's booth was like a Mongolian yurt, just a scaled-down version. After all, Tang Shiyun is now well-known. If people found out she was here, the area would likely be flooded.

After dinner, Ling Chen contentedly patted his stomach and looked at Tang Shiyun across the table, "How about it? Are you full?"

Tang Shiyun nodded lightly, eagerly putting on her mask and said, "Ling, let's go watch a movie. I think a new one just came out."

"Okay, it's up to you."

Leaving the food stall, Ling Chen walked down the Old City streets with Tang Shiyun's hand in his.

Soon after, Ling Chen saw someone walking towards them, and he couldn't help but be stunned.

This is just too coincidental!

To actually bump into her here. Oh right, he nearly forgot, she does work around here in the Old City area.

Chapter 997 - 1004: Experimental Progress

At this moment, the person across also noticed Ling Chen, and her eyebrows raised immediately, with a sweet smile at the corner of her mouth.

But when she saw Tang Shiyun beside Ling Chen, her face changed suddenly, and the smile immediately faded.

"Ling, that woman..." Tang Shiyun pointed at the woman walking towards them and said, "She looks so familiar, have I seen her somewhere before?"

Ling Chen nodded and said, "She is your senior. When you registered at East Sea University, she was the one who did the freshman reception." As he spoke, Ling Chen smiled and greeted her, "Feifei, are you shopping too?"

Leng Feifei forced a smile and said, "No, I'm just about to go to the company for overtime." After speaking, Leng Feifei looked at Tang Shiyun beside Ling Chen and asked, "Ling Chen, is this your friend?"

Because Tang Shiyun wore a mask, Leng Feifei did not recognize her identity.

"This is Shiyun, you should know her, she's also a student at East Sea University, but she's been on leave and hasn't attended classes yet."

"Shiyun?" Leng Feifei was slightly startled and said in surprise, "Tang Shiyun?"

Tang Shiyun smiled and said, "Senior Leng, hello, very pleased to meet you." She paused, looking at the passersby around, and said apologetically, "Senior Leng, I'm really sorry, I'm not convenient to take off the mask, please forgive me."

"I understand." When she said this, Leng Feifei couldn't help but glance more at Ling Chen. She vaguely remembered that when she was handling freshman reception at East Sea University, Ling Chen had once gone to the school to find Tang Shiyun. At that time, Tang Shiyun wasn't famous, so her impression wasn't very deep. Now, Tang Shiyun was already a famous singer nationwide.

However, what Leng Feifei was most curious about was Ling Chen. She didn't know why Ling Chen was always surrounded by outstanding women. Whether it was Nanrong Wanqing or Tang Shiyun, they were the goddesses in the eyes of men. As a result, the relationship between these two women and Ling Chen was unusual.

Thinking of this, Leng Feifei couldn't help but feel a little inferior. Her background was not as good as Nanrong Wanqing's, and her family and achievements couldn't compare to these two women. Deep down, she hoped to get closer to Ling Chen.

However, seeing Ling Chen interacting with so many outstanding women, she couldn't help but feel discouraged.

"Feifei, have you been busy lately?"

Leng Feifei nodded and said, "The company needs to expand its business, and there are many things to handle. Well...you guys go ahead, I won't disturb you, let's meet up another day when we have time."

"Okay. Then you go work overtime first, don't tire yourself out, remember to take care." Ling Chen instructed.

Watching Leng Feifei's figure disappear around the corner of the street, Tang Shiyun hugged Ling Chen's arm and said, "Ling, Senior Leng looked at you with a strange expression just now, is she interested in you?"

Ling Chen chuckled helplessly, "She's just a friend, it's not as complicated as you think. Alright, stop overthinking, let's go watch a movie, don't make it too late."

After watching the movie at night, it was already past ten o'clock. Ling Chen drove Tang Shiyun home, declined her invitation to stay, and hurried back to Wealthy Manor on his own.

Ling Chen had informed Nanrong Wanqing in advance that he would accompany Tang Shiyun for the whole day. In Ling Chen's eyes, he always regarded Tang Shiyun as his little sister, and Nanrong Wanqing knew this, so she didn't say anything.

...

One night passed.

The next morning, Ling Chen sent Nanrong Wanqing to the Hongyu Group and then drove to the base.

In the early hours of last night, Hu Fei had sent a text message to Ling Chen, asking him to come over when he had time today, saying there was something important to discuss with him.

Ling Chen thought about it, it could only be about the machine in the laboratory.

Arriving at the base, just as Ling Chen expected, Tang Guolun and Hu Fei directly pulled Ling Chen to the laboratory.

As soon as he entered the lab, Ling Chen immediately saw a few middle-aged men in white coats busying themselves in front of the machine. Besides that, there was also a young man lying on the iron bed beside the machine. The young man seemed to be in a coma, motionless.

"What's going on here?" Ling Chen pointed at the young man and asked.

Tang Guolun replied, "He's our test subject. See, these are the neurosurgeons Fatty specially hired at great expense. They're responsible for the craniotomy and the installation of the microchip."

"Where did this young man come from?"

"He's a security personnel from the God Organization. We captured him during the last raid on the base." Hu Fei said, "Rest assured, I checked this guy's background, he's got a few lives on his conscience, not a good person at all, perfect for an experiment."

Ling Chen nodded and said, "Alright then."

Once the neurosurgeons were ready for the surgery, the three of them stepped outside of the lab, watching the experiment's progress through the transparent glass.

These neurosurgeons were specially recruited by Hu Fei through various channels, and their skills were impressive. The craniotomy proceeded smoothly. However, that was just the beginning—the most crucial part was the installation of the microchip.

Installing the microchip was a technical task that required utmost care and caution. After all, the brain is the most complex part of the human body, and any slight mistake could lead to the subject's death.

Watching the actions of the neurosurgeons, the three of them held their breath and patiently awaited the results.

The surgery took an incredibly long time, about two hours or so. Then the neurosurgeon responsible for installing the microchip raised his head and made a gesture towards Hu Fei outside the glass window.

Seeing this gesture, Hu Fei immediately focused on the computer screen beside him, his fingers flying rapidly over the keyboard.

As the red alert on the computer screen gradually turned green, Hu Fei's eyes brightened, revealing a hint of excitement.

"Almost there, almost there, just a little more... just a little more..." Hu Fei mouthed silently, muttering to himself.

"OK!" A few minutes later, Hu Fei laughed triumphantly and gave Ling Chen a victory sign.

"Got it, the chip is successfully connected, and the signal is very stable."

"Have the doctors proceed to suture then," Ling Chen said.

After another half hour, the surgery was finally over.

Back in the lab, the three of them approached the iron bed and looked at the young man lying there, asking, "How is his physical condition?"

One of the neurosurgeons replied, "Rest assured, he's in stable condition. Once the anesthesia wears off, he should wake up. However, until the wound is fully healed, it's best to avoid any strenuous activity to prevent affecting the wound."

"I understand," Hu Fei interjected, "Alright, you all have worked hard, go rest awhile, I'll handle the rest."

After the neurosurgeons left, Ling Chen asked, "Fatty, what do you plan to do?"

Chapter 998 - 1005: Experimental Results

Hu Fei chuckled and said, "We have to test the experimental results." As he spoke, Hu Fei entered a command on the computer next to the machine. Instantly, the restraints on the young man's hands and feet were all released, along with the IV tubes inserted in him, which were retracted.

Due to the anesthetic, the young man still couldn't wake up immediately. Hu Fei picked up a syringe from the operating table beside him and directly injected it into the young man's body. Suddenly, the young man, who was in a deep sleep, abruptly sat up from the iron bed.

Seeing the young man's reaction, Ling Chen and Tang Guolun both took a few steps back.

"Fatty, take it easy, don't cause any trouble," Tang Guolun reminded.

"Don't worry, nothing will happen." With that, Hu Fei fixed his gaze on the young man's eyes and began typing quickly on the keyboard, entering lines of command into the computer.

Soon, the young man showed a look of pain, his body slightly trembling, clutching his head tightly, and groaning in agony. After a moment, the young man's expression suddenly became dazed, with no trace of life in his eyes, as if he were a lifeless person, a shade of ashen grey.

Seeing the change in the young man, Ling Chen couldn't help but ask, "Fatty, what's going on?"

Hu Fei grinned, "Just wait and watch the show." Saying that, Hu Fei lightly tapped the Enter key on the keyboard.

As his fingertip fell, the young man immediately got off the iron bed, staring intently at Ling Chen.

Facing the young man's piercing gaze, Ling Chen felt a slight surprise, and before he could say anything, the young man suddenly quickened his pace and rushed towards him, throwing a punch straight at his face.

Seeing the fist approaching, Ling Chen deftly dodged, instantly sliding to reposition himself behind the young man.

After the failed strike, the young man did not give up the attack and continued to change direction, swinging his fists towards Ling Chen.

After several encounters, Ling Chen heard Hu Fei's triumphant laughter and couldn't help but shout, "Fatty, what are you doing?"

"Alright, alright, no more playing." Hu Fei entered a command into the computer, and the young man immediately stopped moving, standing still in place, with a vacant look, resembling a lifeless statue.

Seeing this, Ling Chen and Tang Guolun quickly walked over to Hu Fei's side, looking at the data displayed on the computer screen, and asked in amazement, "Is this the experimental result you mentioned?"

Hu Fei nodded and said, "That's right. The facts prove that this experiment, improved by the God Organization, is a great success. Anyone implanted with the microchip will act according to the transmitted commands. Strictly speaking, he can't be considered a human, but a robot controlled by a chip. After the instructions are transmitted, they lose their ability to think and self-control, and completely obey command. Moreover, the information left by the God Organization indicates that even the most strong-willed person cannot resist the control of the microchip."

"There must be some flaws in this experiment, right?"

"There are flaws, after all, the brain is the most complex part of the human body. Moreover, prolonged signal transmission will gradually increase the overload on the brain. Once the overload exceeds the limit, it could lead to brain death and turn into a vegetative state. According to the research of the God Organization, anyone who receives a microchip implantation has a lifespan of only five to ten years, and the strength of personal physique will determine the length of survival."

Speaking of this, Hu Fei clicked his tongue and sighed, "The God Organization sacrificed countless lives to reach this conclusion."

"We can use this method to control the people from the God Organization we capture and make them work for us," Tang Guolun chimed in. "Ling Chen, if you ask me, we should take the initiative now."

"Let's not rush," Ling Chen said. "Since the God Organization has the capability to develop such experimental devices, there's no guarantee they won't produce a second or third one. So, we shouldn't celebrate too soon."

"No need to worry for now," Hu Fei added, "This machine is a prototype, currently only one exists, and it's unlikely the God Organization expected it to fall into our hands. Moreover, all the data for this prototype machine is stored in this computer. With this data, we can fully reproduce a similar machine. As for the God Organization, although they are without data, the scientific researchers who built this machine are still within the God Organization. If we can locate them and rescue them from the God Organization, the God Organization will never be able to reconstruct the machine, even if they start anew, it will require a significant amount of time."

"Scientific researchers?" Ling Chen pondered and asked, "The God Organization transported the machine to East Sea City, surely those researchers must have come here too, but, we're still unclear about the exact location of the God Organization's base, how do we find the whereabouts of those researchers?"

"You think the people from the Secret Society are just window dressing?" Hu Fei said. "The intelligence capability of the Secret Society is second only to that of the God Organization, and besides, the Secret Society has strengthened the intelligence network in East Sea City. After several days of searching, the Secret Society already has some clues. Also, don't forget, we have a special assistant right now?"

Hearing this, Ling Chen, puzzled, asked, "What do you mean by special assistant?"

Hu Fei grinned, mysteriously smiled, and said, "You'll find out when the time comes."

"Playing mysterious again," Tang Guolun, standing by, said, "Alright, Ling Chen and I won't intervene in this matter, you take the lead. If you can locate those researchers and prevent the God Organization from reconstructing the machine, it'll indeed be advantageous for us."

Back at the control center, Ling Chen sat in Tang Guolun's office chair, browsing the intelligence the Secret Society had gathered recently. Looking at the content displayed on the last page of the data, Ling Chen's expression changed, turning to Tang Guolun in amazement, "Boss Tang, is this information accurate?"

"It's already been confirmed, there's no issue."

"Wow!" Ling Chen put down the file in disbelief and said, "I didn't expect... really didn't expect those guys to set up a temporary base there."

Tang Guolun nodded in agreement, "The people from the God Organization are incredibly bold. To be honest, I didn't quite believe it when the Secret Society handed over this information. However, only the God Organization could pull off something like this."

"Do you think the researchers might be there?"

"Nine times out of ten. Fatty Hu has already taken this matter upon himself, we shouldn't interfere and let him handle it."

"It's not that I don't trust Fatty's abilities, I'm just concerned about potential danger, or else..."

"You want to go?"

Chapter 999 - 1006: Borrowing Money

"The God Organization probably still doesn't know we've got their whereabouts, so for now, we're in the lead." Ling Chen paused, his eyes shifting as he looked at Tang Guolun, "I have an idea, not sure if it'll work."

"Let's hear it."

Ling Chen leaned in closer to Tang Guolun's ear and whispered a few words. After listening, Tang Guolun pondered for a moment, then nodded lightly, "Your idea is pretty good, but I'm still a bit worried. One wrong move and it could be dangerous, even affecting the entire base."

"I know, but fortune favors the bold; to gain more, we have to take some risks."

"Alright then, if you've decided, we'll do as you say," Tang Guolun replied. "Let me arrange things first. I'll inform you once everything is ready. How does that sound?"

"Good, thank you for your efforts!"

After reaching an agreement with Tang Guolun, Ling Chen left the base. He drove around for a bit, making a few phone calls. After half an hour had passed, Ling Chen set off for his destination.

After driving for over ten minutes, Ling Chen arrived at a billiard hall. He parked the car and looked around, noticing a Mercedes sports car worth millions parked outside. At the door of the hall stood a few young men, smoking and chatting lewdly.

Seeing Ling Chen approach, the young men immediately straightened up and respectfully called out, "Chen!"

Ling Chen nodded and asked, "Where's Jiang Hao?"

"Hao is inside. Chen, do you want us to go in with you?"

"No need." Ling Chen waved them off and walked directly into the billiard hall. It was quite large, over two hundred square meters, and decently decorated. This hall was Jiang Hao's business, also used as a base.

Passing through a few doors, Ling Chen descended a staircase into the basement of the hall. The spacious basement had several tables with poker cards and mahjong, lined with long tables by the walls filled with tools, steel rods, and machetes, ready for any unexpected events.

Over ten young people were playing cards, enveloped in a haze of smoke that made the air choke. Seeing Ling Chen enter, they all stood to greet him.

"Chen, Hao is in that room over there. He wants you to go straight in."

"Got it. You guys continue," Ling Chen said, stepping towards a room and pushing the door open.

The room was small but crowded, dominated by a middle-aged woman draped in gold and silver, plump, and sitting on a shabby chair. Her face was pale, sweating profusely, looking nervous.

A few young men stood around her, each holding a weapon, as if ready to act at any moment.

"Chen." Jiang Hao, who was smoking against the wall, tossed his cigarette and walked briskly to Ling Chen, pointing at the middle-aged woman, "Chen, this is the person you mentioned, right?"

"That's right." Nodding, Ling Chen approached the woman and greeted her, "Hello, Miss Yao, we meet again."

"Ling... what do you want?" Yao Li stammered.

Ling Chen smiled faintly, "Miss Yao, don't be afraid. I'm a civilized person and won't hurt you. I invited you here today just to propose a business deal."

"Business? What kind of business?" Yao Li eyed Ling Chen warily, "I warn you, don't even think about going after my daughter."

"Hmph!" Ling Chen chuckled lightly, "Miss Yao, do you really care about your daughter? Don't think I don't know what you did yesterday. Out of respect for your bond, I didn't tell Shiyun about it. If Shiyun knew, what do you think she would do to you? When a daughter loses all hope in her mother, the only outcome is to cut all ties. From then on, you won't get a penny from her. If you don't want this to happen, you'd better listen to my proposal."

Hearing this, Yao Li hesitated and asked, "What do you want to do?"

"You're short on money, aren't you? I know it's hard for you to borrow money now. Even if someone lends you money, it's a small amount, not enough to cover your expenses. However, while others won't lend to you, I can. And the interest is like a bank's, not high-interest loans. You can freely borrow from me."

"Really?" Yao Li looked at Ling Chen half-skeptically, her eyes filled with doubt.

"Miss Yao, honestly, given our relationship, I have no reason to help you. But I feel for Shiyun and don't want her troubled by you. As her mother, you're just a hindrance to her future. So, for Shiyun's sake, I'll help you this once, just don't bother her anymore. Is my request too much?"

"She's my daughter. I can do whatever I want. Why should you intervene?"

"Two million." Ling Chen held up two fingers, "I'll give you two million. It's not part of the loan, just compensation."

"That's too little," Yao Li scoffed, "If I ask my daughter, getting three million wouldn't be an issue."

"Miss Yao, that might have been true before. But you heard Shiyun yesterday; besides the fixed monthly allowance, you won't get another dime. And she's firm this time, showing no mercy." Ling Chen paused and continued, "How about this: I'll give you five million, and then lend you another five million, totaling ten million. If you need more money later, you can still come to me."

Five million?

Yao Li's eyes brightened, clearly tempted. After pondering, she asked, "How long do I have to repay the loan?"

"That's up to you. Pay me back whenever you have the money. However, you must write a promissory note, to avoid any denial later on."

"I can do that." Yao Li nodded, "I accept your terms."

"Great." Ling Chen grinned and turned to Jiang Hao, "Go get the prepared loan contract."

Jiang Hao responded promptly, retrieving two loan contracts from a drawer and handing them to Ling Chen.

"Miss Yao, take a look, and if there are no problems, just sign your name and press your fingerprint. I'll transfer the ten million into your account later."

Chapter 1000 - 1007: Visiting the Police Station

Yao Li looked through the loan contract carefully. After confirming there were no issues, she returned the contract to Ling Chen and said, "Okay, the contract is fine."

"Since there's no problem, let's finish this quickly." With that, Ling Chen placed the contract on the table by the wall. However, no one noticed that the moment he set down the contract, his wrist subtly flicked, and the loan contract instantly turned into another document.

Without any suspicion, Yao Li directly signed her name and pressed her fingerprint onto the document.

Seeing the name and fingerprint on the contract, the corner of Ling Chen's mouth lifted slightly, revealing a faint smile.

"All done, Miss Yao. Leave me your account number, and I'll transfer the money to your account immediately."

After writing down her account number, Yao Li asked, "Can I leave now?"

"Of course. Miss Yao, take care. I won't see you out," Ling Chen said with a smile.

After sending Yao Li off, Ling Chen couldn't help but burst into laughter as he held the loan contract in his hand.

"Chen, are you that happy?" Jiang Hao, standing nearby, asked. "Weren't you planning to do something to that woman? Why are you giving her money? If it were me, I'd beat her up first, then have a good chat with her about life."

"It's not that simple. If she were someone else, would I need to go through all this trouble? She's Shiyun's mother; I can't just be rough with her. Besides, that woman has a lot of issues with me. If I don't give her money to spend, she wouldn't even bother with me. Yao Li is very greedy; only money can

make her agree to my plans." Saying this, Ling Chen waved the loan contract and continued, "You keep this loan contract safe for me. When the time is right, I'll let her have it."

After transferring ten million into Yao Li's account, Ling Chen left the pool hall with Jiang Hao.

After getting in the car, Jiang Hao asked, "Chen, where are we going now?"

"I'm taking you to a place."

About half an hour later, Ling Chen drove to the location of a new base. Looking at the few buildings towering in front of him, Jiang Hao asked in confusion, "Chen, why did you bring me to a construction site?"

"Isn't this area your territory? I need you to find a way to buy these buildings for me. Don't worry about the money; I'll take care of it. But I hope you can get the price down to the lowest. Understand?"

Hearing this, Jiang Hao instantly understood. He nodded with a smile and said, "Chen, don't worry. I'll make sure not a single day goes by where they can start work. Once they sell the buildings, I'll let the workers get to it."

"Alright, I'll leave this to you. Don't disappoint me."

Ling Chen had thought about this issue a long time ago. These buildings were all invested in and built by the Ling Family; they were essentially Ling Family's assets. Since his base was right under their property, he couldn't help but feel a bit insecure. So, after some thought, the best solution was to buy these buildings and put them under his name.

After all, the funds from the Secret Society had already been transferred into his account, amounting to tens of billions, more than enough to buy a few buildings. Moreover, once these buildings were completed, they could be rented out for profit. It wouldn't take more than a few years to recoup the costs.

However, he feared that the Ling Family wouldn't want to sell, which was why he had Jiang Hao help him ensure that these buildings couldn't continue being built. At that point, the Ling Family would have two choices: either sell these buildings or let them become half-finished projects. Either way, it was all benefits and no drawbacks for Ling Chen.

After handling these messy matters, Ling Chen drove back to the Nanrong Family.

Now, he just needed to wait quietly at home for news from Tang Guolun.

Tang Guolun was very efficient and managed to handle all the matters Ling Chen had entrusted to him in just two days.

Ling Chen received Tang Guolun's call at four in the afternoon. Since it was Friday, Nanrong Wanqing and Nanrong Hao had both gone to Hongyu Group, leaving Ling Chen at home with his mother and grandparents.

After greeting Yang Qingling, Ling Chen drove alone to the East Sea City police station.

After parking his car, Ling Chen glanced at the entrance of the police station and saw Tang Guolun standing by the roadside, cigarette in hand, looking around, obviously waiting for him.

"Boss Tang," Ling Chen raised his hand in greeting and quickly walked over to him, asking, "How's it going?"

"No problem, now it's all up to us."

"Let's go, let's meet with Officer Xia first."

Entering the police station, Ling Chen navigated easily to the detective squad and found Officer Xia Mutong's office.

Seeing Ling Chen and Tang Guolun walk in from outside, Xia Mutong's gaze carried a hint of puzzlement.

"You came to see me?"

Ling Chen smiled, sat down casually in a chair, and said, "I was just passing by the police station and wanted to check in on Officer Xia. It seems like you've lost some weight since we last met. How's the food at work been lately?"

Hearing Ling Chen's teasing, Xia Mutong frowned slightly and said, "Ling Chen, get to the point and stop beating around the bush."

Ling Chen shrugged and said, "I really just came to see you."

"Who would believe that nonsense?" Xia Mutong glared and said, "If you don't want to say, then I'll have to ask you to leave."

"No, no!" Ling Chen quickly waved his hand and said, "Officer Xia, actually, I want to take a tour of your police station. Would you be able to show me around?"

"Tour the police station? Ling Chen, are you delirious? Or is something wrong with your brain? Do you think the police station is a place open for random tours? I warn you, if you keep evading the issue, I'll let you spend the night here."

Rubbing his nose, Ling Chen replied helplessly, "Officer Xia, I'm telling the truth. What more can I do if you don't believe me? Really, I just want to take a look around your police station, with absolutely no other intentions. Officer Xia, we're old friends by now, aren't we? Can't you fulfill even this small request for me?"

Hearing this, Xia Mutong looked at Ling Chen half-believingly, with her eyes flickering as if contemplating something.

After a while, Xia Mutong stood up, placing both hands on the desk, staring directly at Ling Chen.

"Don't think I don't know your character. Requesting such a thing, you definitely have your reasons. If you don't tell me, then don't expect my help."

Ling Chen glanced at Tang Guolun beside him, hesitating for a moment.

"Officer Xia, let me put it this way," Ling Chen organized his words before speaking, "We suspect there's a dangerous individual inside the police station, so we want to investigate."

"Dangerous individual? What kind of dangerous individual? Ling Chen, this better not be another excuse of yours, right?"

"It's not. Officer Xia, I swear on my honor that I'm not lying to you. How about this, you'll be accompanying me anyway, so you'll know whether I'm telling the truth once we're done. How about it?"

Xia Mutong thought it over and realized that with herself there, she could monitor Ling Chen's actions, which seemed reasonable. With that thought, Xia Mutong agreed, "Alright, I'll take you on a tour."