

Two Trillion 281

Chapter 281 Male Lead Lu Fanyu_1

Lin Weiwei heard that Bai Xiaosheng was attending the event and got busy making preparations as his advisor.

Zhongjing Media had tailored business suits for departments like Administration and Logistics. Departments that didn't need to wear uniforms received an annual clothing allowance. Executives were provided with a wardrobe that included everything from suits to ties, shirts, and even socks, with different colors and styles. Just for suits, executives got two sets while deputy directors and general managers received five sets each.

Bai Xiaosheng had been measured for clothing some time ago since his arrival, and the outfits had been delivered, but there had been no major events for him to attend in them. Even at the event his own company held yesterday, Bai Xiaosheng had only been backstage and didn't show his face, so he hadn't worn formal attire.

Now, attending a cocktail reception required formal attire, which was also a sign of respect to the guests.

Lin Weiwei chose an appropriate suit for Bai Xiaosheng, and when he came out after changing, she was impressed.

Clothes make the man, just as gold makes the Buddha.

After changing, Bai Xiaosheng looked extraordinarily handsome, which made Lin Weiwei blush slightly.

Having looked at himself in the mirror, Bai Xiaosheng also felt good.

"Weiwei, come with me tonight," Bai Xiaosheng said. After all, as a deputy director, it wouldn't be too ostentatious to bring an assistant.

"Sure," Lin Weiwei agreed happily. But just as she had consented, her phone rang.

After stepping out to take the call, she returned looking anxious.

"My mother fainted and was taken to the hospital, I need to go there," Lin Weiwei said uneasily, "Xiaosheng, about your event..."

"Silly girl, hurry over there. Nothing is more important than family!" Bai Xiaosheng immediately cut her off, then reminded her, "After you get there, call me if you need anything."

Lin Weiwei gave a grateful smile and rushed off.

Bai Xiaosheng sighed softly and straightened his tie in the wardrobe mirror.

"Looks like I'll have to attend the banquet alone this time. The Film Department, huh? I've never been there and I don't think I know anyone..."

...

At the top floor of Zhongjing Wanhe Building,

The opulent banquet hall with its eight-meter high ceiling mirrored the Garnier Opera House in Paris, France, exquisite in every detail and resplendent with gold.

Stepping inside, Bai Xiaosheng was profoundly moved.

Compared to this, the luxurious private rooms of Tiannan Pearl Tower seemed to pale in significance.

The entire banquet hall was imposing and refined, with attention to detail that bespoke masterpiece craftsmanship, flawlessly intricate.

Bai Xiaosheng noticed that even in the most inconspicuous corners, decorative iron figurines were crafted with clear facial features and delicate attire, all custom-made items.

Actually, it was only after arriving here that Bai Xiaosheng realized he had made a mistake; he had gotten the timing from Song Changkong's assistant mixed up... resulting in him arriving thirty minutes early.

It was somewhat embarrassing for a company's deputy director to come early and wait for others in such eagerness...

"I mustn't let Weiwei find out about this, or she'll tease me for a month," Bai Xiaosheng sighed to himself.

Fortunately, quite a few people had already arrived. There were also many handsome men and beautiful women, the young artists signed by the company's Film Department.

However, despite the crowd, Bai Xiaosheng didn't recognize a single person, and no one there knew him.

Even though he was a deputy general manager, since the day he started, he hadn't spent time touring the various departments, but had been buried in work with the New Media Department, busy with restructuring and competing with Chen Changqing.

"I've missed out on meeting so many beautiful women," Bai Xiaosheng lamented as he admired the beauties around him.

Of course, there were not just beautiful women there.

Around the walls of the banquet hall hung high-quality oil paintings. While they weren't creations of world-renowned masters, Bai Xiaosheng had looked up the names, and they were all valuable collectors' items.

The rich cultural heritage suited a major enterprise.

With these thoughts, Bai Xiaosheng carried a cocktail and admired the oil paintings.

Though he wasn't particularly knowledgeable about art, with Red Lotus, he could read the names of the works and the artists below the paintings. If Bai Xiaosheng wished to know more, with just a thought, the most authoritative interpretations and various perspectives were available to him.

Looking around, it was quite amusing.

Bai Xiaosheng was immersed in Red Lotus's tinkling voice, experiencing the beauty of art.

...

At one side of the hall, a mix of men and women surrounded a man.

The man was in his twenties, with skin white and tender as snow, even more refined than a woman's; built muscles under his suit, every gesture carried a sense of style—it was clear he knew how to play it cool.

At the moment, they would call him a "little fresh meat."

The leading "little fresh meat," now apart from his entourage, walked on the outside of the crowd, animatedly explaining an oil painting to everyone. He seemed to know a lot, as his words often had people nodding in agreement.

Yet, a girl on the very outskirts of the crowd remained calm, showing little reaction.

Compared to the other women in the crowd who had amorous glances and revealing shoulder lines, even flaunting their décolleté, she was dressed elegantly, with just a touch of makeup on her face, not overtly seductive but instead a trace of purity.

"Brother Lu, you are so knowledgeable!"

"Fanyu, you are so impressive!"

There were constant exclamations toward the "little fresh meat" ahead.

Lu Fanyu seemed somewhat proud, as he had specifically studied oil painting at college to mix with high society, possessing enough knowledge and cultural conversation topics, which were extremely important for an actor's career. Besides that, he's also formally studied various vocal and instrumental music.

Though Lu Fanyu could be arrogant at times, he had a motto that was incredibly accurate: "At the end of the day, artists compete with culture and cultivation."

He had done just that, and with his stunning appearance and these talents and charms, he quickly became a star artist vigorously promoted by Zhongjing Media & Film Department.

This time, at the gathering, Shang Wanwan was invited to play the lead actress in a television drama, with the lead actor being none other than Lu Fanyu.

It's safe to say, the company was sparing no effort in promoting him.

From here on, my acting career is going to soar to a whole new level!

Lu Fanyu, brimming with pride and enthusiasm, was also showing off his depth by explaining the oil paintings to the crowd.

These people before him were also selected for roles in the drama.

As Lu Fanyu's gaze passed over looks of admiration, he felt incredibly smug. However, he accidentally caught the sight of that plain-dressed, tranquil woman in the back and imperceptibly frowned.

This woman, named Zhao Xiaoying, was presently competing with another actress for the third female lead position.

This Zhao Xiaoying, Lu Fanyu had set his sights on her, wanting to try this type. He had once flirted with her before.

But, relying on his hitherto unbeatable charms, he was actually rejected.

As a result, he felt quite annoyed with Zhao Xiaoying.

When Lu Fanyu looked her way, Zhao Xiaoying raised her head and their eyes met for a moment.

Hurriedly shifting his gaze, Lu Fanyu quickly moved two steps to the side and pointed at another painting on the wall, saying, "Come, let's look at this one..."

"Oh no!" Before he could finish, Lu Fanyu let out an exclamation.

Everyone saw him collide with someone nearby, spilling half a glass of cocktail onto his clothes.

"Are you blind!" Lu Fanyu exclaimed furiously.

In a moment, he was to meet Shang Wanwan!

The person he bumped into, Bai Xiaosheng, was about to apologize when he heard that remark, and his face instantly darkened.

This person is so rude!

"It was you who bumped into me and spilled my drink, shouldn't you be the one apologizing to me?" Bai Xiaosheng looked at him impassively and said calmly.

"Apologize to you?" Lu Fanyu frowned as he scrutinized Bai Xiaosheng, sneered, and spit out disdainfully, "Do you even deserve it?!"

Chapter 282: Explain Yourself!_1

Lu Fanyu looked at Bai Xiaosheng with contempt.

This man actually expected him to apologize—how absurd and ignorant. He didn't even recognize himself, was he a newcomer?

And his looks were so mediocre!

His skin wasn't fair, his face wasn't tender, and there was not a hint of star quality.

The leaders hadn't arrived yet, and there this man was, holding a glass of wine and putting on airs—disgusting!

Lu Fanyu glanced at Bai Xiaosheng with repulsion.

"Fanyu, how are you? I have some tissues here if you want to wipe off," someone offered.

"No, Fanyu's suit is high-end; you can't just wipe it with a tissue!"

Several men and women were bustling around in a fluster, gathering around him.

Others glared at Bai Xiaosheng, accusing him, "What's wrong with you? Can't you watch where you're going? Do you know who this is? Lu Fanyu! Our rising star! The lead actor in the TV series! Are you blind or what?"

Bai Xiaosheng looked coldly at these people.

These young artists were really lacking in guidance—sure, they had looks and maybe even talent, but they were missing the character of "virtue."

Maybe I should ask Song Changkong to transfer to the Film and Television Department.

In a month, I'll be in charge, all of them in a month's time.

Bai Xiaosheng thought to himself.

However, the thought of leaving the New Media Department, which was just starting to develop rapidly, made him reluctant.

Forget it, I'll wait for another opportunity.

Bai Xiaosheng remained silent.

"This isn't the gentleman's fault, Lu Fanyu was the one who suddenly walked over and bumped into him," someone said in a jarring voice from the crowd.

Everyone was taken aback, and Bai Xiaosheng curiously looked over. A woman with a calm expression was looking at him.

Her appearance wasn't sensational; at first glance, she wasn't even that pretty, but the more you looked at her, the more appealing she became.

Bai Xiaosheng met her gaze and gave a polite smile; the woman also nodded back with a slight smile.

"Zhao Xiaoying, what do you mean? Are you saying it's Fanyu's fault?"

"You, a potential third female lead, are defaming the male lead. I think you don't want to be in the show anymore!"

"It couldn't be Fanyu's mistake—it's this guy's fault! You're holding a wine glass, don't you know to look around?"

The condemning voices around targeted Zhao Xiaoying and also attacked Bai Xiaosheng in passing.

Lu Fanyu looked at Zhao Xiaoying with cold disapproval, his face clearly displeased.

So, Zhao Xiaoying, you're trying to undermine me?

Do you really think I can't deal with you?

I don't think you want to keep your third female lead role!

Bitter resentment filled Lu Fanyu's heart.

Bai Xiaosheng had intended to walk away magnanimously, but now he didn't want to leave.

"Shut up!" Bai Xiaosheng furrowed his brow and barked sharply.

The men and women around, never expecting him to dare to scold them, were stunned.

"Shall we discuss who is right and who is wrong?" Bai Xiaosheng looked at Lu Fanyu with an untroubled expression, "Do we call a leader or check the surveillance footage? Lu Fanyu, which will it be?"

Bai Xiaosheng exuded a cold, calm defiance, his face fearless.

On him loomed a certain aura, overshadowing everyone else.

Zhao Xiaoying couldn't help but look at him with curiosity, her eyes filled with surprise.

Initially, she had spoken out against Lu Fanyu's arrogance and in sympathy for the underdog.

But she hadn't expected that the so-called underdog would have such a strong presence.

Zhao Xiaoying's eyes showed a hint of admiration as she thought to herself, "Such a composed man, even if he's unknown now, will surely achieve something in the future!"

Lu Fanyu's gaze flickered uncertainly.

Frankly, he detested these overweening fools the most, and on any ordinary day, he would have definitely taught them a harsh lesson.

But not today!

It was already late, and perhaps Mr. Song, the head of Zhongjing Media, along with the two rumored newly-promoted deputy directors, would arrive soon. He couldn't afford to lose composure in front of the big boss!

And he certainly couldn't jeopardize his collaboration with Shang Wanwan!

You're lucky today, kid. I'll let you off the hook!

Lu Fanyu glared coldly at Bai Xiaosheng and raised his voice, "Forget it, forget it, there's no need to stoop to his level and squabble with someone like that!"

At those words, the men and women surrounding him fell silent for a moment before erupting into lavish praise.

"Lu is so magnanimous. Truly befitting of our leading man, even more charismatic than the characters in the dramas!"

"Fanyu's breadth of spirit is unmatched by the ordinary."

"You got lucky this time, kid!"

The crowd couldn't seem to praise Lu Fanyu enough, as if he had just performed a great act of forbearance.

Bai Xiaosheng shook his head slightly, amused.

"Hurry up and leave; what are you still doing here?" someone couldn't help but snap at Bai Xiaosheng.

Bai Xiaosheng looked at the speaker indifferently and gestured with his mouth towards the painting on the wall.

"Is this oil painting yours? You can look at it, but I can't?" Bai Xiaosheng's voice was cold, and his face unkind.

"Let it go, let him look if he wants. Would he even understand it?" someone scoffed.

"Our Fanyu, on the other hand, is the one who has formally studied oil painting courses. Fanyu, why don't you illustrate, so that these ignorant country bumpkins can also broaden their horizons."

"Haha, exactly. If someone wants to sponge some knowledge, we should oblige, so they can parrot it later and show off."

Several people joined in the teasing, sneering at Bai Xiaosheng.

Zhao Xiaoying couldn't help but glance towards Bai Xiaosheng.

Bai Xiaosheng remained expressionless, his gaze resting on the painting.

Zhao Xiaoying saw that Bai Xiaosheng was indifferent to the insults and derision, and she couldn't help feeling a bit disappointed.

Too bad, this man still lacks some vigor!

"Fine, then I'll enlighten you all!" Lu Fanyu intentionally raised his voice, even giving Bai Xiaosheng a sneering glance.

Bai Xiaosheng remained unmoved.

"Look at this painting, everyone. The artist has used skilled classical and exquisite realist techniques to subtly and lyrically portray this lady's serene character. Her focused expression and the slight smile on her lips, her beautiful cheeks, and her graceful figure vividly exude feminine beauty with rhythm, like a statue of an ancient Greek goddess. The artist has meticulously crafted the background texture, using regular and austere horizontal and vertical lines to contrast with the vivacious curves and tranquil character of the woman, imparting an extraordinary sense of stability and peace to the entire scene."

Lu Fanyu finished fluently, with delicate detail.

The women and men around were captivated, nodding frequently and singing praises.

"Fanyu explains it so well!"

"Lu's talent is extraordinary, and with this level of skill, none of us can compare!"

After such overflowing compliments, Lu Fanyu couldn't help but feel smug and triumphant.

Even Zhao Xiaoying sighed inwardly, conceding that when it came to artistic talents and cultivation, no young artist at Zhongjing Media could rival him.

Seeing even Zhao Xiaoying impressed, Lu Fanyu felt increasingly proud.

However, a very discordant voice suddenly sounded.

"What a load of nonsense!"

Bai Xiaosheng turned and walked away.

"You stop right there!"

Lu Fanyu was taken aback, then pointing at Bai Xiaosheng, he roared furiously, "What did you say? Make it clear! If you can't explain yourself, don't think about leaving!"

Chapter 283 Do You Understand Oil Painting?_1

Lu Fanyu had specifically studied oil painting as a major and, back in his student days, was among the top performers, even receiving praise from the old professors.

Over the years, he had been deeply confident in his artistic expertise and his ability to appreciate art.

At the party hall, explaining oil painting works to the men and women around him, he was constantly adored, feeling quite elated all the while.

Now, out of nowhere, some nobody had splashed wine all over him and even dared to question his cultivation in this field.

Lu Fanyu wouldn't stand for it.

"You're not leaving until you make things clear!"

The men and women around him also came to their senses and glared angrily at Bai Xiaosheng.

"What nonsense are you spouting!"

"Do you know anything about oil paintings? Is this your place to interrupt?!"

"Talking rubbish, call security to throw him out."

A stunningly voluptuous woman was the loudest in her clamor, as though Bai Xiaosheng had grievously insulted her idol.

It was she who called for security.

Zhao Xiaoying's face bore a look of sympathy.

Bai Xiaosheng was now alone and being blamed by everyone. The scene sparked empathy in her; in her most difficult times, hadn't she been just as helpless?

Lu Fanyu was the company's new star, vigorously promoted by the film and television department. Offending him could mean that no artist or employee would last long at Zhongjing Media.

Zhao Xiaoying couldn't help but walk over and whisper to Bai Xiaosheng, "Apologize to him and get out of here quickly. You can't afford to provoke Lu Fanyu!"

Bai Xiaosheng looked at Zhao Xiaoying, quite surprised. He could tell that this girl seemed out of place among those people, in a delicate position.

In such a situation, the best way to protect oneself was to talk less and avoid trouble.

Bai Xiaosheng also noticed that Zhao Xiaoying was not impulsive. The more so, the more precious it was for this woman to step forward and advise him.

"Zhao Xiaoying, you're helping him again and again. Are you trying to go against Fanyu?"

The glamorous woman scolded.

Lu Fanyu's face also darkened, his cold eyes fixing on Zhao Xiaoying.

"Let's all take a step back. There's no need to make a big deal of it," Zhao Xiaoying earnestly looked at the woman, "Qiuya, you wouldn't want the company leaders to see this either."

Qiuya snorted coldly and gave Zhao Xiaoying a disdainful look.

She was the actress competing with Zhao Xiaoying for the third female lead.

"Today, if this person doesn't bow and apologize to me in public, I won't be afraid even if it goes to the leaders!"

Lu Fanyu declared proudly, "Throwing wine on me, I can be magnanimous, but questioning my cultivation, my ability to appreciate art, I cannot!"

Afterward, he added with a righteous and imposing air, "This is a desecration of art!"

Around him, led by Qiuya, men and women looked at Lu Fanyu with admiring gazes.

So handsome, even his speech is stylish!

Zhao Xiaoying was at a loss for words to refute and couldn't help but make eye signals to Bai Xiaosheng, urging him to apologize quickly. It's wise to retreat in the face of overwhelming odds.

Bai Xiaosheng laughed.

"A crooked monk reading crooked scriptures, and now art? Do you understand oil paintings?"

At this challenge, everyone was taken aback.

Zhao Xiaoying watched Bai Xiaosheng, confused as to whether this person was foolish, still insisting on standing his ground on this issue.

After a moment of silence, those men and women exploded.

"Who are you calling out? How dare you talk to Lu like that!"

"Which group do you belong to, tired of mixing in with Zhongjing Media, huh!"

Qiuya's voice was sharp, "Wait for the leaders to come, we'll protest together. This person insulted our Fanyu, and he must be dealt with seriously!"

Who is Lu Fanyu? The company's popular fresh meat, a traffic draw, the calling card of the film and television department, even the director has to speak to him politely.

This person has been insolent over and over again, it's simply courting death!

"If you don't make yourself clear today, you really won't be able to mix in the film and television department anymore!" Lu Fanyu glared at Bai Xiaosheng, his voice deep.

Confident with his weight within the department, he believed it would be a piece of cake to get rid of an unknown little guy like that.

Bai Xiaosheng ignored Lu Fanyu's ranting, lifted his head, and looked at the oil painting.

"To appreciate an oil painting, to appreciate a piece of art, what are we appreciating? Just the surface? Have you read what the author wanted to express, have you seen into the author's heart? Analyzing a painting isn't about describing the content, that's called picture talking."

Bai Xiaosheng said calmly, "When looking at this painting, focus on her eyes! She may be smiling, but is there a sparkle of laughter in her eyes? Hmm! The essence, the most pivotal part of the entire painting,

is her gaze. While she's smiling, it conveys a sense of sorrow. Once you see that, will you still look at her actions, the overall color scheme the same way you did before?"

Bai Xiaosheng's words made these men and women unable to resist looking at the oil painting again.

Reason untold remains unclear, words unpointed remain non-penetrative.

Looking at the painting again as Bai Xiaosheng suggested, it truly seemed to be imbued with a touch of sorrow.

Zhao Xiaoying was entranced, her eyes unavoidably brimming with surprise.

She walked over, approached the painting, and upon seeing the name of the work, she gasped, "Loneliness and Melancholy!"

A smiling portrait bearing such an unimaginable name, had it not been for Bai Xiaosheng's interpretation, Zhao Xiaoying really would have thought the staff had stuck the wrong label on it.

"The name of this painting is 'Loneliness and Melancholy'? But it's clearly smiling..."

"It's precisely because she is smiling that the loneliness seems deeper, the melancholy stronger... I can really feel that she's sad!"

The men and women couldn't help murmuring to themselves in a low voice.

"How can you listen to his nonsense, this is clearly a smile, not loneliness, and definitely not melancholy!" Qiuya couldn't help but shout angrily.

However, her shouting at most bought silence from those around her.

Those men and women didn't say it with their mouths, but their eyes were fully convinced by Bai Xiaosheng's words.

They were signed artists; their innate qualities and cultivation in art weren't low, and with a little guidance, they understood it all.

Lu Fanyu watched the painting, his eyes revealing a hint of astonishment; he actually thought Bai Xiaosheng's few words made a lot of sense.

The gaze is where the essence lies, the gaze is the essence...

But so what!

Lu Fanyu's eyes turned cold.

He didn't care about some damn art. Art was nothing more than a garment he wore on the outside to make himself look better. What he truly cared about were tangible benefits, being revered.

Bai Xiaosheng had undermined the reverence people held for him, leaving him feeling both ashamed and furiously angry at this moment!

"Nonsense! Who are you to educate me? Do you know who I am? The new king, the lead male of the company's biggest TV drama investment!"

Lu Fanyu roared, "Do you believe that I can make you scram in a matter of minutes? I have that power!"

All around, there was silence.

The men and women didn't dare say anything more.

Lu Fanyu was right, he could do it, and he had the means!

"Hopeless, you have no clue who you're up against?"

Bai Xiaosheng gave Lu Fanyu a cold glance, disregarded his rant, and turned to leave.

Why bother with a fool!

Chapter 284 Life is Full of Worries_1

As for Lu Fanyu, Bai Xiaosheng really didn't want to reveal his identity and settle things in public.

The reason was simple: after all, this was a reception prepared for welcoming Shang Wanwan, a major company event, and it was also promoting the soon-to-be-filmed major TV series. To let the male lead be embarrassed right off the bat was not good for the company.

Bai Xiaosheng, as the deputy general manager, also had to make some "sacrifices" for the company and hold back.

Once the reception was over, he would have plenty of time and opportunities to teach this arrogant newcomer a lesson.

Right now, Bai Xiaosheng felt that he was making a great sacrifice.

I am truly worthy of being the deputy general manager; my level is indeed higher!

Bai Xiaosheng lamented profoundly in his heart.

At the same time, he also made a mental note of the Film and Television Department.

Young artists like Lu Fanyu were actually spoiled by the company, really thinking they were indispensable, that the whole company couldn't do without them.

In the company's eyes, there were only artists who make money and artists who don't.

The company treated them as cash cows, pouring in vast amounts of resources. The goal was merely to harvest "fruit"—that is, to make money.

If these resources were given to other artists, they could be just as successfully promoted under the right support.

At the very least, Bai Xiaosheng was confident he could do it.

Watching Bai Xiaosheng walk away with a flick of his sleeves, Lu Fanyu's face turned an ashen blue with anger.

Facing such a tough and unyielding punk, he also felt like a dog biting a hedgehog, not knowing where to start.

This was a reception, after all; starting a fight was impossible. Even if he could call upon many willing to act as enforcers, making a full-on brawl would affect his reputation should leaders and dignitaries arrive.

I can't be impulsive!

Lu Fanyu endured again and again.

Today is my big day, and I will endure!

After the reception, just wait and see how I'll deal with you!

Lu Fanyu watched Bai Xiaosheng's retreating back, suppressing his rage, but his eyes were chilling to the extreme.

This isn't over!

Zhao Xiaoying watched Bai Xiaosheng leave, then glanced at Lu Fanyu, Qiuya, and the others. She gritted her teeth and suddenly started following him.

"Zhao Xiaoying, what are you doing?!" Qiuya couldn't help but shout.

"Forget it! If she wants to go, let her go. After this, the role of the third female lead won't have anything to do with her!" Lu Fanyu coldly watched Zhao Xiaoying's back, telling Qiuya, "I will recommend you to the company, to Miss Wanwan. Qiuya, you'll be the third female lead!"

Lu Fanyu said it with supreme confidence.

A sea of newcomers surrounded him, but only he had the closest connections with the leaders and the big stars; a slight word from him could affect someone's future.

"Really, thank you Fanyu!"

Qiuya exclaimed excitedly, her charming eyes sultry, subtly casting a flirtatious glance at Lu Fanyu.

Lu Fanyu felt a ticklish sensation in his heart, but he kept a composed expression on his face.

The men and women around them couldn't help swallowing their saliva. Zhao Xiaoying, the third female lead, was she now being declared finished?

Naturally, they also believed in the influence of Lu Fanyu's words, and their faces were all full of smiles.

"Lu, say a few good words for me too. I just want more screen time, a few more lines will do!"

"And me, Lu. I've always admired you the most. I just want to act in a scene with you."

"Fanyu, help me out, sis. Any small role will do."

These young artists said eagerly, circling around Lu Fanyu.

The upcoming TV drama was no small affair; the company had spent a lot of money on a sought-after IP, known for the "three names": famous director, famous actors, famous script. Getting a part in it, even a minor role, could lead to stardom.

What do they aspire to in this business if not to become famous? Fame brings everything.

As for all this flattering and fawning, is it shameful...

Can you eat dignity?

First, get famous, then talk about dignity.

Facing his peers' eager flattery, Lu Fanyu felt a surge of satisfaction, laughing heartily and basking in the glory of the moment.

"Fanyu, continue telling us about oil painting," Qiuya urged eagerly. "We love hearing you talk. That guy just now was spouting nonsense. He can't compare to you!"

"Yes, yes, tell us more!"

"Lu's artistic attainments are peerless. Let's all learn from him,"

Enthusiastic agreement filled the air.

Lu Fanyu was pleased.

"Good, then I'll continue to share with you, let's go!"

The group of men and women flocked around Lu Fanyu and rushed to the next oil painting.

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Bai Xiaosheng took another glass of red wine, left the hall, and walked out onto the spacious balcony.

The evening breeze was refreshing, and the night lights of Zhongjing shone brilliantly below.

Bai Xiaosheng leaned on the railing with enjoyment, sipping a little wine and savoring its pleasant richness.

Zhao Xiaoying, with a glass in hand, walked over and leaned on the nearby railing, curiously studying Bai Xiaosheng.

She said nothing, and Bai Xiaosheng did not speak either.

"You were too reckless just now. Do you not know whom you've offended?" Zhao Xiaoying said seriously.

"Whom have I offended?" Bai Xiaosheng looked at her casually and asked with a smile.

Zhao Xiaoying had a pair of very beautiful eyes, crystal clear and bright. Compared with those who didn't fit in, Bai Xiaosheng knew that she had not been assimilated by the entertainment industry, standing alone and independent.

But actually, this was very dangerous.

"You've offended Lu Fanyu, one of the protagonists of this party, and the leading man in the upcoming major TV drama the company is about to shoot!"

Zhao Xiaoying explained to Bai Xiaosheng, "Perhaps, he could become hugely popular with this TV drama. By then, maybe the whole company will have to treat him with great respect. Offending him wasn't a wise move!"

Zhao Xiaoying was seriously reminding Bai Xiaosheng.

Bai Xiaosheng nodded indifferently.

"I heard them call you Zhao Xiaoying," Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile, "So, Miss Xiaoying, may I ask, knowing that I've offended this Lu Fanyu, which was unwise, why did you follow me? Aren't you making the same kind of foolish mistake right now?"

As he spoke, Bai Xiaosheng glanced back at the hall.

Were those young men and women eagerly surrounding Lu Fanyu all fools?

Probably not one of them was dull!

Without Bai Xiaosheng pointing out that painting, was there really no one who understood it?

There were! And definitely more than one or two!

Bai Xiaosheng was certain of this.

But they preferred to act like idiots, to fawn over others in public.

It was just a posture, after all.

It was for Lu Fanyu to see, in exchange for his support.

Sometimes life forces people to play the fool!

Bai Xiaosheng felt quite reflective.

Zhao Xiaoying silently observed Bai Xiaosheng, watching the seemingly smile in his eyes, as though he understood everything.

She suddenly found herself infatuated.

This man's eyes were really beautiful, and they had the clarity to cut through the fog.

"I'm not a fool either," Zhao Xiaoying turned, leaning on the railing with her elbow, overlooking the night view of Zhongjing, speaking involuntarily to Bai Xiaosheng and partly as if talking to herself.

"It's precisely because I'm not a fool that I realize how stupid I am, so stupid that I don't seem to fit in this industry. The longer I stay, the more I feel like I'm losing myself. Unfortunately, I'm not losing myself fast enough to resolve to really give up certain things. This is causing my awkward situation.

The third female lead... the third female lead! I, Zhao Xiaoying, am an ambitious woman, yet here I am reduced to compromising myself for such a minor role—I'm not content with this! I want to realize my dreams while I'm still young, but I also want my dreams to be pure..."

Zhao Xiaoying mumbled to herself.

She had been repressing these feelings for too long.

Bai Xiaosheng watched her with interest.

Zhao Xiaoying, Xiaoying, glow of the firefly hoping for a speck of light in the clean brightness.

You really don't fit in the entertainment industry!

Bai Xiaosheng mused and laughed, "Life is always full of worries, but you still need to have dreams, just in case they come true."

Chapter 285 Qiuya Offers A Strategy_1

Bai Xiaosheng said a widely-circulated motivational phrase, which made Zhao Xiaoying laugh.

"That quote from the big shot has inspired quite a few people... Um, including me, doesn't make much difference." Zhao Xiaoying chuckled and stood up straight.

The evening breeze gently caressed, stirring Zhao Xiaoying's hair tips. Zhao Xiaoying reached out to tuck a stray lock of hair behind her ear.

This natural gesture had Bai Xiaosheng slightly dazed.

Back in Tiannan, on a beautiful night, there was a beautiful and pure girl who made the same motion, which had sunk him into deep infatuation from which he could not extricate himself.

Before him, Zhao Xiaoying also carried that pure aura. This gesture filled Bai Xiaosheng with a warm feeling.

The night was delightful.

The two remained silent, quietly enjoying the tranquility of the evening breeze.

"We've been talking for so long, and you know my name, but I still don't know yours," Zhao Xiaoying suddenly said with a smile.

Bai Xiaosheng glanced at her.

"My name is Bai Xiaosheng," Bai Xiaosheng announced his name, waiting for her surprise.

"That's a nice name." To his surprise, Zhao Xiaoying just calmly nodded and even joked, "It seems we might be of the same generation, both with the 'Xiao' character in our names."

After saying that, Zhao Xiaoying could hardly keep from bursting into laughter.

"You don't recognize me?" Bai Xiaosheng was curious.

"You're famous, and I'm supposed to know you?" Zhao Xiaoying was even more curious.

"Oh, then never mind," Bai Xiaosheng shrugged his shoulders.

In truth, since he had been at Zhongjing Media, he hadn't had Song Changkong send out any notices, nor did he attend any company-wide gatherings.

He plunged headfirst into the new media department and seldom showed his face.

Right now, in the other departments of the company, likely only a few knew there was such a vice president, and many didn't even know his real name.

"Actually, I'm quite close with the executives at the company. Do you need me to smooth things out for you, maybe land a role as the second female lead?"

"The female lead, I'm afraid, is out of the question, because Shang Wanwan probably wouldn't agree to play the male lead," Bai Xiaosheng laughed.

Making Shang Wanwan play the male lead, Zhao Xiaoying had just taken a sip of wine and nearly sprayed it out, coughing uncontrollably.

It was too beautiful a picture to imagine...

"Who are you close to among the top execs, to be the second female lead... even the director doesn't have the authority to replace that!" Zhao Xiaoying laughed, shaking her head, "You got me with that joke. But still, thank you!"

Zhao Xiaoying spoke earnestly, "I was feeling unhappy today, but after chatting with you like this, I feel much better and happier. Thank you, Bai Xiaosheng!"

Zhao Xiaoying was sincere.

"You're welcome." Bai Xiaosheng smiled and raised his glass to clink with hers.

The cool evening wind, savoring the fine wine, and chatting with a girl who shared a similar aura with "her," he was enjoying it.

Thinking of her, Bai Xiaosheng's gaze drifted into the distance.

Xuelian, I'm working hard!

...

While Bai Xiaosheng and Zhao Xiaoying were chatting on the terrace, two people in the banquet hall were also talking and glanced at them from time to time.

Lu Fanyu and Qiuya.

After Bai Xiaosheng and Zhao Xiaoying left, Lu Fanyu took the group to see a few more paintings, explaining along the way until he was parched. He suggested to wrap it up for the time being and continue another day.

The men and women surrounding Lu Fanyu, although showing great interest on the surface, were in fact tired of listening.

As Bai Xiaosheng had thought, these people weren't so incompetent that they lacked any appreciative and analytical abilities.

Especially after Bai Xiaosheng had commented on a painting, they too had eyes to see and brains to think. On one hand, they listened to Lu Fanyu speak convincingly, on the other hand, they tried to understand and appreciate the painting in light of its title. Yet outwardly, they still nodded frequently to Lu Fanyu's explanations, heaping praise on him.

What they sought was those few pleasant words from Lu Fanyu—effective or not, it was still a hope.

At the moment, Lu Fanyu himself proposed to stop talking, and what's more, he didn't allow them to follow him, saying it wouldn't look good if the leaders saw them, impacting the objectivity of the recommendations for them.

These men and women, their faces full of longing, strongly requested Lu Fanyu to speak again next time before they scattered reluctantly.

But in reality, most of them were probably glad to have a moment of leisure...

At the moment, only Qiuya and Lu Fanyu were together.

At the moment, the two of them watched Bai Xiaosheng and Zhao Xiaoying on the terrace, speaking in a low voice.

"Look at that little vixen, the moment she turns around she's off seducing men. She thinks she's fit to be the third female lead," Qiuya sneered at Zhao Xiaoying.

Originally, the competition between Qiuya and Zhao Xiaoying was fierce, and the decision on the candidate had not yet been made.

Qiuya, in order to gain Lu Fanyu's support, had made a certain sacrifice one night.

However, having enjoyed a night of passion, Lu Fanyu did not put as much effort into it as she had anticipated. Instead, he displayed interest in Zhao Xiaoying.

It seemed he wanted to have his cake and eat it too...

Qiuya had been furious, but she didn't dare make a scene with Lu Fanyu.

After all, there were plenty of female artists like her in the company, but there was only one Lu Fanyu.

Once, a woman made a big fuss and got embroiled in scandal with Lu Fanyu; as a result, she was directly fired by the company and nearly sued.

Over the years, the company had invested a lot in Lu Fanyu and he had earned a lot for them; of course, they would protect him.

Today, Zhao Xiaoying's open confrontation with Lu Fanyu had somewhat incurred his resentment, giving Qiuya an opportunity to stir things up.

"This stupid woman, neglecting such a great asset and choosing to chat with a nobody. You deserve to lose to me!"

Inside, Qiuya couldn't help but feel a sense of schadenfreude.

"This woman, truly unaware of what's good for her!" Lu Fanyu's gaze turned icy cold.

That man had humiliated him, and now Zhao Xiaoying was chatting with him, which made Lu Fanyu's jealousy skyrocket.

"Don't worry, Qiuya, I said I'd help you and I mean it. I will spare no effort to do so," Lu Fanyu huffed coldly.

Qiuya swayed her hips, shooting Lu Fanyu a full flirtatious smile. It wasn't proper to do anything outrageous in public, so she discreetly reached out with a slender, snow-white finger and covertly drew a circle on a certain part of Lu Fanyu's body, softly and gently.

A tantalizing itch stirred in one's heart.

"Fanyu, if you help me, I won't forget this favor," Qiuya purred with a vulpine smile, as graceful as an orchid.

This siren.

Lu Fanyu felt a burning desire flare up, his breathing growing heavier.

To avoid an embarrassing physical reaction, Lu Fanyu turned his gaze back to the terrace, watching Bai Xiaosheng and Zhao Xiaoying with venomous eyes.

"We need to teach these two a lesson!"

Qiuya glanced over there, her eyes flitting with a malicious gleam, and whispered softly in Lu Fanyu's ear, "Fanyu, I actually have an idea that can let you vent your anger and also make them suffer a huge misfortune!"

After Qiuya murmured her plan, a bright light shone in Lu Fanyu's eyes.

Excellent strategy, ruthless and venomous!

Lu Fanyu looked at Qiuya, indeed she was a femme fatale.

"Alright, we'll do as you said!" Lu Fanyu looked toward the terrace with a sinister smile, "Since they're courting death, they can't blame me, Lu Fanyu, for being merciless!"

Chapter 286: Hitting People is Not Good_1

Zhao Xiaoying and Bai Xiaosheng were enjoying the evening breeze and night sky on the terrace, casually chatting.

Zhao Xiaoying felt very comfortable talking with Bai Xiaosheng. This man had a pleasant voice and a humorous way of speaking.

Only, when he looked at her, there was always a kind of distant look in his eyes, as if he were reminded of someone.

His smile carried a slight trace of reminiscence.

In today's society, long-distance yearning isn't this type of emotion.

With video calls and convenient transportation, meeting up is quite easy.

But this was a yearning born of a long time without meeting.

Could it be about that girl who resembled her, had he broken up with her, or were they separated by life and death?

Zhao Xiaoying wasn't a gossip. However, at that moment, she couldn't help but let her mind wander.

"Are you thinking of someone because of me?" Zhao Xiaoying eventually couldn't hold back and asked.

Bai Xiaosheng was taken aback and then laughed.

How had his emotions become so transparent?

Bai Xiaosheng casually spoke a little about Xuelian, also reflecting on the past.

In the end, he only mentioned family reasons and a temporary separation.

Zhao Xiaoying listened silently.

"It's about time, we should head back, the leaders will be arriving soon," Bai Xiaosheng stopped talking and said with a smile.

Zhao Xiaoying did indeed possess certain traits that resembled Xuelian, making him involuntarily feel a hint of closeness, but that was it.

Zhao Xiaoying nodded.

There was a faint, indescribable, even unclear feeling in her heart, like a sense of loss.

"I must be crazy, what am I feeling down about? It's our first meeting, we just had a good chat, at most we're acquaintances who've met by chance," Zhao Xiaoying mocked herself inwardly with a smile.

The two of them returned to the hall, one after the other.

As soon as they reached the hall, someone shouted, "Zhao Xiaoying!"

It was a woman's voice, crisp as a silver bell, yet with an unmistakable hint of anger.

Bai Xiaosheng and Zhao Xiaoying turned their heads to look.

A beauty with a lovely face, fair skin that seemed almost breakable, and a pair of long, straight, and slender legs was leading a group of men and women, walking towards them with an aggressive air.

"Gao Ya," Zhao Xiaoying exclaimed.

"Who is she?" Bai Xiaosheng asked, curious.

"A friend of mine! She's Director Gao's daughter and the second female lead in the upcoming TV drama," Zhao Xiaoying whispered quickly, "Though her father has connections, she is indeed outstanding and suits the role of the second female really well!"

Zhao Xiaoying was eager to ensure that Bai Xiaosheng didn't think Gao Ya had gotten the role through nepotism, so she quickly clarified a few things.

Listening to her, she seemed very certain about Gao Ya.

Bai Xiaosheng looked over but couldn't help frowning.

This 'friend' of Zhao Xiaoying's was approaching with a look of anger on her face.

She looked unfriendly at first glance.

Zhao Xiaoying was also startled.

Among the people following Gao Ya, Bai Xiaosheng spotted Lu Fanyu and Qiuya.

Why were these two people following Gao Ya...

Bai Xiaosheng's eyebrows raised, sensing that there was more to this situation than met the eye.

Here comes trouble again.

Though the trouble wasn't directed at him.

"Gao Ya?"

Zhao Xiaoying also saw Lu Fanyu and Qiuya, too preoccupied to take note, she addressed Gao Ya.

"Don't get cozy with me!"

Gao Ya responded with a tight face, anger evident in her demeanor, her delicate face covered in a frosty layer, her beautiful eyes filled with coldness.

She pointed at Zhao Xiaoying, "You, Zhao Xiaoying, today I have come to get some clarity from you!"

Zhao Xiaoying was stunned, surprised and bewildered. She didn't understand what Gao Ya wanted to ask.

"When you first came to the company, without status or background, wasn't it me who always helped you, treated you like a sister!" Gao Ya bit out, questioning with clenched teeth.

"Yes," Zhao Xiaoying admitted without hesitation, her face showing gratitude.

"But why, why did you spread rumors everywhere, saying I'm not suitable for the role of the second female lead, claiming my dad rigged the competition to get me the role, and that you should be the one playing it!" Gao Ya berated.

Zhao Xiaoying was stunned and hurriedly defended, "I never said that..."

"You didn't, so are they all lying!"

Gao Ya pointed furiously behind her, where Lu Fanyu, Qiuya, and two or three other people were looking at Zhao Xiaoying with cold laughter.

Qiuya stepped forward.

"Xiaoying, we are good sisters. You should've just talked to me about it, not with so many people. I know you've always looked down on the role of the third female lead and had your eyes on the second female lead," Qiuya said with a smile.

Zhao Xiaoying was both shocked and angry as she glared at Qiuya.

"Who's your good sister, you're framing me!" Zhao Xiaoying exclaimed, pointing at the other women, "You're in this together with her!"

"Great! They are framing you, Qiuya is doing it for the role of the third female lead!" Gao Ya said, her rage transforming into a sneer, pointing at Lu Fanyu, "Then tell me, Fanyu, as the leading male actor, why would he frame you? Could it be that he also has his eye on your role of the third female lead!"

Zhao Xiaoying looked at Lu Fanyu with both shock and anger, as he stood with a serious demeanor, a hint of cold laughter clearly in his eyes.

As the saying goes, with three people reaffirming it, even a lie becomes truth.

Now with these five people against her, as their united voices tarnished gold, whom would Gao Ya believe?

The information Qiuya provided, the rest were brought separately to testify to Gao Ya.

"You, you're falsely accusing me!" Zhao Xiaoying was aggrieved by her friend's misunderstanding and cried out in desperation.

She could give up the role of the third female lead, but she couldn't bear this disgrace, nor the misunderstanding of a good friend.

To Gao Ya's eyes, Zhao Xiaoying's reaction seemed like the behavior of someone whose secrets had been exposed, and who was now hysterically trying to cover them up.

"Zhao Xiaoying, you're still denying it!" Gao Ya's face turned a livid shade of anger, "A few days ago, my dad mentioned that someone had sent an anonymous report to the general manager's email, originating from our department, from your computer's IP! Can you deny that too? I can't believe I considered you a sister!"

With Gao Ya's angry shout, the people around were also startled.

So, there was such a thing!

Bai Xiaosheng's eyes flickered slightly.

No wonder Gao Ya was so out of control.

Bai Xiaosheng knew that Zhongjing Media & Film Department took artist development very seriously, not only hiring a variety of professional teachers but also engaging foreign training agencies to provide video-training in "voice, stage presence, and expression." Each artist had a large-screen terminal bound to their IP.

But really, who would be foolish enough to send an anonymous letter using their own computer, and to accuse a director to the general manager in hopes of toppling a rival and advancing? How foolish...

Bai Xiaosheng shook his head.

The director who was reported, it seemed, was not foolish. Although he had traced the IP, he hadn't taken immediate action, suggesting that he also doubted the veracity of the accusation.

Gao Ya's screaming attracted the attention of many people in the banquet hall. Those nearby lowered their voices, discussing and pointing.

"So it turns out that accusation letter was sent by Zhao Xiaoying!"

"How could she do this? Gao Ya and Director Gao have been so good to her!"

"Ungrateful and shameless. How is someone like that fit to play the third female lead?"

"I never imagined she was this kind of person. I think the company should fire her!"

The crowd was agitated.

Zhao Xiaoying was on the verge of tears, unable to defend herself.

The fear of public opinion is enough to drive one to death.

Now, regardless of the truth or how many people really believed it, public opinion had effectively solidified her bad reputation.

Even the company executives wouldn't care whether she was wronged or aggrieved, only considering the impact. They would likely shelve her or terminate her contract.

Zhao Xiaoying's white teeth bit into her lower lip, tears glistening in her eyes. She couldn't bear this humiliation.

"I don't want the role of the third female lead!" the defiant girl blurted out, her voice strained with exertion.

"Of course, you don't want a mere role of the third female lead, you want the second female lead," Qiuya sneered with glee in her eyes, fanning the flames.

"And you still pretend, do you even have the face to cry!" Gao Ya, trembling with rage, raised her hand, poised for a slap.

Zhao Xiaoying, with tears in her eyes, held Gao Ya's gaze, unflinching.

Just as the slap was about to land on Zhao Xiaoying's face, a hand reached out from the side, grabbing Gao Ya's wrist.

"Hitting people, not good," Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile.

Chapter 287 Chen Has Arrived_1

Bai Xiaosheng watched from beginning to end, capturing everyone's expressions in detail.

As soon as Gao Ya appeared, Zhao Xiaoying had a very high and positive opinion of her.

If Zhao Xiaoying were truly jealous of Gao Ya, she would not subconsciously praise her when talking about her; some aversion would show through no matter what. These unconscious reactions are the most truthful.

Furthermore, as an observer, Bai Xiaosheng used the system's third aid—the Micro Expression Analysis System.

Zhao Xiaoying's grievances and anger were real. Gao Ya's shock, anger, and heartache were also real.

They were both acting out of true feelings, and neither was hiding anything. Both were good girls.

The problem lay with people like Lu Fanyu and Qiuya. From an observer's perspective, Bai Xiaosheng could see they were instigating trouble. He could even assert that the so-called whistleblowing letter was Qiuya's doing.

Because no matter the outcome, Qiuya stood to benefit the most.

If the accusation succeeded, or if Director Gao, to avoid suspicion, vacated the role of the second female lead, it would open up an opportunity for Qiuya to compete for the role.

If the accusation failed, the company would easily trace it back to Zhao Xiaoying. Once Zhao Xiaoying was resented by the director, the third female lead's role would become vacant and Qiuya would have no competition.

This woman was very calculating!

Bai Xiaosheng couldn't help but glance at Qiuya, feeling somewhat impressed by her.

Of course, these were just Bai Xiaosheng's conjectures.

However, the system's analysis of Qiuya indicated that whenever the whistleblowing letter was mentioned, Qiuya appeared proud, showing her extreme satisfaction with her own dirty tricks.

"Let me go!"

Gao Ya struggled fiercely to free herself and glared angrily at him. "Who are you!"

Zhao Xiaoying watched Bai Xiaosheng with tearful eyes, choking back sobs in silence.

In this moment, the fact that someone stood up for her was deeply moving.

"He's Zhao Xiaoying's new little lover. They were just now getting cozy on the terrace," Qiuya said with a sneer, shouting to the people around her.

"Wow, newly acquainted, and he's already stepping in to help out. How deep the affection must be!"

"Is this guy from our department? Which group's artist is he?"

"I haven't seen him before. He looks average; probably just a newbie who joined a few days ago."

"Kid, don't stick your nose where it doesn't belong. This isn't something for you to handle. Do you know who Gao Ya is!"

People around them started to speak up, with mockery, skepticism, and teasing.

Bai Xiaosheng smiled and remained silent, not paying any attention to these idle remarks.

"Miss Gao Ya, you should calm down a bit, and don't rush to any conclusions," Bai Xiaosheng said at a leisurely pace, "lest you do something foolish."

"What did you say!" Gao Ya exclaimed angrily.

Bai Xiaosheng smiled and gestured for her to listen further.

"What you are angry about boils down to two things. One, Zhao Xiaoying spoke ill of you behind your back, discrediting you; and two, Zhao Xiaoying sent an anonymous letter to company leadership, framing your father. Am I right?"

"That's right!" Gao Ya glared at Bai Xiaosheng, huffily.

"Alright, first, regarding the first point, spreading rumors about his daughter among the artists under your father's management, I am not sure what that would accomplish, nor do I understand why such a foolish person would do such a thing. By doing that, the benefits for her are almost zero. And regarding your status today, I expect that you have fought for it step by step, in view of everyone. It's not something that can be destroyed by a few words or some gossip!"

Bai Xiaosheng laid out the logic plainly and clearly.

He believed Gao Ya was not a foolish girl but merely blinded by anger. As long as she calmed down and analyzed the situation, she would naturally understand where the problem lay.

Bai Xiaosheng spoke unhurriedly, yet every word was clear and logical, and he affirmed Gao Ya's achievements.

Gao Ya opened her mouth but found herself unable to rebut. Her anger diminished slightly.

"But she did it!" Qiuya, seeing Gao Ya fall silent, hurriedly stoked the flames.

"Did I ask you to speak?" Bai Xiaosheng glanced coldly at Qiuya, slowly saying.

His gaze was as cold and sharp as a knife, a mere look sent a chill down Qiuya's spine, even a trace of fear lurking within.

Since Bai Xiaosheng had assumed the role of the future president, he looked down on these people from a higher perspective, completely that of a superior regarding inferiors.

With Bai Xiaosheng's corporate rank rising higher and power growing greater,

the aura he cultivated and honed along the way was formidable indeed.

Lu Fanyu, too, wanted to interrupt, but feeling the fringe of Bai Xiaosheng's gaze, she inadvertently swallowed her saliva and found herself unable to speak.

"As for this first point, don't you think it makes some sense, Miss Gao Ya?" When Bai Xiaosheng turned towards Gao Ya, his face once again transformed into a warm, amiable smile.

Gao Ya remained silent and shook her head.

But such a reaction clearly indicated she kind of believed it.

The people around were also shocked by Bai Xiaosheng's domineering presence. However, they soon began discussing his words.

"Right, who would be so foolish as to spread bad rumors about her daughter in Director Gao's department? That's basically seeking death!"

"Exactly, it's a losing game. Besides, such talk is usually reserved for private conversations with close friends and family. Are Zhao Xiaoying and Qiuya that close?"

"There is a problem here..."

The people around murmured among themselves.

Gao Ya's fiery anger was reduced even more.

"Now for the second point. Let's assume Zhao Xiaoying completely doesn't understand what 'IP binding' means," Bai Xiaosheng said.

"I know, it's like one person, one IP address, no repetition," Zhao Xiaoying couldn't help but mumble.

"We're assuming you don't know!"

Bai Xiaosheng said bemusedly yet amusedly, looking at Gao Ya, "Let's say she knows, but we'll pretend she doesn't. Let's assume her report against Director Gao was purely out of jealousy towards you, wanting to pull you off the role of the second female lead. Maybe she wanted the company to investigate, or even to force Director Gao, for the sake of avoiding suspicion, to drop you from the role."

"Then, would the role of the second female lead automatically go to her?" Bai Xiaosheng asked with a smile. "I never knew that if the second choice is out, the third could simply step up. What a bizarre logic! I think, if you, Gao Ya, were to step down, the only one who could take over as the second female lead would likely be the one who competed with you and was eventually defeated by you, because she's the next closest fit for the role!"

Gao Ya was visibly shocked.

A single word can awaken someone from a dream!

Zhao Xiaoying's third female lead role had been decided from the start because she suited it.

In contrast, Qiuya, who had failed to compete against her for the second female lead and had certain traits suiting the third female lead, therefore became the tentative choice for that role.

Gao Ya couldn't help but turn to Qiuya, her brows slightly furrowed.

And it was this same Qiuya who, just before, had been speaking ill of Zhao Xiaoying to her and actively looking for witnesses!

Gao Ya's suspicious gaze caused Qiuya to tremble, a clear flash of panic crossing her face, precisely caught by Gao Ya's eyes.

"Was it you?!" Gao Ya couldn't help but frown deeply.

Bai Xiaosheng was about to continue speaking when he suddenly saw a familiar figure entering the banquet hall from outside—Chen Changqing!

Ah, Chen is here. In that case, he must be brought into this excitement!

Bai Xiaosheng smiled.

Chapter 288 You're Really Seeking Death_1

As Bai Xiaosheng unraveled the matter layer by layer, his narration led to a sudden epiphany among the surrounding people.

Upon careful consideration, it was indeed true!

If Zhao Xiaoying really reported Director Gao and slandered Gao Ya, she would gain no benefit whatsoever.

On the contrary, the one who would ultimately benefit wasn't her, but Qiuya.

"That's right, Qiuya was the one who failed to get the role of the second female lead against Gao Ya. Even if Gao Ya didn't get the part, it probably wouldn't go to Zhao Xiaoying, but to Qiuya instead."

"From any angle, Zhao Xiaoying has no reason to do this, but instead..."

Rustles of discussion rose up, and countless glances turned towards Qiuya.

Qiuya, panicked.

What was even more terrifying was the abrupt "It was you" from Gao Ya, almost making Qiuya scream out.

"No, it wasn't me, it was all done by Zhao Xiaoying, it was her," Qiuya blurted out in panic, and then, disregarding everything, pointed at Bai Xiaosheng, "This man is spouting nonsense, you can't believe him! Writing the report letter and slandering Gao Ya behind her back, it was all Zhao Xiaoying!"

Qiuya's defense was weak and futile, as she desperately tried to throw dirt on Zhao Xiaoying, which only made the crowd look on with a hint of amusement.

"If Zhao Xiaoying is taken down, the role of the third female lead would be Qiuya's. No wonder, she wanted to secure third place to contend for second!"

Someone mocked.

At this point, no matter what Qiuya argued, no one believed her anymore.

"Qiuya, you're despicable, shameless!" Zhao Xiaoying angrily pointed at Qiuya and scolded.

"Qiuya, about this matter, I will have my father thoroughly investigate it. Our Zhongjing Media's artists, acting so lowly, truly don't deserve to stay in the company!" Gao Ya said with a grim face.

Now, she believed what Bai Xiaosheng had said.

After speaking, Gao Ya looked at Zhao Xiaoying, somewhat guiltily, "Xiaoying, I..."

"Sister Gao Ya!" Unable to hold back, Zhao Xiaoying started to cry woefully.

Gao Ya, with a face full of apologies, took her hand, her guilt increasing.

All thanks to that man who helped clarify things for Zhao Xiaoying.

Only then did Gao Ya realize that the calm and collected man had already left with big strides towards the entrance of the banquet hall, engaging in conversation with a dignified man who had just come in from the outside.

A moment later, the two men walked over together.

...

This time, Chen Changqing did not bring Yu Qing and Murong Yan with him, leaving them behind in the department.

On one hand, as a vice president, bringing two assistants and overshadowing Song Changkong would obviously be improper.

On the other hand, there were some matters in the gaming department that needed to be taken care of, and one person couldn't handle it all, so it was better to leave them all behind.

Chen Changqing, who came by himself, was warmly greeted by Bai Xiaosheng as soon as he entered.

"Mr. Chen, good morning!" Bai Xiaosheng greeted with enthusiasm.

"Good morning, Mr. Bai," Chen Changqing replied, lukewarm.

He didn't harbor any animosity towards Bai Xiaosheng just because he lost a bet.

After all, manners were of utmost importance in Chen Changqing's eyes.

I will completely defeat you someday and make you surrender willingly! Chen Changqing glanced deeply at Bai Xiaosheng.

This guy really has the patience and clearly doesn't admit defeat. Bai Xiaosheng smiled.

"Mr. Chen, come on, I'll take you to meet the newcomers from our company's film and television department! They are all handsome men and beautiful women. To facilitate interaction, I didn't reveal my own status, fearing that everyone would be restrained. But it's different for you, Mr. Chen, you should make it known, after all, you are a top leader," Bai Xiaosheng said with a smile.

Chen Changqing glanced at Bai Xiaosheng and snorted coldly.

Bai Xiaosheng was not revealing his identity but was urging him to disclose his, what kind of plan was that!

He wanted those people to respect but keep their distance from him, Chen Changqing.

I won't fulfill your wish, if you don't tell, neither will I! Chen Changqing thought.

Bai Xiaosheng led him back.

Just then, they came upon Gao Ya angrily reprimanding Qiuya, "It's all been cleared up now, Qiuya. You don't have anything to say, do you? I advise you to drop out of the competition for the role of the third female lead! I'll consider it a sign you've seen the error of your ways, and if you keep your head down and behave in the company, you can stay on!"

Gao Ya spoke with righteousness in her tone.

Chen Changqing slightly frowned and glanced at Bai Xiaosheng.

Bai Xiaosheng had not informed him about such a lively scene.

What drama was being played out here?

"Mr. Chen, you're late and missed a good show." Bai Xiaosheng smiled and recounted the events to Chen Changqing in a lowered voice.

Chen Changqing was slightly surprised and looked at these people with some interest. Personally, he was somewhat in favor of Qiuya.

She had goals and was willing to use any means to achieve them. As for right and wrong, justice, and morality, those were the prerogatives of the victor to claim.

If today Qiuya won and even became incredibly popular in the future, who would care whether she had ever been tainted by scandal?

But still, this woman was ultimately too foolish, not even qualified to be put to use by him.

Chen Changqing shook his head inwardly.

He needed capable generals, not fools.

"Gao Ya, don't you think you're going a bit too far?" Lu Fanyu, who had until now been silent, suddenly spoke up.

Qiuya retreated behind Lu Fanyu, her panicked expression steadying.

"Up to this point, indeed, there is no evidence to prove that Zhao Xiaoying is behind those acts. But there's also no evidence to prove Qiuya did them. Your judgement is too arbitrary, it's not appropriate. Just because you're Director Gao's daughter, you get to judge and punish the company's artists at will? If you're calling the shots, then when the investors ask about Qiuya, are you going to say the same thing?" With one statement, Lu Fanyu suppressed Gao Ya.

Gao Ya was angry but had no retort.

True, she was Director Gao's daughter.

But Lu Fanyu carried even more weight than her, much more!

In recent years, Lu Fanyu's image as a young and trendy idol had won over young people's adoration, nearly to the point of fervor, compelling even Director Gao to be courteous to this artist under his management.

Moreover, several major investors had invested in this TV drama because of Lu Fanyu, not her, Gao Ya.

Now that Lu Fanyu had spoken up, the bystanders who had been whispering among themselves instantly fell silent.

"What are you suggesting?" Gao Ya asked expressionlessly.

Zhao Xiaoying frowned, also looking at Lu Fanyu.

"My suggestion is that we consider the incident never happened; both Qiuya and Zhao Xiaoying were falsely accused. Why should we make such a fuss about it, right? At the end, let the director, the investors, and the big star Shang Wanwan make the decision about the role," Lu Fanyu said with a smile.

In front of those big shots, his say was of even greater influence than a director's, much greater!

With that thought, Lu Fanyu was prideful.

What counted as a director's daughter!

And what counted as a director!

Dominating the scene, Lu Fanyu glanced at Bai Xiaosheng with a smile that quickly turned cold.

This man had opposed him time and again!

This time, he could not let it pass!

"This matter can be dropped, but he," Lu Fanyu said with a cold laugh, pointing at Bai Xiaosheng, "for spouting nonsense and stirring up trouble, should bow and apologize to us!" Lu Fanyu looked over at Chen Changqing beside him.

"And his little homosexual sidekick," Lu Fanyu scoffed.

Chen Changqing looked at Lu Fanyu as he pointed at him and called him a homosexual, and his face darkened with the gathering storm!

Lu, you are really asking for it! My only fear is that Chen would oppose me when I deal with you.

Now, thank you for solving this problem for me!

Bai Xiaosheng smiled, his smile cold and eerie.

This time, he could not let this popular idol off the hook!

And, it was an opportunity to get involved in the film and television department!

Chapter 289 Look at how arrogant you are_1

Bai Xiaosheng had been sly before dragging Chen Changqing over, afraid that Chen would introduce himself and make it impossible for Lu Fanyu to tread these waters.

Actually, Bai Xiaosheng was being overly cautious.

Chen Changqing, attending the party on his own, would never open his mouth to announce to everyone, "I am the Deputy General Manager, you should all show some respect".

In Chen Changqing's view, that would be incredibly embarrassing.

He had his own dignity and pride.

Bai Xiaosheng had not expected Lu Fanyu to start cursing upon arrival. Chen attracting so much fire, and Lu Fanyu so recklessly courting death.

Faggot.

Countless gazes fell upon Chen Changqing's face, curious, mocking, speculative.

Chen Changqing's face turned iron blue in an instant, and he was about to explode.

He had never suffered such an insult!

"Chen, don't get worked up, what's he worth? Don't stoop to his level," Bai Xiaosheng held him back.

As soon as Bai Xiaosheng said this, Lu Fanyu blew up too.

"Damn it, you dare to insult me! I've tolerated you not just once but multiple times, don't think that because of the occasion, I wouldn't dare to touch you!" Lu Fanyu snapped.

Indeed, he had tolerated Bai Xiaosheng several times.

Young and inevitably full of vigor, once driven to the edge, he could throw caution to the wind.

So what if it caused a big scene!

The company couldn't fire me, could it!

I am Lu Fanyu, a rising star!

Several financiers came here for me!

Even if the general manager saw this, I would still be in the right, witnessed by many people!

Lu Fanyu's morale skyrocketed, piercing the dome of the sky!

"Fanyu, with your status, you shouldn't have tolerated them from the start! We've all seen your patience and demeanor, no need to hold back any longer!" Qiuya fanned the flames beside him.

Now, she had already been targeted by Gao Ya, and the only one she could rely on was Lu Fanyu.

As long as Lu Fanyu reached an agreement with the financiers or even with Shang Wanwan, there was no way she would be knocked out of the game, even if it meant offending the director.

Qiuya threw caution to the wind and staunchly supported Lu Fanyu.

If things really went south, she would drag Lu Fanyu down with her... at least she wouldn't be alone.

The men and women surrounding Lu Fanyu also started to clamor.

"Get security, throw these two out!"

"Right, when Director Gao arrives, we'll protest, these two must be dealt with seriously!"

"Any Tom, Dick, or Harry dares to square off with Brother Lu, has our company abandoned all rules?"

Some people even pointed at Chen Changqing and Bai Xiaosheng and cursed, "You two, look at yourselves in the mirror before picking fights. Getting into Zhongjing Media & Film Department is your good fortune; don't you know blessing and misfortune go hand in hand? Your misfortune is upon you!"

Bai Xiaosheng and Chen Changqing, expressionless, coldly watched these buffoons, silently taking note of them in their hearts.

"Well said!" Lu Fanyu laughed wildly, "Go call security!"

Some couldn't wait to go find security.

They didn't need to get their hands dirty with this matter, enjoying the spectacle was enough.

"Lu Fanyu, you've gone too far!" Gao Ya shouted angrily, "By what right do you drive them away, who gave you the authority!"

"Yeah, they haven't done anything out of line, you can't do this!" Zhao Xiaoying said indignantly.

There were a sparse few others who chimed in help, but clearly, there were too few people on their side, and none of them wanted to offend a furious Lu Fanyu.

"Gao Ya, this isn't my authority, it's the will of everyone!" Lu Fanyu sneered.

He looked at the two women, his eyes not lacking a menacing intent.

"Just because I can't deal with you today doesn't mean I'll let you off!" Lu Fanyu conveyed this message with his glare.

Zhao Xiaoying and Gao Ya were trembling with anger, yet they were powerless.

"Both of you, remember this, and remember it well. Some people, you just can't afford to provoke!" Lu Fanyu pointed at Bai Xiaosheng's and Chen Changqing's noses, his voice commanding.

"Oh really!" Chen Changqing's face was steel-blue as he pushed Bai Xiaosheng aside and stepped forward, "I'd like to see how you are so untouchable!"

Bai Xiaosheng laughed; he didn't stop him but casually walked over, standing side by side with Chen Changqing.

In his lazy gaze, a sharp fierceness emerged, along with supreme authority, "Just a mere actor, look at how arrogant you've become!"

The presence of Bai Xiaosheng and Chen Changqing made some people suddenly feel that something was off.

Even Zhao Xiaoying and Gao Ya were a bit short of breath.

What on earth do these two do!

"What's going on here?!" A loud shout came from outside, as a chubby middle-aged man hurried over.

"Dad!" Gao Ya cried out in shock.

The man was Gao Ya's father, Director Gao Dazhi of the Zhongjing Media & Film Department.

Director Gao had just arrived and saw several artists under his command yelling for security, claiming Lu Fanyu was being bullied.

This was not acceptable!

Gao Dazhi was a mix of shock and fury.

Lu Fanyu was the darling of the company, even he always treated her with respect.

He was actually aware that the whistleblower letter a few days ago was Qiuya's doing, and since Qiuya was getting close to Lu Fanyu, whether Lu Fanyu was involved or not, he wasn't sure.

That's why Director Gao didn't act hastily.

As a director, he had some dignity...

The reception was about to start, Mr. Song, the general manager, along with the two deputy general managers, were about to arrive, and it was said that Shang Wanwan would also be arriving soon. Who would dare to touch Lu Fanyu at this critical moment!

Director Gao was going crazy; he hurried over with his people, nearly running, not even caring about his image.

Song Changkong had a hot temper, and those two deputy general managers were notoriously ruthless, one restructured the entire new media department within a week, leading them to skyrocketing achievements, the other acted domineeringly in the gaming department.

If he upset these leaders, Director Gao would definitely not be able to face the consequences.

Director Gao parted the crowd, not even having time to attend to his own daughter, and immediately checked on Lu Fanyu.

Seeing Lu Fanyu safe and sound, Director Gao let out a sigh of relief and eased his heart.

The people around, seeing how anxious Director Gao was about Lu Fanyu, all perked up.

The top figure of the department was indeed the top figure, even the director had to handle it with care.

"What exactly happened, Fanyu, what trouble have you run into?" Director Gao couldn't help but ask.

His tone was still very polite.

Lu Fanyu smiled, full of triumphant pride, to have the director speak to him like this in public, that was power!

"It's these two people, repeatedly insulting me in public, seriously affecting my reputation. Director Gao, what do you think should be done?" Lu Fanyu pointed at Chen Changqing and Bai Xiaosheng.

"Who?!" Director Gao exclaimed in anger, turning and glaring over, "Who dares to publicly slander Fanyu? I see you are... are... are..."

Director Gao stopped mid-sentence; he saw Bai Xiaosheng and Chen Changqing, both of whom were looking at him with somber faces.

Director Gao felt as if he'd been struck by lightning, his teeth chattering.

"It's them!" Lu Fanyu shouted angrily.

Under everyone's gaze, Director Gao almost fell over. Gao Ya hurriedly supported her father and was shocked to see that Director Gao's legs were shaking.

"Bai... Chen..." Director Gao, looking at their stern gazes, couldn't even speak, suddenly turned back towards Lu Fanyu and roared, "Lu Fanyu, you damn well come here and apologize!"

Chapter 290 I Accept Your Apology_1

Director Gao's scream, raw and desperate, silenced the whole room.

Everyone looked at Director Gao in disbelief, the contrast between his usual demeanor and the outburst was just too stark!

Director Gao was known as a mild-mannered person, particularly conscious of his reputation. Even when furious, he would never shout and scream in public.

But now, on such an important occasion, he was shouting himself hoarse!

And at Lu Fanyu, no less!

He even cursed!

The people around, their eyes as if dropping to the ground in shock.

Even Gao Ya and Zhao Xiaoying were staring, dumbstruck.

"Director Gao, you..." Lu Fanyu couldn't help but speak.

He had a bad feeling.

"This gentleman, is our company's Deputy General Manager Bai Xiaosheng, and this, is our Deputy General Manager, Chen Changqing!"

Director Gao introduced Bai Xiaosheng and Chen Changqing with utmost respect and then glared at Lu Fanyu and bellowed, "You say these leaders insulted you? Bullshit! In front of them, what are you!"

Director Gao's manner of speaking had changed even in the midst of his fright!

It was evident just how panicked he was inside!

Old Gao had completely lost it.

Lu Fanyu, oh Lu Fanyu, you son of a bitch, I have elevated you, coddled you, and yet, you managed to provoke these two!

Director Gao felt a chill down his spine, a coldness in his heart.

As a director, he had naturally met the two deputy managers, and over these days, he had heard plenty about their deeds.

Just look at Lin Beichen and Wang Hui—what became of these colleagues, offending either of the two deputies ensured a terrible fate.

And you, Lu Fanyu, managed to offend both at once!

You even wanted security to throw them out!

Seeking death, and on such a scale, no one could save you! You can die, but don't drag me down with you!

A bitter taste rose in Director Gao's mouth.

He flattered Lu Fanyu for the sake of performance, for the sake of making money.

But if it came down to choosing between performance and his job, what was performance worth, what was Lu Fanyu worth!

Following Director Gao's introduction, a chorus of gasps echoed around the room.

Everyone knew the strife between the deputy managers.

The department heads, fearing that their staff might have the terrifying idea to request a deputy manager to personally take charge of a segment of work, kept their doors closed and exaggerated the stories about the two deputies, portraying them as fearsome as natural disasters.

Over time, people believed such talk.

Now, seeing the two deputies' menacing presence, everyone was filled with foreboding dread.

"He's a deputy manager!" Zhao Xiaoying murmured in disbelief as she looked at Bai Xiaosheng.

Gao Ya was pressing her pale hand against her mouth, her beautiful eyes widened, she had actually argued with a deputy manager, and it was the deputy manager who had patiently laid out the facts and reasoned with her...

This was a story she could brag about for half a year!

Gao Ya looked at Bai Xiaosheng, unable to suppress a flush of excitement on her face.

The people around Lu Fanyu and Qiuya changed expressions dramatically and hurriedly distanced themselves, treating them as if they were the plague.

These two, on the verge of death, had provoked the deputy managers, and offended not just one, but both...

Now, those looking at Lu Fanyu and Qiuya had pity in their gaze.

"How could this be! A deputy manager? Impossible, this can't be true!" Qiuya kept shouting in horror and disbelief, her voice reduced to just that one phrase, repeating it over and over.

Offending a director, she might seek Lu Fanyu's protection, but a deputy manager was an entirely different matter, let alone two...

Lu Fanyu's eyes were wide open, his lips trembling, his hands shaking, his legs shaking, his whole body quaking with fear.

"I'm sorry, I had no idea it was the two of you!" Lu Fanyu apologized, fearfully and humbly, even bowing deeply.

Bai Xiaosheng and Chen Changqing looked at him indifferently.

At this moment,

a commotion arose at the entrance of the banquet hall. The door was flung wide open, and a crowd of people surged in.

There were Zhongjing Media's administrative staff and security, as well as external security guards clad in black suits and sunglasses.

The guests were startled, but then they understood.

The true star of the evening's gathering, Shang Wanwan, had arrived!

As expected, the first to enter was Song Changkong; accompanying him was a graceful figure that slowly made her way inside.

Lu Fanyu's eyes lit up as if he had seen a glimmer of hope, then turned to Bai Xiaosheng and Chen Changqing. He was no longer as fearful, but still very cautious and careful as he asked in a low and obsequious tone, "Deputy Directors, now that Mr. Chen and Miss Shang are here, should we go and meet them?"

If Bai Xiaosheng and Chen Changqing nodded, then this page could be turned over for him.

"I was blind not to recognize Mount Tai just now. It was my shortsightedness. I plead for your forgiveness this one time," Lu Fanyu begged, his voice low and submissive.

His stance couldn't have been lower, and his last words were even a plea.

I should be fine now, right? After all, it was an unintentional mistake. Who could have guessed that you two would come so early, and without even an assistant? No one blames the uninformed!

Lu Fanyu made excuses for himself in his mind.

With the importance he held, with this attitude, wasn't it enough?

"I do not accept your apology!" Chen Changqing gave Lu Fanyu a cold glance and left him with a hard statement before stepping towards the entrance to meet Song Changkong and his companions.

Lu Fanyu's face immediately turned ugly.

He had never expected that Mr. Chen would persist in his resentment.

With no other choice, he had to look towards Bai Xiaosheng.

Actually, the one who had the deepest grudge against him was Bai Xiaosheng, whom he feared the most. Moreover, he had heard that Bai Xiaosheng was unconventional and ruthless in his actions, acting entirely on personal preference, without regard for face or consequence.

Such a person was the most terrifying!

Lu Fanyu would shiver every time he thought of those rumors.

However, to his surprise, Bai Xiaosheng nodded and said to him with a smile.

"He doesn't accept it, but I do."

Bai Xiaosheng accepted his apology?

Lu Fanyu's expression revealed a hint of joy, and it felt like a huge weight had been lifted off his chest.

"I accept your apology, but that doesn't mean I forgive your mistake!" Bai Xiaosheng walked towards the entrance of the hall.

He paused slightly as he passed Director Gao.

"Director Gao, you know what to do!" said Bai Xiaosheng, his voice as chilling as the winds of midwinter. "If I am dissatisfied, I will have to personally come to the Film and Television Division and take charge for a while!"

At those words, Gao Dazhi nearly wet himself.

What a joke, Mr. Bai coming to the Film and Television Division?!

Those who had mocked and cursed Bai Xiaosheng were now turning green, casting glances at each other, signaling Director Gao to hurry up and take a stand.

Gao Dazhi trembled all over, his voice rapid as he said, "Mr. Bai, I will definitely provide you with a satisfactory explanation! Qiuya has nothing to do with all the roles in this TV drama!"

Qiuya's eyes went blank, and she nearly collapsed.

"As for the male lead, we will also re-select and report to the company!" Gao Dazhi hardened his heart and declared.

Lu Fanyu's expression turned to ash, and his body shook.

Bai Xiaosheng whispered a few words to Director Gao, seeming to have more instructions, before he stepped forward to catch up with Chen Changqing.

Lu Fanyu couldn't help but watch his retreating figure, his eyes filled with despair and venomous resentment!

Bai Xiaosheng, Mr. Bai! You aim to ruin my future, to drive me to death! I, Lu Fanyu, will not be bullied so easily!

Remember, even a cornered rabbit will bite!

Lu Fanyu glared with red eyes towards the hall entrance.

No, I still have a chance!