

The Billion-Value Lands Are Just For Farming

#Chapter 401 - Read The Billion-Value Lands Are Just For Farming Chapter 401

Chapter 401 - You Haven't Even Eaten a Hotpot Before!

The dinner stretched on until the early hours of the morning.

It was only then that Su Qiu managed to drift off to sleep.

While tidying up the living room, Su Ming noticed dawn had broken.

Feeling it was too late to turn in, he decided to skip sleeping altogether.

The breeding zone was still vacant, so he headed there.

He checked the warehouse briefly, then browsed through the marketplace.

Su Ming purchased some common animals from the shop.

With the warehouse offering unlimited space, he figured the more he acquired, the better.

He pondered over which animals he might want to raise next.

The control panel had received an upgrade.

It now resembled the large computers of the older generation.

At the very least, it bore a resemblance to a computer.

Additionally, it featured a new automatic watering function.

After some careful consideration, Su Ming opted to raise bamboo rats.

Since bamboo rats feed on bamboo, they were quite easy to maintain.

He went ahead and started raising some.

Utilizing 24 individual rooms, he bred the bamboo rats, housing four in each room, totaling 96.

Su Ming activated his phone, accessed the marketplace, and exchanged for some bamboo specifically for the bamboo rats.

He hauled the bamboo out of the warehouse and split the stalks in half with a knife.

The bamboo was thick and substantial, appearing quite appetizing.

Su Ming couldn't help but think that there was good reason pandas were so fond of bamboo; he even felt tempted to try a piece himself.

He placed four bamboo stalks in each room to avoid any fights among the bamboo rats over their meals.

“Bamboo rats successfully bred! Harvest time: 50 hours!”

A prompt echoed in Su Ming's head.

The bamboo rats would be ready for harvest in two days, and Su Ming felt the wait wouldn't be too long.

He was content to wait patiently without any rush.

Glancing at the breeding zone's points once more, he saw they had surpassed one thousand.

This meant he could afford another upgrade for the house.

With resolve, Su Ming ceased his hesitation.

He invested 1000 points to upgrade the breeding zone from Level Two to Level Three.

“Breeding zone is upgrading. Upgrade will complete in: 12 hours!”

Su Ming then visited the aquatic product area, where he scattered some feed into the water.

The loaches were lively and healthy, darting joyfully through the water.

The sheep appeared to be thriving.

They bleated affectionately upon spotting Su Ming.

They had a close bond with him.

Su Ming had finished attending to the tasks in the three designated areas.

He started by sweeping the courtyard.

Afterward, he replaced the water in the swimming pool, cleaned the farm truck, and organized the fertilizer in the warehouse.

Though these tasks were varied, Su Ming dedicated his morning to completing them.

Before he knew it, noon had arrived.

Dressed in simple cloth attire, with cloth shoes and a straw hat, Su Ming was squatting in the field, weeding. A towel was draped over his shoulder.

Just then, the villa's door swung open.

Su Qiu emerged, still clad in her pajamas, looking as though she had just woken up.

Upon seeing Su Ming, she rubbed her eyes and said, "Brother, I'm hungry."

Su Ming couldn't help but feel a bit exasperated.

He remembered how much Su Qiu had eaten the night before and was surprised she could be hungry again so soon. Yet, he also realized that her hearty appetite wasn't necessarily a bad thing.

"Alright," Su Ming replied with a smile, "go freshen up first."

Su Qiu nodded and headed off to shower.

Su Ming's home was stocked with women's clothing.

These garments weren't purchased by Su Ming, but by the manager who had overseen the villa's construction.

Believing Su Ming to be a wealthy and handsome man, the manager assumed that there would be many women in his life, so having extra women's clothing on hand seemed sensible.

However, Su Ming wasn't the type the manager had imagined.

Only a few women resided in Su Ming's villa.

One was Little Streamer, whom Su Ming had previously met.

Another was his sister, Su Qiu, who was part of his family.

Su Ming approached the tap and rinsed his hands and feet.

He hung the straw hat on a hook in the warehouse, washed the towel, and laid it out to dry on the clothes rack.

Removing his sweat-drenched shirt, he tossed it into a nearby bucket, planning to wash it later in the afternoon.

After cleaning his mud-caked feet, he slipped into a fresh pair of slippers and a clean set of clothes, then made his way back to the villa.

Su Ming entered the kitchen.

The charcoal in the hot pot was still glowing.

The water in the pot continued to bubble.

However, thanks to the System, there were no safety hazards in the kitchen.

The evaporation rate of the water was significantly slower than normal, ensuring the pot still contained water.

But the water level had indeed dropped by more than half.

Su Ming moved the hot pot to the center of the living room.

He opened the refrigerator and retrieved all of yesterday's ingredients.

Then he sliced some fresh fruits and vegetables.

A knock sounded at the door.

Su Ming glanced at the clock.

He murmured to himself, "Who could that be knocking? A band member?"

That seemed unlikely since Su Ming had informed them that today was a day off.

So, who could it be?

With a hint of curiosity, Su Ming approached the door and opened it.

Xiao Chen stood there with a grin, greeting, "Brother-in-law!"

Su Ming returned the smile, "It's hot out there. Come on in."

"Sure, brother-in-law."

Xiao Chen entered, beaming and trailing behind Su Ming like a faithful follower.

Puzzled, Su Ming inquired, "What brings you here?"

Xiao Chen replied, "Today's my dad's birthday, and he'd like you to join us for dinner at our place."

Su Ming paused, then asked, "His birthday? Why didn't you let me know sooner?"

"Brother-in-law, we didn't mean to keep it from you. He specifically instructed us not to tell you too early."

Xiao Chen quickly clarified, "His birthday mornings are always hectic with friends dropping by. Knowing you're not fond of socializing, he asked me to inform you at noon. We'll all have dinner together tonight."

Realization dawned on Su Ming, and he asked, "Have you eaten lunch yet?"

Xiao Chen chuckled, "Brother-in-law, it's almost one in the afternoon. I've already had lunch."

"Well, even if you've had lunch, join us for a bite."

"No, brother-in-law, my family is quite strict about eating only at meal times. What's that smell, though? It's delightful." Xiao Chen paused, suddenly intrigued by the aroma.

He stood still, taking in his surroundings with a deep breath.

The air was thick with the enticing aroma of hotpot.

The scent was simply irresistible!

With a teasing smile, Su Ming asked, "Do you want to try it?"

Xiao Chen nodded vigorously, exclaiming, "Yes!"

He quickly followed Su Ming inside the house.

His eyes grew wide at the sight of the bubbling hotpot and the array of ingredients spread out on the table.

"Is this the famous hotpot?"

Su Ming paused, taken aback by Xiao Chen's question.

"You've never had hotpot before?" Su Ming asked, puzzled.

At the question, Xiao Chen looked like he was on the verge of tears.

“Brother-in-law, my family has very strict rules. The last time I went out to eat with you and my sister was one of the rare occasions I've been allowed to dine out.”

Xiao Chen felt deeply aggrieved.

To outsiders, he might appear to be from a privileged family, living in the lap of luxury.

But the reality was that within his prestigious family, there were numerous rules, and the expectations placed on a future heir like Xiao Chen were particularly high.

He had been under strict guidance all his life, expected to excel in every aspect, from his capabilities to his health.

Chapter 402 - Brotherinlaw Save Me!

Su Qiu emerged from the bathroom just then.

Xiao Chen was thoroughly enjoying his meal, so he merely nodded in acknowledgment upon seeing Su Qiu.

It wasn't that Xiao Chen was impolite; his mouth was simply too full of food to carry on a conversation.

The trio lounged on the couch, chatting away as they ate.

Su Ming had put on a movie, and they were all quite pleased to watch it together.

Time flew by, and before they knew it, it was already mid-afternoon.

Just then, Xiao Chen's phone rang.

He paused, a look of confusion crossing his face as he pulled out his phone.

“Oh no!” Xiao Chen's face turned ashen as he saw the caller ID. His hand slackened, and his chopsticks clattered to the floor.

“What's the matter?” Su Ming inquired, looking puzzled.

“It's my sister calling. She told me to hurry back before I came here, and I completely forgot,” Xiao Chen said, his face ghostly pale with dread.

In a sudden panic, he tossed his phone aside and clutched Su Ming's hand.

Su Ming jumped, startled by the gesture.

Internally, Su Ming mused, "I'm certainly not into this. You've been calling me 'brother-in-law' every day, and I've humored you because your sister is both attractive and talented. But honestly, I have no interest in her."

"Brother-in-law, please help me," Xiao Chen pleaded with a tearful voice, "or my dad's birthday will turn into the day of my demise!"

It's often said that one must steer clear of temptation to lead a better life.

Xiao Chen had initially intended to notify them and then dash home.

The morning guests were acquaintances they barely knew.

Nevertheless, each of these guests was of no ordinary standing.

The afternoon visitors would be fewer but more significant, including friends and relatives.

As the prospective patriarch and heir to the Xiao family, it was crucial for Xiao Chen to make his presence felt.

It was an opportunity to hone his skills and to broaden his network.

But in the joy of the moment, Xiao Chen had forgotten this vital commitment.

Should he return now, a stern reprimand from his family was all but guaranteed.

With tears brimming in his eyes, Xiao Chen recounted his predicament.

Hearing the tale, Su Ming was torn between laughter and sympathy.

"It's okay, you can just say I wouldn't let you leave," Su Ming said with a smile.

"Brother-in-law, thank you. You're the beacon on my future path!" Xiao Chen exclaimed with emotion.

Su Ming changed into a different outfit, as his loungewear was far too casual for the occasion.

He was off to attend the patriarch's birthday banquet and needed to look his best.

In the basement, Su Ming picked up a handful of bracelets and stamps. Covered in dust, they weren't of much use to him anymore, but he couldn't bring himself to sell them. Instead, he decided to have President Chen assist him in disposing of these items.

He also selected two bottles of fine red wine and packed everything into a large black plastic bag.

"Aren't you scared to be home alone?" he asked.

"Don't worry, bro, I'm not scared," Su Qiu replied with a smile.

"Don't worry, Master, I will ensure your sister's safety," Yuvyuv assured him telepathically.

Su Ming nodded, comforted by the presence of the System.

He grabbed the gifts and chose a car from the garage at random, then he and Xiao Chen headed straight for the countryside estate.

As they neared the estate, Xiao Chen was sweating profusely, a mix of fear and guilt written all over his face.

Seeing this, Su Ming asked with a chuckle, "Are you coming home or walking to the gallows?"

Xiao Chen glanced at Su Ming, his eyes brimming with dread.

"Brother-in-law, heading home feels just like going to the gallows!" Xiao Chen confessed.

Su Ming laughed at his response. Xiao Chen's standing in the family must have been quite low.

Parking the car, Su Ming led the way with the gifts in hand, while Xiao Chen followed, his body tensed and sticking close to Su Ming's shadow.

"Xiao Chen!" A sharp voice called out, causing Xiao Chen to shudder.

The door swung open, revealing a beautiful girl with a furrowed brow, looking at Xiao Chen with irritation. It was Xiao Ke'er, whom Su Ming hadn't seen in days.

"Mr. Su?" Xiao Ke'er's frown turned to surprise and joy upon seeing Su Ming.

She quickly approached Su Ming, greeting him with a warm smile.

She had committed to a one-year stint as a consultant director for the company. Recently, she had been busy working in the capital for a few days. Today was her father's birthday, so she took special leave to return home.

Su Ming greeted her with a smile, "Welcome back!"

Xiao Ke'er returned the smile, "The work in the capital is wrapped up, so I'm back to relax for a few days."

Just then, an aged voice called out, "Mr. Su."

Su Ming turned to the source of the voice and saw Old Master Tang.

Old Master Tang gave Su Ming a look of admiration and said warmly, "Mr. Su, it's been too long since our last meeting."

Su Ming replied with a smile, "Old Master Tang, you're as healthy as ever, I see."

Old Master Tang got straight to the point, "I'm looking forward to seeing you two get married and start a family."

Su Ming was puzzled by the sudden turn in conversation.

Why was Old Master Tang bringing this up now?

Xiao Ke'er's cheeks flushed at the mention, and she said shyly, "Grandpa Tang!"

"I'll say no more. Xiao is inside waiting for you. Let's go join him," Old Master Tang suggested, and he and Su Ming exchanged a polite gesture before proceeding inside.

It was now well past three in the afternoon, and the remaining guests were all close to the Xiao family. Su Ming surveyed the room, recognizing all the prominent figures from Eastsea.

"Good afternoon, Mr. Su."

"Mr. Su, please."

"Mr. Su, have a seat."

Upon seeing Su Ming, everyone rose to their feet, offering him their utmost respect.

Then, a robust laugh filled the room.

Old Master Xiao emerged, chuckling, "Mr. Su, I'm supposed to be the guest of honor today, but your arrival has stolen the spotlight. It seems Xiao Chen was right to invite you a bit later."

Su Ming, clutching a black plastic bag, quickly approached Old Master Xiao and said, "Old Master Xiao, enough with the jokes. Happy birthday. Here's my gift to you."

As he finished, all eyes were drawn to the black plastic bag.

Were they judging the modesty of the bag?

Did they find Su Ming's choice embarrassing?

Certainly not!

Among them circulated a legend concerning a black plastic bag.

While others might use black plastic bags for trash or to conceal personal items, Su Ming would use them to hold precious treasures!

All eyes were fixed on that black plastic bag, brimming with longing.

What could be inside the plastic bag?

They were all eager for Old Master Xiao to reveal its contents.

If he didn't open it today, they felt they would toss and turn all night.

Curiosity, after all, is a trait we all share!

Chapter 403 - Lee Zhanmu

As anticipation filled the air, a series of footsteps approached the doorway. A young man, dressed sharply in a suit and tie with leather shoes and a watch, strode in with confidence, his head held high. His hair was slicked back, and upon his entrance, he greeted everyone in fluent English, leaving the room in a state of shock.

Who was this stranger?

Why had the elder invited a foreigner to his birthday celebration?

They weren't aware of any foreign relatives in the old man's family.

And what was with his flashy attire?

It was a good thing the lights were off; otherwise, his outfit would have been blindingly bright, making it difficult for them to even keep their eyes open.

If he had come to boast, he was sorely mistaken.

It was akin to a beggar finding a dollar and claiming wealth at a bank.

The room buzzed with confusion and murmurs.

Xiao Ke'er's brow furrowed in slight annoyance at the sight of him, her face etched with distaste. "Why are you here?" she asked, her tone edged.

"I heard your grandfather is celebrating his birthday today, so I decided to come and pay my respects," he replied, standing tall with his hands clasped behind his back. Despite being a foreigner, his Mandarin was impressively good.

He seemed to think he was the epitome of cool, drawing all eyes to him as soon as he made his entrance.

"Who is he?" the old man asked, his brow creased with curiosity.

With a hint of resignation, Xiao Ke'er explained, "Grandpa, he's a colleague of mine."

Recently, Xiao Ke'er's employer had brought in a consultant from overseas. The consultant was of mixed heritage, with a name too long for Xiao Ke'er to remember, but he went by the Chinese name Lee Zhanmu. His good looks and wealth had made him quite popular among the young ladies at the company.

However, he had set his sights on Xiao Ke'er, persistently pursuing her despite her lack of interest.

Xiao Ke'er had taken leave to escape Lee Zhanmu's advances, never imagining he would boldly show up at her family's doorstep.

The old man nodded in understanding. "Ah, so you're Kemeng's friend. Please, come in and sit down."

"Thank you, sir," Lee Zhanmu responded, nodding in return.

With the eyes of the room upon him, he entered with an air of superiority, convinced he was the most impressive person there.

As Lee Zhanmu was basking in his own glory, the elder's attention shifted to Su Ming. "Mr. Su, please take a seat," he said.

At the mention of this title, Lee Zhanmu's brow furrowed slightly, and he turned his attention to Su Ming.

Who was this man?

Why did the elder refer to him as Mr. Su?

Was he trying to usurp the spotlight from him today?

Meanwhile, Xiao Chen stealthily approached Su Ming, hoping to coax some favorable words from him. “Brother-in-law, I...”

Xiao Chen was cut off mid-sentence as Xiao Ke'er intervened sharply, “Go back to the study and stay there!”

“Okay.” Xiao Chen, visibly shaken, quickly scurried back to the study.

The term “brother-in-law” only deepened Lee Zhanmu's frown.

Xiao Ke'er had a boyfriend! That was something Lee Zhanmu found hard to swallow.

But he wasn't about to give up. He believed that if he proved himself exceptional, he could win Xiao Ke'er over.

Besides, Su Ming's attire was nothing special, and the gifts he brought were even carried in plastic bags.

In Lee Zhanmu's eyes, aside from being more attractive, Su Ming had no edge over him.

He was determined to outshine Su Ming with his own merits.

The reason the elder addressed Su Ming as Mr. Su was probably because Su Ming was a teacher.

Having read about the imperial court, Lee Zhanmu understood that teachers there were often called ‘sir.’

He assumed that Su Ming must have been tutoring Xiao Ke'er, which led to a romantic connection between them.

The more he pondered, the more plausible it seemed—just like the storylines in TV dramas.

Truth be told, despite his imperial court heritage and being of mixed descent, he was raised abroad and wasn't well-versed in the nuances of the imperial court.

He failed to grasp that ‘sir’ was not exclusively used for teachers or husbands; the word had broader connotations.

Above all, the language of the imperial court was intricate and profound. He mistakenly believed that speaking a few phrases meant he had a deep understanding of the imperial court, which was far from the truth.

Actually, the issue was his own, not someone else's fault.

Lee Zhanmu's competitive spirit was instantly aroused. He was ready to demonstrate his power and capabilities.

No sooner had Lee Zhanmu taken his seat than he pulled a box from his pocket. Inside was a vibrant green bracelet.

“Grandpa, this is my birthday gift to you. I had a friend help me purchase this bracelet for five million yuan,” Lee Zhanmu stated with feigned nonchalance.

He gave the impression that five million yuan was a trifle to him, yet his smug expression betrayed his true feelings.

His words captured the attention of those around him.

They could all afford the bracelet, but they were curious to see what it looked like.

Everyone turned to look. Upon seeing the bracelet, they were taken aback.

They all thought the bracelet was not worth five million yuan.

But Lee Zhanmu believed he had done something remarkable.

The bracelet was indeed meant to be a jade piece, but it was clearly made from counterfeit jade.

The market had seen the rise of a new forgery technique.

Unscrupulous merchants would grind jade into powder, mix it with a special adhesive, and pour it into a mold.

Once the adhesive set, it formed what appeared to be a solid piece of jade.

This kind of fake jade could fool only the uninitiated.

Anyone with a modicum of experience could spot the fake immediately.

Even an average person, with a bit of online research on how to identify genuine versus counterfeit jade, could easily recognize the sham.

After all, buyers are always cautious when purchasing jade, wary of being duped.

Lee Zhanmu, however, didn't know how to tell the difference.

When he saw the bracelet's excellent color and purity, he assumed it was highly valuable.

Thus, he promptly spent five million yuan on the bracelet, intending to flaunt his financial clout.

He believed that the jade bracelet, which cost him five million yuan, would surely impress many.

Ultimately, everyone was indeed impressed.

But the reason for their astonishment was quite different.

Lee Zhanmu thought it was his wealth and aesthetic discernment that had wowed the crowd. In reality, they were astounded by his foolishness.

When Lee Zhanmu caught the shocked expressions on the faces of those around him, he couldn't help but let a smug smile spread across his own.

Old Master Xiao, upon glancing at the jade bracelet, involuntarily twitched at the corner of his mouth.

He exchanged a look with Old Master Tang, both uncertain of how to proceed.

Informing Lee Zhanmu that the bracelet was a counterfeit would come across as impolite. Yet, saying nothing left them feeling uncomfortable.

It was at this juncture that Su Ming chimed in, "What a fantastic gift. You're incredibly generous—a true hallmark of the wealthy!"

Lee Zhanmu, basking in Su Ming's compliment, felt his vanity swell.

He believed he had triumphed over Su Ming through his financial prowess.

He thought Su Ming had started to butter him up.

But the onlookers nearly burst into laughter at his display.

They were connoisseurs in distinguishing genuine jade from the counterfeit and could easily spot the fake in the bracelet.

They were well aware that Su Ming's comments were a sly dig at Lee Zhanmu's foolishness.

Chapter 404 - Trap!

Although the merchant selling the jade was somewhat unscrupulous, the stone itself was invaluable.

If someone falls in love with a stone, even if it's riddled with flaws and impurities, to them, it's a treasure beyond price.

Conversely, if someone dislikes a stone, it could be the finest jade and still hold no value to them.

Lee Zhanmu observed this and thought himself quite impressive.

His actions immediately intimidated everyone around him.

He straightened his clothes with pride, surveyed the room, and then announced loudly, "All of you are prominent figures in Eastsea. I have news to share. I'm planning to start a company here, and we may have many opportunities to collaborate in the future."

"Once my company goes public, I'll host a dinner for all of you."

"Rest assured. Though Eastsea's environment and amenities may seem modest compared to International Street, as long as you partner with me, I guarantee we'll make it onto the global stage."

Lee Zhanmu smiled, his expression one of sheer arrogance.

He carried himself with an air of superiority, as if his presence was a blessing to Eastsea.

His words caused the brows of those around him to furrow.

What was he implying?

Was he belittling Eastsea? If he disdained Eastsea, he had no business staying there.

Eastsea was a top-tier city in the nation, with a highly developed economy and politics, certainly on par with International Street.

If he preferred International Street, he should go back to his own country.

He shouldn't assume he belonged to the imperial court simply because he had its bloodline.

Su Ming's brow also creased as he listened.

Eastsea was Li Ming's hometown. How dare this foreigner speak ill of it?

His pursuit of Xiao Ke'er had already irked Su Ming, and now he had the audacity to insult Su Ming's hometown. This foreigner was crossing the line. Su Ming felt the urge to set him straight.

Despite his inner thoughts, Su Ming's face betrayed a look of pleasant surprise. He said, "Mr. Lee, you're truly formidable. We look forward to your assistance in the future."

"It's nothing," Lee Zhanmu replied, basking in Su Ming's adulation.

He believed himself to be the most luminous star of the day.

Back home, he often kept up with news from the imperial court. The reports depicted its people as unable to get enough food, lacking warm clothing, and holding foreign countries in high esteem.

He had come to realize that it was indeed true.

As a foreigner and a wealthy individual, he believed himself to be quite formidable.

Lee Zhanmu was swelling with pride, yet the bosses around him, Old Master Tang, Old Master Xiao, and Xiao Ke'er, were all struggling to keep their expressions neutral.

They were all too familiar with Su Ming's character.

Given Su Ming's standing, it was out of the question for him to fawn over a foreigner.

Su Ming's comments were surely a sign that he had laid a trap for the unsuspecting foreigner.

The crowd was brimming with anticipation and curiosity, eager to witness how Su Ming would outwit the foreigner.

With a sly grin, Su Ming inquired, "Starting a company must cost a pretty penny, doesn't it?"

Lee Zhanmu boasted, "I spent only a few tens of millions of yuan."

Su Ming prodded further, "The process of converting foreign currency to local currency is quite cumbersome, isn't it?"

"No problem. I secured a loan from President Chen," Lee Zhanmu responded.

"Aha," Su Ming feigned a moment of clarity.

The onlookers perked up at this revelation.

The self-satisfied Lee Zhanmu spilled the beans. The funds for his company had come from a loan.

Had he sought a loan from any other bank, his situation wouldn't be so dire.

But to borrow from Tianhua Bank—was he unaware that President Chen was Mr. Su's underling?

“That's a hefty sum. It must have been quite the challenge to secure that loan from the bank, right?” Su Ming asked, still smiling as he pulled out his phone.

“For you, perhaps, but for me, it was a walk in the park. The moment I arrived, the bank staff rushed to process my loan. Even President Chen didn't dare utter an extra word,” Lee Zhanmu declared with an air of superiority.

Lee Zhanmu's arrogance knew no bounds; he disdained everyone.

Su Ming nodded, unlocked his phone, and sent a message to President Chen: “Cancel Lee Zhanmu's loan.”

With feigned admiration, Su Ming praised, “You are truly impressive. For us mere mortals, obtaining a loan is quite the ordeal.”

Upon hearing Su Ming's words, Lee Zhanmu was overjoyed. He believed his power and cunning to be unmatched by anyone from the imperial court.

President Chen was in his office, sipping tea, when his phone suddenly vibrated with an incoming text message. He furrowed his brow, puzzled, as text messaging had become almost obsolete in this age of rapid technological advancement. Could it be a scam?

With a nonchalant expression, President Chen picked up his phone and examined the message closely. To his surprise, it was from Mr. Su! He quickly opened the message, scrutinizing each word to ensure he didn't misinterpret anything.

Having read the message, President Chen didn't hesitate to act on Su Ming's request, harboring not a shred of doubt. For him, Mr. Su's commands were to be executed without delay. There was no need to question Mr. Su's motives; following his directives was always the right move.

Without wasting a moment, President Chen pulled out his phone and called Lee Zhanmu.

Meanwhile, Lee Zhanmu was boasting, “My company is formidable and will soon lead the industry.”

Just then, his phone rang. Lee Zhanmu saw the caller ID and smirked with conceit. Receiving a call from President Chen, the head of Eastsea's largest bank, was an opportunity to flaunt his status, especially since he was in higher standing than many others there.

Lee Zhanmu believed that President Chen, following the approval of a substantial loan, was reaching out to propose an investment in his company. He anticipated deference from President Chen, who would surely seek to ingratiate himself if Lee Zhanmu played hard to get, thereby elevating his own status even further.

Thrilled by this prospect, Lee Zhanmu cleared his throat and announced, "I'm swamped every day. See, President Chen is calling me. Excuse me, I need to take this call."

He set his phone on the table for all to see, tapped the answer button with a smug look, and switched on the speakerphone.

He would soon come to regret this decision.

Yet, oblivious to the impending outcome, Lee Zhanmu remained smug. He coughed, straightened his posture, and answered, "President Chen, what can I do for you?"

Chapter 405 - Disgrace

Lee Zhanmu was brimming with pride.

He was convinced that President Chen would treat him with the utmost respect over the phone.

But as Lee Zhanmu reveled in his self-assurance, he was taken aback by President Chen's voice on the line.

"Lee Zhanmu, there's something I need to discuss with you."

President Chen sounded quite nonchalant.

He addressed Lee Zhanmu by name, his tone tinged with a hint of indifference.

Lee Zhanmu was momentarily stunned, sensing that something was amiss.

How could this be happening?

He then rationalized that perhaps this was just how people from the imperial court conducted phone calls.

"President Chen, what seems to be the issue?"

Lee Zhanmu maintained his confidence.

"Lee Zhanmu, we've canceled your loan."

With an air of self-importance, Lee Zhanmu responded, "You're saying you want to buy in? I'll need to think it over."

The onlookers were taken aback.

A hush fell over the room; no one uttered a word.

Was there a problem with Lee Zhanmu's hearing?

He seemed to be in a world of his own.

He hadn't paid any attention to President Chen's words. His arrogance had gotten the better of him.

"What are you talking about? I told you, your loan has been canceled. Goodbye."

President Chen, clearly irritated, ended the call abruptly.

"Why are people from the imperial court so impolite? He was just pleading with me to cancel the loan, and yet he..."

Lee Zhanmu's brow furrowed. Mid-sentence, he was struck by the realization that something was terribly off.

He was in disbelief that his loan had been canceled.

What was going on?

He had intended to boast in front of everyone, but instead, he had made a fool of himself.

Could anyone explain what had just happened?

In a panic, Lee Zhanmu grabbed his phone and redialed President Chen's number.

"Hello, the number you are trying to reach is currently unavailable."

President Chen had blocked him!

Lee Zhanmu then frantically called other bank employees, only to receive the same response.

Noticing the stares from those around him, his face contorted with embarrassment.

He had claimed that President Chen was desperate for him to take out a loan, but now President Chen had called to terminate their deal.

Lee Zhanmu forced an awkward smile.

“No matter. It's just a minor setback.”

“I think the issue must be that my loan amount was too large for the bank's capacity.”

“I had intended to open my business quickly, which is why I opted for a loan.”

“If President Chen doesn't have the funds to loan me, I'll just delay the opening by a few days. It's not a big deal.”

Lee Zhanmu concocted a flawless excuse for himself.

He was pleased with his quick thinking.

Those around him couldn't help but notice his knack for making excuses.

But was he really convinced that President Chen pulled out of the deal because the loan was too hefty?

Tianhua Bank is the premier bank in Eastsea City.

They could easily issue loans in the billions without batting an eye.

And if they reached out to their headquarters, securing loans in the tens of billions wouldn't be out of the question.

What kind of enterprise was Lee Zhanmu planning that required such a massive amount of capital?

It seemed he was merely trying to save face.

Su Ming added, “Indeed. This setback is trivial for Mr. Lee.”

The crowd remained silent, observing the unfolding drama.

Mr. Su was personally handling Lee Zhanmu, and everyone was eager to see Lee Zhanmu hold his ground a bit longer instead of making an early exit, which would spoil the fun.

“Absolutely.”

Lee Zhanmu, misreading Su Ming's expression, believed his self-assurance had effectively masked the situation, and a look of delight spread across his face.

Su Ming then inquired with a grin, "By the way, Mr. Lee, where is your company located?"

"The standards in Eastsea are subpar, and the architectural environment leaves much to be desired."

"Finding a suitable location for my company's headquarters has been quite the challenge."

"I came across a new development with two decent storefronts available, so I decided to rent them."

Lee Zhanmu stroked his chin, "The place is called Empire Community, if I'm not mistaken."

The individuals behind him nearly burst into laughter upon hearing this.

Lee Zhanmu was on the verge of embarrassing himself once more.

They were familiar with Su Ming and knew that he owned the Empire Community development.

Even the shops adjacent to the complex were Su Ming's property.

They thought to themselves that Lee Zhanmu was out of his element in the imperial court.

He consistently stirred up trouble in Su Ming's presence, who could effortlessly turn the tables on him.

Not only had he sought a loan from President Chen, but he had also rented property from Boss Fong, which, unbeknownst to him, was owned by Su Ming.

Lee Zhanmu's luck was downright terrible.

They even suggested that since Lee Zhanmu had managed to anger Su Ming, he might as well make a quick exit and drive back to his home country. If there were no direct routes to M Country, perhaps he should purchase an inflatable boat and paddle his way back.

"That's a great place."

This time, Su Ming nodded with genuine approval.

His entourage echoed his sentiment.

They figured that if it was Mr. Su's domain, it certainly had to be top-notch.

“Indeed, I have a knack for picking out the best spots!”

Lee Zhanmu's enthusiasm surged once more.

He had completely put the incident with President Chen behind him.

His demeanor had become exceedingly arrogant.

Su Ming pulled out his smartphone and shot a text to Boss Fong.

“Don't rent the house to Lee Zhanmu.”

After sending the message, Su Ming set his phone aside.

The other bosses witnessing the scene realized that Su Ming was about to play his usual tricks on Lee Zhanmu. Poor Lee Zhanmu was about to be humiliated once again.

Just as Lee Zhanmu's arrogance returned, his phone began to ring.

Seeing that it was Boss Fong calling, he sensed another chance to shine.

He had just suffered a blow to his pride because of President Chen.

He was determined to restore his reputation through Boss Fong.

Lee Zhanmu cleared his throat, his eyes scanning the crowd.

He intended to use this call to demonstrate his significant influence to the onlookers.

To flaunt his power, he waited a good twenty seconds before lazily answering the call.

Lee Zhanmu inquired with a drawn-out tone, “Boss Fong, what can I do for you?”

“Why are you just picking up now? What have you been up to?”

Boss Fong's voice crackled through the line, dripping with impatience.

Lee Zhanmu sensed that something was amiss with Boss Fong's response—it wasn't aligning with his expectations.

Despite cultural differences in phone etiquette, Lee Zhanmu could discern the underlying message in Boss Fong's tone.

Far from respectful, Boss Fong sounded downright annoyed.

Lee Zhanmu was taken aback.

Boss Fong spoke with irritation, "You've rented three of my properties. When do you plan to pay the rent? Today is the final deadline!"

"Could I have just a few more days?"

A muscle in the corner of Lee Zhanmu's eye gave a slight twitch.

Chapter 406 - Everything Was too Much of a Coincidence!!

He was supposed to secure a loan from President Chen today, which would have covered his rent. It all could have been so simple.

But now, the loan was off the table.

And Lee Zhanmu had completely forgotten about the rent.

He assumed Boss Fong was calling about something else, so he answered the phone with a smug grin.

But Lee Zhanmu was instantly mortified.

What on earth was happening?

"I'm telling you, there are plenty of people waiting to rent my property. If you don't have the money today, I'll rent it to someone else!" Boss Fong's voice came through.

With that, Boss Fong ended the call.

Lee Zhanmu's face turned a shade of steel gray as he thought, "Damn it! Something feels off. Are they picking on me?"

Lee Zhanmu had hoped to impress everyone, but his attempts had backfired spectacularly. Not only did he not succeed, but he also repeatedly faced embarrassment in front of a crowd.

Meanwhile, Su Ming was somewhat baffled.

How did Boss Fong find out Lee Zhanmu was broke?

Turning around, Su Ming instantly grasped the situation. He noticed several bosses behind him sneakily pulling out their phones, streaming the whole scene live.

Boss Fong was comfortably ensconced in his office, sipping tea and snacking while enjoying the live feed.

“You tried to strut in front of Mr. Su. Not so easy now, is it?” Boss Fong mused.

Lee Zhanmu sat on the couch, his eye twitching, his face the picture of discomfort.

The other bosses watched Lee Zhanmu eagerly, thinking, “Lee Zhanmu, your moment of truth has arrived. We're all eyes on you, waiting to see how you'll wriggle out of this one.”

Lee Zhanmu's mind raced as he thought, “Good heavens! Can someone please give me some on-the-spot advice? How should I explain this?”

Then, an idea struck him. His eyes sparkled, he let out a sly chuckle, and his confidence surged.

“Ah, to be honest, I wasn't really keen on Boss Fong's properties.”

“I was just trying to spare Boss Fong some embarrassment.”

“After all, I'll need to collaborate with Boss Fong in Eastsea down the line.”

Lee Zhanmu said, sporting a self-satisfied smile. He believed he had crafted the perfect excuse, even considering awarding himself 99 points instead of a full 100, just to keep his ego in check.

“Mr. Lee, is your company still going to open?”

Su Ming inquired from the side.

“Absolutely! I must open my company.”

Lee Zhanmu responded immediately, feeling the weight of his earlier boasts. To back down now would be too humiliating.

“But without the money or a location, how do you plan to open your company?”

Su Ming pressed on.

The other executives listening in couldn't help but feel a pang of sympathy for Lee Zhanmu.

They were all aware that Su Ming was toying with Lee Zhanmu once again.

“No worries at all.”

“There's a trading group in Eastsea, the Wang Group. You've heard of them, haven't you?”

“I'm acquainted with the owner, Wang Guohui.”

“We've done some trading in the past.”

Lee Zhanmu said with a composed smile, “This time, I'm collaborating with Boss Wang. If I seek his assistance, he's sure to provide me with a space.”

The others struggled to contain their laughter, shaking their heads and covering their faces.

Even the two elderly gentlemen shook their heads in disbelief.

Xiao Ke'er also had to stifle a chuckle. She thought to herself, “Lee Zhanmu, maybe I should buy you a plane ticket. You'd better catch the next flight home. You're practically handing your dignity to Mr. Su on a silver platter, begging him to take a swing at you.”

The rest pondered, “Initially, we understood why you approached President Chen for a loan, given that Tianhua Bank is the biggest in the region. And your request to Boss Fong for renting property made sense, considering it's a prime new development with top-notch facilities. But why on earth would you turn to Wang Guohui for help? You're just asking for trouble, laying your neck on Mr. Su's chopping block. Even if Mr. Su has no intention of targeting you, you're going out of your way to provoke him. You should head home. This isn't the place for you. You're no match for Mr. Su; you're simply not in the same league.”

Su Ming's mouth twitched involuntarily at the thought.

President Chen, Boss Fong, and Wang Guohui were all well-known to him.

He knew these people all too well.

Everyone around was watching Su Ming closely.

With practiced ease, Su Ming pulled out his phone.

He located Wang Guohui's contact details and sent off a text message.

Su Ming dispatched three texts, yet Lee Zhanmu remained oblivious.

Lee Zhanmu was busy flaunting himself, trying to catch Xiao Ke'er's eye.

Moreover, Lee Zhanmu was quite haughty.

Proud to be from M Country, Lee Zhanmu would never stoop before anyone.

But people as conceited as Lee Zhanmu often find themselves in hot water.

While Lee Zhanmu was bragging, his phone rang once more.

This time, Lee Zhanmu paused, nervously rubbing his nose.

His Adam's apple bobbed as he involuntarily swallowed.

A sense of foreboding washed over him.

He thought, "There's no way such coincidences happen. It just can't be."

Lee Zhanmu said with a smile, "We were just talking about Boss Wang. Now he's calling me."

The onlookers couldn't help but facepalm in silence.

Truth be told, they were starting to feel a bit sorry for Lee Zhanmu.

He was in a pitiful and embarrassing situation.

Yet, he insisted on antagonizing Mr. Su. He was really courting disaster.

Lee Zhanmu picked up the call and said, "Boss Wang, what can I do for you?"

Lee Zhanmu tried to appear composed, but anxiety was gnawing at him inside.

This was, after all, the second time such an incident had occurred.

"Lee Zhanmu, I apologize. Our company has decided to terminate our partnership with you," Boss Wang stated bluntly before hanging up.

This time, Lee Zhanmu was utterly flabbergasted.

What in the world was happening?

Could life really be filled with such coincidences?

Though Lee Zhanmu sensed that something was amiss, he couldn't pinpoint the issue.

Lee Zhanmu thought, "I can't stay here any longer. In the words of the imperial court, this place is cursed. I need to get out of here fast. If I linger, I might end up bankrupt."

Unable to remain seated, Lee Zhanmu stood up hastily.

He had lost the desire to impress and pursue Xiao Ke'er.

It was shockingly unbelievable.

It was an uncanny coincidence.

Lee Zhanmu said, "I've just remembered there's some business I need to take care of at the company, so I must excuse myself. Farewell, everyone."

Lee Zhanmu was on edge, ready to make his exit.

But as he turned to leave, a strong hand firmly grasped his arm.

Turning back, Lee Zhanmu saw Su Ming with a smile, saying, "Don't rush off. Let's chat a bit more. I'm eager to learn how you manage the affairs of such a large company."

Chapter 407 - Shocking News!

"No!"

Lee Zhanmu sprang up like a startled rabbit.

He had no intention of staying. After suffering a heavy blow here, he was ready to leave the imperial court and head back to his home country.

Su Ming, smiling, said, "Don't leave just yet. You've only just arrived, and you haven't even had a meal."

"I'm not eating. I'm not hungry!"

Lee Zhanmu declared, eager to leave without wasting another second. He turned on his heel and strode toward the door.

But as he reached the entrance, he noticed several black sedans pulling up.

The doors swung open, and a few individuals stepped out.

Lee Zhanmu froze.

Several middle-aged men emerged from the cars, dressed in sharp suits and ties, looking very polished. Their faces were flushed with health, and they carried themselves with confidence.

They were none other than President Chen, Wang Guohui, and Boss Fong.

There was no need to introduce President Chen and Wang Guohui; they had long been acquainted.

Boss Fong had borrowed money from President Chen for a previous construction project, so naturally, they knew each other as well.

They had all watched today's live broadcast and, after a brief exchange, were aware of the situation.

Seeing these men, Lee Zhanmu's anger flared.

“President Chen, we were having a good talk. Why won't you extend me the loan?”

“Boss Fong, I asked for just two more days to repay you. It's not like I'm refusing to pay.”

“Boss Wang, we're old friends. You've shown me great disrespect.”

Lee Zhanmu stood with his hands on his hips, his posture broadcasting his fury and discontent.

The three men gave him a cool glance and greeted him with detached civility.

Lee Zhanmu then realized something. Today was the birthday of the Xiao family's patriarch, and all of Eastsea's notables were in attendance. As prominent figures in Eastsea, they were expected to be there, but why had they only just arrived?

The answer was simple: Su Ming had not yet arrived.

They all knew Su Ming would certainly attend, given his well-known connection to the Xiao family.

Thus, they had decided to wait for Mr. Su to make his appearance before they themselves would arrive.

Now that Su Ming had arrived, they had come together.

While Lee Zhanmu was lost in thought, the three men made their way to Su Ming in perfect sync.

“Mr. Su, as per your instructions, I've canceled Lee Zhanmu's loan.”

“Mr. Su, following your orders, I've terminated the lease for the house rented to Lee Zhanmu.”

“Mr. Su, as you directed, I've ended our partnership with Lee Zhanmu.”

They spoke to Su Ming with utmost respect.

“You've all worked hard. Please, have a seat.”

“Yes, sir!”

Once Su Ming had finished, the three men stood neatly behind him.

Others in the vicinity watched the scene with envy, wishing they too could stand behind Mr. Su as his bodyguards.

How did these three get so lucky? Especially that Old Fong.

Old Fong had clearly crossed Mr. Su before, so how was he still receiving such favorable treatment?

Lee Zhanmu's eyes bulged and his mouth hung open.

Were they all in league together?

Was it all a setup?

Was Su Ming actually the leader of these three?

It turned out he was the one who had embarrassed himself.

It made sense now why his endeavors had consistently failed.

They were taking advantage of him, a newcomer to the imperial court.

Just then, Lee Zhanmu's phone rang, catching him off guard.

He pulled out his phone and glanced at it.

This was his chance to change his fortunes!

It was a call from his father.

Lee Zhanmu thought, his family's business was a multinational corporation. Surely his father was calling to inform him that they had secured the billion yuan in funding. With that money, he wouldn't have to rely on these people anymore.

He was determined to reclaim the respect he had lost!

With this in mind, Lee Zhanmu stayed put, gleefully answering the call at the doorway.

“Dad, what's up? Have you managed to secure the billion yuan?”

“Son, your father's company has been accused of tax evasion and is now bankrupt!”

A woman's crying echoed from the other end.

“What?”

Lee Zhanmu was shocked and exclaimed, “Mom, please, this isn't a time for jokes. It's not April Fools' Day!”

The voice on the phone replied, “I'm not joking. Your bank cards have all been frozen, and you don't even have enough money for a plane ticket home. If you can't make ends meet, you might have to beg on the streets. The people at the imperial court are quite generous. And don't bother calling us again; we're not going to use this phone card anymore.”

Lee Zhanmu was in a state of panic and blurted out, “No, Mom, don't we have that bank card at home with a lot of money on it?”

“Quit fixating on that bank card; it's where your father and I have saved our retirement funds! And to be honest with you, you're not our biological child. We adopted you from the imperial court.”

“We knew the company was going under before you left for the imperial court. The reason we sent you away was to get you out of the picture.”

With that, the voice on the other end of the line went dead.

Lee Zhanmu was utterly stunned.

When he tried calling his mother back, her phone was already switched off.

The room fell into an eerie silence.

What a spectacle this was.

Their visit today had certainly not been a waste.

Lee Zhanmu felt an overwhelming urge to cry. He had intended to boast about his father's wealth, only to discover his father's company was bankrupt and he was left without a family.

Poor Lee Zhanmu.

Had he known this would happen, he would never have come here.

Even if his family was bankrupt, if he had managed to secure a loan and start a company, he could have at least pursued a career here and harbored hopes of earning money.

But now, it was all over.

It took a while for Lee Zhanmu to snap out of his daze.

Seeing the looks on the faces of those around him, he couldn't bear it any longer.

He turned on his heel and walked out.

“Wait a minute!”

Su Ming suddenly burst into laughter. “I feel for you, I really do. Here, take this bracelet back with you.”

No sooner had Su Ming spoken than a shadow darted by. The bracelet vanished from Su Ming's hand, swiftly snatched by Lee Zhanmu.

Lee Zhanmu was quick on his feet.

He had purchased the bracelet for five million yuan, thinking he could sell it for three to four million yuan.

With that money, he wouldn't have to worry about going hungry.

However, when Lee Zhanmu went to sell the bracelet, full of hope, he was informed it was a counterfeit, not even worth three to four hundred yuan.

Lee Zhanmu saw red, rage boiling over to the point of making him physically ill.

From that day on, the world had one more heartbroken soul.

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Chapter 408 - The Pumpkin Is Ripe

Lee Zhanmu's incident was merely a minor episode for those in the house.

The remainder of the time was spent in light-hearted conversation and laughter.

Later, everyone shared a meal together before heading their separate ways.

Before departing, they each bid farewell to Mr. Su.

Their gestures left the old man torn between laughter and tears, as he mused, “Whose birthday is it really, Su Ming's or mine? Next time I won't invite Su Ming to my birthday. He's stolen the show.”

Naturally, he was only jesting.

By the time Su Ming got home, night had fallen.

He parked his car in the garage and quickly made his way to the fields.

The pumpkins were ready for harvest.

What would he find this time?

He adeptly opened the gate and stepped into the yard.

After closing the gate behind him, he eagerly headed for the fields.

He had cultivated six acres of pumpkins—there had to be something worthwhile.

As Su Ming entered, he said a silent prayer and took a closer look.

The pumpkins were quite peculiar.

It's common knowledge that there are numerous varieties of pumpkins.

Typically, they're round and yellow, resembling a large pie or a sphere.

But in Su Ming's plot, the vines were a vibrant green, and instead of pumpkins, there were bubbles.

These were the kind of bubbles that children love to blow in parks on weekends.

The bubbles weren't large, roughly the size of an apple, and they shimmered with a rainbow of colors in the light.

A faint red glow on the bubble's surface obscured the contents.

What could this be?

Filled with curiosity, Su Ming approached.

He crouched down and gently prodded the bubble with his finger.

The bubbles were soft and surprisingly warm.

Su Ming could even see wisps of steam rising from them.

The deep autumn nights had grown chilly, necessitating warm clothing.

Yet these bubbles were radiating heat, indicating something warm inside.

Su Ming grinned to himself, thinking, "This is the first time I've ever harvested such a thing. Whatever's inside must be incredibly useful."

He carefully tugged at a bubble, and it remained intact.

Su Ming examined it in his hand; it was slightly heavy.

He gave it a gentle shake, but it remained still.

Su Ming squeezed it gently with his hand.

It remained intact, a testament to its impressive elasticity.

Next, Su Ming jabbed it with his fingertip.

The bubble emitted a faint pop.

A dazzling red light flared.

Su Ming quickly shut his eyes.

After a moment, he cautiously opened them again.

Floating above his palm was a tiny red bead.

"Congratulations, Host, on acquiring the Cold-dispelling Bead. When worn, it will shield you from the cold. Regardless of the temperature, the Cold-dispelling Bead will provide the warmest and most comfortable experience. You could even run naked in freezing weather and still feel as cozy as if it were spring, without feeling the slightest chill."

Su Ming mused, "This is a great item. With this, I won't fear the cold in winter. No need for bulky cotton clothes; I could get by with just shorts, a t-shirt, and flip-flops."

Indeed.

"But, System, can you be a bit more professional? What's this about running naked? Why would I do that in winter? Given my good looks and dashing appearance, not to mention my perfectly sculpted muscles, it would be a total waste to go unclothed and let others gawk for free. You should at least charge admission. Say, one point for a glance."

"The System has noted the Host's desire and will consider it when deciding whether to initiate a mission."

While Su Ming pondered, a prompt sounded in his mind.

He quickly interjected to stop the System.

He protested, "System, you're doing this on purpose, aren't you? I'm always hoping to level up quickly and cultivate excellent items, but you ignore those requests. Why do you jump at the chance to issue a mission the moment I think of something like this?"

"If you actually issue this mission, are you saying I should accept it? Of course, I might consider it if the points are right."

Hearing the System's familiar tone, Su Ming immediately cut it off.

In a rush, he extracted another bead, another Cold-dispelling Bead.

Su Ming noted that the bubble only floated and glowed red during the first minute after being revealed.

After that minute, it transformed into a normal red bead, indistinguishable from an actual ruby, with no apparent abnormalities.

Six acres of land could yield six hundred pumpkins.

This also meant that Su Ming could collect six hundred beads.

Su Ming thought to himself, "Not too shabby."

He grabbed a bag from the villa and started to gather the pumpkins.

He soon noticed something unusual about the bubbles.

The previous bubbles had a reddish glow.

But this bubble looked as if it had ripples of water flowing across its surface.

It was even dripping water.

The droplets vanished upon hitting the ground.

Could this bead be different from the others?

Su Ming quickly reached out, took a bead into his hand, and examined it closely.

Holding this bubble felt like grasping a sphere of water: an extraordinary sensation.

He poked the bubble with his finger, and inside was a drop of water.

But it swiftly transformed into a bead and landed in Su Ming's palm.

Upon closer inspection, he noticed a water droplet pattern at the center of the bead.

The System announced, "Host, congratulations on acquiring the Water Repellent Bead. When worn, it creates a thin protective film over your body. In the event of drowning, this film will keep water away from your body, preventing you from drowning! However, be cautious. The Water Repellent Bead can only separate you from water, not resist the force of its flow!"

Hearing this, Su Ming mused, "A Water Repellent Bead? Quite impressive."

Even though it couldn't counteract the force of moving water, it would significantly improve his odds of surviving a drowning incident, which often occur in calm waters where people are likely to swim and potentially drown.

Yet, in the face of a sudden flood or if someone with suicidal intent deliberately jumps into turbulent waters, the Water Repellent Bead might not be very effective.

Regardless, the Water Repellent Bead was a formidable item.

Something then occurred to Su Ming.

He picked up the Cold-dispelling Bead and scrutinized it under the light.

Indeed, at its center was the image of a tiny flame.

Su Ming pondered, "So this is a second type of bead. I wonder if there are more varieties out there?"

Su Ming's interest was piqued.

He wasted no time and hastened his collection of the beads.

Before long, the third type of bead made its appearance.

This bead was encased in a layer of frost, with snowflakes tumbling from within.

It was the Heat-dispelling Bead, designed to counteract the effects of the Cold-dispelling Bead.

In sweltering climates, anyone wearing the Heat-dispelling Bead would feel a refreshing coolness, as if standing in the breeze of an air conditioner.

A curious thought struck Su Ming: "What would happen if I took this bead to the surface of the sun?"

He chuckled and shook his head, dismissing the fanciful idea.

He resumed his diligent gathering of the beads.

Ultimately, he amassed six different types of beads.

Each acre yielded a unique variety of bead.

The collection comprised the Cold-dispelling Bead, Water Repellent Bead, Heat-dispelling Bead, Fire Repellent Bead, Mosquito Repellent Bead, and Fragrant Bead.

The Fire Repellent Bead could create a protective film between fire and flesh, shielding one from the heat and burns. However, it couldn't protect against injuries caused by falling debris in a fire.

Nonetheless, the Fire Repellent Bead was impressive.

With the Mosquito Repellent Bead on his person, he could fend off mosquito bites, and even cockroaches, centipedes, and snakes would give him a wide berth.

Su Ming already possessed this ability.

The Fragrant Bead, crafted from a unique material, emitted a subtle scent. It was gentle and not overpowering, perfect for alleviating fatigue during work.

Moreover, the Fragrant Bead had the added benefit of inducing a quick and restful sleep.

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Chapter 409 - All of Them Upgraded to Level Two Land!

“You've successfully harvested the crops and received 120,000 experience points! Plus, an additional reward of 24,000!”

“Item recycled. Congratulations, you've earned 6,000 experience points! Additional reward: 1,200!”

Su Ming was holding several bags in his hands.

Though these items seemed unremarkable, he couldn't deny their practicality.

After pondering for a moment, Su Ming made a decision.

He intended to keep half of the pearls for his family and friends and exchange the remainder for points.

“Yuvyuv, how many points do I get for each pearl?”

“Master, each pearl is worth 10 points,” Yuvyuv replied.

Pleased with the exchange rate, Su Ming calculated that with the 300 pearls he had left, he could get 3,000 points.

Adding that to the 3,201 points already in the plantation area, he had a total of 6,000 points.

That meant he could upgrade the remaining six acres to Level Two.

Su Ming walked into the living room with the pearls.

He kept half and converted the rest into points.

A thought suddenly struck him, and he inquired mentally, “Yuvyuv, can these pearls be drilled?”

“Absolutely, drilling the pearls won't affect their use,” Yuvyuv assured him.

Reassured by Yuvyuv's response, Su Ming nodded contentedly.

He planned to craft a bracelet from these pearls for his sister tomorrow. He wouldn't give them to anyone but her.

It wasn't that Su Ming was miserly; it was just that the pearls' effects were extraordinarily potent.

Old Master Tang and his peers were worldly and wise, and they might deduce something about the pearls.

Should they question him later, it could lead to complications.

His sister, however, was in a different situation. As a student with few friends, she spent most of her time at school, where she was unlikely to face danger.

Even if she did encounter peril and discovered the bracelet's miraculous properties, her nature was such that she wouldn't broadcast it.

Su Ming was aware that the existence of his farm would eventually become public knowledge, as he couldn't keep it hidden indefinitely.

Yet, the time to disclose the secrets of his farm had not come; he was not yet powerful enough.

Su Ming paused for a moment before gathering the remaining pearls. He left a few on the table and then headed upstairs. Upon booting up his computer, he instinctively checked the online shop. It offered nothing out of the ordinary, yet Su Ming made a few purchases nonetheless. Among the items were familiar ones he had cultivated before, like chilies and cucumbers.

There was something Su Ming had been curious about: if he were to replant the crops he had previously grown, would the yield be identical to the original? He navigated to a mysterious item in the shop, its description still a mere question mark. He recalled obtaining a mission scroll while harvesting bananas. The System would trigger a specific mission at a certain time, which would then unlock this enigmatic item. Su Ming was convinced it was something valuable.

After perusing the shop, Su Ming opened the upgrade page. He had amassed over 6,000 planting points. Faced with a choice, he could either upgrade all six acres of his land to Level Two, which cost just 1,000 points per acre, or he could invest 5,000 points to elevate a single acre from Level Two to Level Three. After some contemplation, Su Ming opted to upgrade all six acres to Level Two. The plantation area was extensive, and it was the sole source of his experience points. By upgrading, the quality of his crops would improve, leading to a higher yield and more points. His decision was final.

With resolve, Su Ming wasted no time and upgraded all six acres to Level Two. "Land is upgrading. Upgrade time: 24 hours!" announced the System as soon as he clicked the mouse. The process would take a full day, but Su Ming was patient.

Descending the stairs to grab a bite, Su Ming suddenly wondered, "Where did Yuvyu go?" Earlier that day, he had visited Old Master Tang, and upon leaving, he had seen Su Qiu enjoying a hotpot. In his rush to harvest his crops, he had completely forgotten about her. It was only the lingering scent of hotpot that jogged his memory.

Quick to act, Su Ming headed to the adjacent room. Gently pushing the ajar door open, he peered inside and found Su Qiu, wrapped cozily in a blanket, fast asleep.

Su Ming chuckled and shook his head, thinking to himself, "She's truly without a care in the world."

He softly closed the door behind him and glanced at the kitchen.

It was spotless; any leftover food had been neatly stored in the refrigerator.

Stretching with a smile, Su Ming reflected on his day. He had been up all night and his day was packed with activities. He had celebrated his grandfather's birthday and harvested crops in the plantation area.

Despite possessing the Stamina Talent, which kept his body from feeling fatigued, he was mentally exhausted.

After a refreshing shower, Su Ming retreated to his bedroom and turned in early.

The next day, he awoke as the sun was well up in the sky. Following his morning routine of washing up and brushing his teeth, he headed downstairs to make breakfast.

Su Qiu was still deep in slumber.

It wasn't until breakfast was ready that she stumbled out of her bedroom, bleary-eyed.

“Bro, you're back,” Su Qiu mumbled upon seeing Su Ming.

She then made her way to the bathroom to freshen up.

Soon, they were sitting in the living room, enjoying their meal, when Su Qiu's phone rang.

Checking her phone, her expression turned sour.

“What's the matter?” Su Ming inquired.

“I have a class this morning,” she replied.

Su Ming was taken aback. Wasn't Su Qiu on break? She had been off for several days already. Why did she have a class?

Su Qiu's frustration grew as she noticed Su Ming's bewildered look.

“Brother, Principal Ye secured a research project. Seniors can base their thesis on it,” she explained.

“It's a prestigious project. I've heard only a select few across the nation are chosen to work on it. If I join the research team, make significant findings, and publish some papers, I could virtually guarantee my spot in a graduate program, maybe even a doctoral one.”

“But I'm just a freshman! Principal Ye invited me to the project team. I just wanted to enjoy my holiday,” Su Qiu lamented.

Su Ming just smiled and shook his head again. Principal Ye might show him deference, but as the head of Eastsea University, he was a titan of economic research.

His research in economics was outstanding.

The students he has taught have all become significant figures within the field of economics.

Should Principal Ye's students join a company, their starting annual salary would be in the tens of millions.

Truthfully, it would take a great deal of effort for others to secure a spot in Principal Ye's research group.

Yet, Principal Ye personally invited Su Qiu to join his team. Undoubtedly, many must be envious of her.

Chapter 410 - Could It be That There Was a Problem with the Air Conditioner?

Su Ming chuckled and urged, "Hurry up and eat. Once you're done, I'll drive you to school."

Su Qiu nodded with a sense of resignation.

Diligent and eager to learn, Su Qiu understood the rarity of the opportunity before her. Delving into her research topics, she often encountered concepts that were beyond her grasp. Being a freshman, she was tackling material meant for seniors. Yet, having the chance to attend Principal Ye's lectures and collaborate with her upperclassmen on research projects had significantly expanded her knowledge base.

She was learning things that textbooks simply didn't cover.

Notably, Su Qiu had mastered the use of a sophisticated instrument that the school had acquired for tens of millions of yuan.

Everyone needs a break now and then, and Su Qiu was no exception; she had been looking forward to resting during the holiday. Learning that she had to attend class left her feeling somewhat disheartened.

Despite her reluctance, she dutifully went to class, finishing her meal with a sullen face.

Afterward, she changed clothes, hung her head low, and trudged to the car where Su Ming was waiting.

As Su Ming drove, he glanced at Su Qiu's sullen expression and shook his head with a smile.

But instead of heading straight to school, Su Ming took a detour to a shop specializing in bead bracelets.

He had pre-selected some beads, so it took the shopkeeper less than ten minutes to craft two bracelets.

Back in the car, Su Ming handed one of the bracelets to Su Qiu.

She looked at it curiously and asked, "Brother, what's this?"

Clasping the bracelet, she inhaled its subtle scent, which lifted her spirits.

Su Ming replied with a hint of intrigue, "I had a friend pick out these beads for you. They're meant to keep you safe."

"Really?" Su Qiu's eyes sparkled with excitement.

"Absolutely. When have I ever deceived you? Wear this bracelet. The cord is very durable, but remember to replace it once a year. Don't lose it, and make sure to keep it on at all times."

Su Qiu nodded, slipping the bracelet onto her wrist.

Buoyed by Su Ming's thoughtful gift, her gloominess vanished.

She perked up considerably, chattering away like a cheerful sparrow in the car seat.

Su Ming was quite pleased. Even though Su Qiu's chatter was somewhat of a headache, he much preferred it to her being silent and withdrawn as if she were struggling with depression, unwilling to engage with others.

Before long, Su Ming pulled into the school.

As Su Qiu prepared to hop out, Su Ming beamed and said, "Alright, off you go to class."

Just then, Su Qiu clasped Su Ming's arm and exclaimed, "Brother!"

Her large, luminous eyes seemed to be searching for the right words.

Su Ming froze, a sense of foreboding washing over him.

Su Qiu blinked earnestly and pleaded, "Brother, this is your alma mater. Since you're here, why not sit in on a class with me before you go?"

Su Ming massaged his forehead at the request.

"No!" he declared, shaking his head resolutely.

Back in his college days, Su Ming had little love for attending classes, preferring to play video games or catch up on sleep in his dorm instead.

He was notorious for skipping classes to hang out at internet cafes, though he buckled down when finals approached. He scraped by in his courses, just enough to secure his degree and diploma.

The thought crossed his mind, "I finally graduated. I don't want to sit through classes. No way! I'm not going to class with her."

Confronted with Su Ming's unwavering stance, Su Qiu's lips jutted out in a pout.

Tears brimmed in her big eyes, making her look exceedingly pitiful.

Onlookers might have thought her grievances surpassed those of Dou'e.

Su Ming, faced with her display, was at a loss.

Su Qiu was all grown up, but she still resorted to the same stubborn tactics she used as a child.

"Fine," Su Ming eventually conceded with a reluctant nod.

"Thank you, brother!" she beamed.

The girl's mood flipped in an instant, her excitement palpable.

Her acting was impeccable.

She truly lived up to the Su family name.

With her backpack slung over her shoulder, Su Qiu strode ahead while Su Ming trailed behind, his steps languid.

Despite the autumn season, the daytime heat lingered.

During the holiday, the campus was sparsely populated.

Only those with an aversion to studying would leave school during the holidays, like Young Master Su.

Yet, many students remained on campus.

Some freshmen and sophomores were reviewing lessons, while juniors and seniors were busy preparing for graduate entrance exams.

Others were engaged in activities like playing basketball, dining in the cafeteria, picking up packages, or showering in the dorms.

But everyone was either shielding themselves with umbrellas or rushing about.

The reason was the day's scorching heat.

Su Ming, however, didn't seem affected by the heat as he walked; he actually felt quite refreshed.

Su Qiu felt the same.

“Brother, the weather feels so pleasant today, and the sunlight isn't harsh at all,” Su Qiu remarked, glancing at Su Ming.

Her comment left the other students on the street dumbfounded.

They turned to look at her in disbelief, their experience of the weather starkly contrasting with hers.

They observed the siblings' contented expressions and their effortless stride.

On such a sweltering day, most people would be drenched in sweat quickly.

Yet, the siblings' clothes were dry, their foreheads sweat-free.

Where could they have come from?

Perhaps the equator?

But no, the equator enjoys a perpetual spring, and it was even hotter here.

Maybe they were from Mercury?

A man was trudging along, moving swiftly.

Overwhelmed by the heat, he felt a tightness in his chest and was sweating profusely.

He just happened to cross paths with Su Ming.

He stopped in his tracks when he reached Su Ming's side.

“How did it suddenly become so cool?” he wondered, blinking and scanning his surroundings.

The bystanders heard him but were skeptical.

The brother and sister looked so at ease, seemingly impervious to the heat.

But this man was drenched in sweat; how could he feel cool?

While the man was still perplexed, Su Ming had already moved on.

The moment Su Ming left, the man was hit by a blast of hot air.

Shocked, he quickly moved forward a few steps.

Drawing near to Su Ming once again, he instantly felt the coolness return.

The man was baffled. Could Su Ming be an Air Conditioner Monster?

He found it hard to believe.

Regardless, he hurried to keep up with Su Ming!

Whenever he was by Su Ming's side, the heat seemed to dissipate.

Thus, a devoted sidekick materialized in Su Ming's shadow.