

War God 471

Chapter 471: Do You Still Find It Funny?

Yu Fei had a strong impression of Lin Mu, but it wasn't a good one. Back in school, he had always looked down on classmates like Lin Mu—poor, ugly, tasteless, and without connections. He figured such a person would surely struggle after leaving school, and seeing Lin Mu's attire now, Yu Fei felt he had guessed correctly. Compared to his own clothes, Lin Mu's were like dirt next to the sky; there was simply no comparison.

"Lin Mu?"

A man in spectacles beside Yu Fei pushed them up his nose. "Haven't seen you in years. What brings you here? How've you been?"

The man's attitude wasn't enthusiastic; it was rather cold. As the saying goes, the clothes make the man. Judging by Lin Mu's attire, it was easy to tell how he was faring. His words were clearly meant to mock Lin Mu. Combined with Yu Fei intentionally withdrawing his hand earlier, it was a clear attempt to humiliate Lin Mu in front of everyone.

"Glasses?" Lin Mu nodded.

His relationship with Glasses was actually quite good. They had been friends in school; the two of them, along with Liu Zijian, often hung out together. But after Lin Mu dropped out and Glasses went to university, they lost touch. They hadn't kept in contact, so seeing Glasses now was a surprise to Lin Mu, but a happy one. From the looks of it, Glasses was doing quite well for himself.

"Hey, Lin Mu, is that any way to talk? You call him 'Glasses'?" Yu Fei said deliberately. "He's Director Wen now. You shouldn't be so casual."

"That's right," a plump girl said enviously. "Director Wen is an attending physician at a top-rated hospital and is about to be promoted to department head. His annual salary is between 100,000 and 200,000."

Glasses didn't say anything, clearly accepting the praise by default. A hint of smugness flashed in his eyes. It was clear what Yu Fei and the others said was true, and he was already reveling in the feeling of being a director.

Lin Mu smiled. "Sorry, old habits."

Back in school, Glasses always wore a pair of thick spectacles, so everyone had called him Little Glasses.

"Hmph, some habits are bad and need to be changed!" the plump girl said. "Speaking of which, Lin Mu, how are you doing these days? In case you didn't hear, Director Wen's salary is quite high, between one hundred and two hundred thousand a year."

As she spoke about Glasses, a flash of admiration appeared in her eyes.

Lin Mu knew that back in high school, this girl had utterly looked down on Glasses because he always hung out with poor kids like him. Who would have thought how much things could change? The same girl who once despised Glasses now admired him. Lin Mu didn't dwell on it; he was just sincerely happy for his old friend.

"Last I heard, didn't Ye Tong introduce you to a job as a security guard? The salary isn't bad, right, Lin Mu?" Yu Fei said, deliberately trying to shame him in front of everyone.

"No way, Lin Mu? You're actually working as a security guard?" the plump girl said. "That's a nice way to put it. To be blunt, you're just a doorman..."

"Gu Jie!" Glasses cut her off. Her sentence was unfinished, but everyone knew what she was about to say.

He looked at Lin Mu with some surprise. "Lin Mu, what they're saying can't be true, can it? If things are really that bad, I can introduce you to a job. The pay isn't high, but at least it's more respectable."

He hadn't expected Lin Mu to fall on such hard times. Although he now looked down on him, he remembered the days they used to play together, so he figured he could help a little. Of course, his offer wasn't sincere. He just wanted to show off his connections in front of Lin Mu. Back in school, he and Liu Zijian were often bullied, and Lin Mu was always the one to stand up for them. Though Glasses never said anything, he had always felt deeply inferior. But things were different now. The gap in their status

was obvious. He was about to become a hospital director with a limitless future. Lin Mu, on the other hand, was only getting worse off, a fact that gave Glasses a strange sense of pleasure.

Lin Mu smiled. "Thank you, but that won't be necessary."

"Come on," Yu Fei said. "We're all classmates here. If you're having trouble, just say the word. We'll definitely help you out, right?"

He sneered inwardly; his goal was to humiliate Lin Mu again and again.

"That's right, Lin Mu," said Gu Jie, the plump girl. "Look at President Yu, he's doing so well now. Instead of being a security guard, you could work on his construction site. President Yu pays well, two or three hundred a day. If you work hard, you can make over 10,000 a month. I heard a lot of his workers even have their own cars. By the way, Lin Mu, have you bought a car yet?" another girl chimed in.

Lin Mu smiled slightly. "Not yet."

"Hey, Xiao Juan, you're going too far," Yu Fei said, feigning displeasure. "How much does a security guard make in a month? 3,000 at most? And you're asking if he's bought a car? Even if he could afford one, could he maintain it? Aren't you just trying to embarrass him? Hurry up and apologize."

Though he said this, he was laughing his head off inside. Lin Mu, just you watch. I'm going to ruin you!

"I'm sorry, Lin Mu. I can be a bit blunt. I didn't mean to disrespect your profession," the woman, Xiao Juan, said with a smile. It was meant to be an apology, but it was clear to everyone she didn't mean a word of it. She was looking down on him.

Xiao Juan ran a shop that sold *hanfu* and historical costumes. She was wearing a *hanfu* herself and, as she spoke, deliberately covered her smiling mouth with her hand, the picture of affectation. One by one, they all chimed in, eager to ridicule Lin Mu.

"I don't think it matters what you do for a living."

Just then, a timid voice spoke up.

From a corner, Tao Shiyu said hesitantly, "As long as you're earning a living with your own two hands, there's no shame in being a security guard!"

"Shut up!" Xiao Juan snapped. "Tao Shiyu, who asked for your opinion?"

"Exactly," Gu Jie added with heavy sarcasm. "Don't think I don't know that you're washing dishes in a restaurant. A dishwashing girl for a security guard—a match made in heaven!"

At her comment, most of the people present burst into laughter.

Tao Shiyu's face turned crimson. She lowered her head and bit her lip hard. Lin Mu noticed that her hands, clenched together in her lap, were covered in calluses and cuts. It was obvious she'd had a hard time these past few years. For some reason, Lin Mu felt a twinge in his heart. It was like he was seeing his little sister.

"Is this so funny?"

Amid their laughter, Lin Mu spoke.

The smiles on their faces froze. Yu Fei patted Lin Mu's shoulder. "Lin Mu, what's with you? We're all just joking around."

Gu Jie held back a laugh. "Lin Mu, can't you take a joke? Tsk tsk, and here I thought we were classmates."

"If I said you were as fat as a pig, and claimed I was just joking, would you get angry?" Lin Mu looked at the plump girl, his eyes flashing with a cold light. "I'm sure you wouldn't get angry either, right? You fat pig!"

"You..." Gu Jie's face turned livid, and tears welled in her eyes. She hated being called a fat pig more than anything.

Lin Mu clicked his tongue. "Can't take a joke, huh? And here I thought we were classmates."

He threw her own words right back at her. It was like a resounding slap across Gu Jie's face. The others looked on, embarrassed and incredulous.

With a cold and aloof expression, Lin Mu looked over the crowd, his tone indifferent. "Now then," he asked, "do you still find this so funny?"

Chapter 472: She Looks Down on Me!

"Lin Mu, you've gone too far!"

Seeing that Lin Mu's retort had actually made Gu Jie cry, Yu Fei said with a displeased expression.

Glasses chimed in, "Yeah, Lin Mu. We're all classmates. Is it worth getting so worked up over a joke?"

Lin Mu laughed. His smile was cold.

Looking at the group, he said indifferently, "Classmates? If we're all classmates, why did you humiliate Tao Shiyu like that? Have you ever treated her like a classmate?"

A flicker of embarrassment passed over everyone's faces.

Yu Fei glared at Tao Shiyu in annoyance. We're all targeting Lin Mu, so why are you butting in?!

Originally, when Yu Fei heard from Liu Zijian that Lin Mu was coming, he had already discussed with everyone how they were going to humiliate him. That was the only reason he recognized Lin Mu the moment he walked in. Otherwise, with everyone having changed so much after so many years apart, it would have been impossible to recognize him at a glance.

"Come on, Lin Mu. Gu Jie's a girl, after all. Just apologize and we'll let this drop," Yu Fei said with a smile.
"Right, everyone?"

"Yeah, just apologize."

"Lin Mu, hurry up and apologize. We're all classmates, why make things difficult?"

The smile on Lin Mu's face remained, but his gaze grew even colder.

"Apologize?" Lin Mu looked at Yu Fei impassively. "You want me to apologize to her? Fine. But first, all of you have to apologize to Tao Shiyu."

"What?"

His words caused an uproar.

Yu Fei pointed at Tao Shiyu in disbelief. "You want me to apologize to a... to her? Are you insane?"

"Exactly! Lin Mu, this is too much!"

Xiao Juan pointed at Lin Mu and said, "Lin Mu, who do you think you are? What right do you have to make us apologize?"

"Too much?" Lin Mu's tone was dismissive. "When you were all verbally abusing a classmate, you didn't think you were going too far? But now that the tables have turned, you cry foul? Don't you think a little too highly of yourselves?"

"Lin Mu..." Tao Shiyu stared at him, dumbfounded, tears welling in her eyes. It felt like she had a million things to say but didn't know where to begin.

"Hmph, we're not like her!" Xiao Juan said coldly. "Everyone knows Tao Shiyu didn't finish high school. She ran off with a classmate and didn't even take the college entrance exam. How could she be the same as us?"

As Xiao Juan spoke, an irrepressible look of superiority appeared on her face. It wasn't just her; Yu Fei, Glasses, and the others all felt the same. They were people with a higher education, unlike someone from the bottom rungs of society like Tao Shiyu.

"Oh, my mistake. It seems you didn't go to college either, did you?" Xiao Juan said, as if suddenly remembering something. She looked at Lin Mu. "I heard you dropped out too. You probably never even went to college. No wonder the best you can do now is work as a doorman!"

This Xiao Juan was viciously sharp-tongued, shamelessly humiliating Lin Mu.

"If Lin Mu is only fit to be a doorman, then you aren't even qualified to carry his shoes!"

Just then, a cold voice cut in.

Three young women walked in from outside. The one in the lead had a well-proportioned figure and stunning features, but it was her gentle aura that truly stood out, making one want to pull her into an embrace and cherish her.

It was Song Wenrou.

Following behind her were Ye Tong and another woman with large, wavy hair.

The one who had spoken was Song Wenrou.

She walked into the private room, glanced at Gu Jie and Xiao Juan's group with a coolly arrogant look, and snorted. "Do not do unto others what you would not have them do unto you. Has no one ever taught you that? Since we're all classmates, why be so aggressive? Why deliberately try to embarrass someone? Is this your so-called friendship?"

Song Wenrou's tone grew heavier. "If that's the case, then you're the kind of classmates we're better off without!"

With that, she took Tao Shiyu and Lin Mu by the hand and turned to leave.

"Oh, right," Song Wenrou said, suddenly turning back to Xiao Juan, a gentle smile on her face. "I heard you opened your own clothing store. In that case, you should have some knowledge of world-famous brands, right?"

Xiao Juan subconsciously nodded.

Song Wenrou gave a faint, mocking smile. In her presence, Xiao Juan lost all confidence and could only lower her head subconsciously. Gu Jie didn't dare to utter a word, and neither did Yu Fei. He knew the Song family had some pull in River City.

"Let it go, Wenrou," a voice cut in. The woman with large, wavy hair standing beside Song Wenrou tugged at her arm. Smiling, she said, "It's rare for everyone to get together. No sulking is allowed."

After she finished speaking, she put her hands on her hips and said to the room in mock anger, "Today, if anyone doesn't give me, Tang Man, some face, you'll have to answer to me!"

Tang Man was Yu Fei's girlfriend, and the two were about to be married.

Out of respect for Tang Man, Song Wenrou didn't press the issue.

"Don't be angry, Wenrou, okay? It's a rare get-together, so let's just eat and chat."

Tang Man was a natural diplomat. With a few words of apology and comfort, she instantly defused the awkward atmosphere. Seeing how she handled the situation, the others were even more envious of Yu Fei.

To find a woman like that, Yu Fei must have saved the entire galaxy in a past life!

One of the guys spoke up. "I really envy President Yu for finding such an amazing girlfriend."

"Yeah, absolutely."

Everyone chimed in with agreement.

Yu Fei and Tang Man exchanged a look, both of them breaking into blissful smiles. He took her hand and said affectionately, "To be honest, I'm quite envious of myself too."

Everyone paused for a second before bursting into laughter, the tense atmosphere vanishing completely. Clearly, Yu Fei's joke had cleared the air.

"My, my, Lin Mu. Who would have thought," Tang Man teased, "you've gotten more handsome than you used to be."

Indeed. The Lin Mu they all remembered had dark skin and a short, scrawny frame; he had looked completely malnourished. But the Lin Mu before them now was tall and upright with a handsome face. His skin even seemed to have a mysterious luster. He was a completely different person. It was only after Tang Man's comment that everyone else finally took a proper look.

He really had changed a lot. That calm and composed aura of his was especially unforgettable. If it weren't for their preconceived notions, they might not have even noticed.

Lin Mu just smiled and said nothing.

Song Wenrou and Ye Tong, sitting beside him, sighed inwardly. A huge change? It was a complete rebirth. He was like an entirely different person now. After all, this was a man who now wielded terrifying power and held a frighteningly high status.

"By the way, Lin Mu, do you have a girlfriend?" Tang Man suddenly asked, propping her chin on her hand.

Yu Fei's expression flickered. "A man should establish his career before starting a family. Right, Lin Mu?"

His words were a clear jab, mocking Lin Mu for not having a respectable job and therefore being unqualified to have a girlfriend.

"Who says?" Tang Man shot Yu Fei a dissatisfied glare. "I think Wenrou is wonderful. She and Lin Mu are a match made in heaven. Don't you all agree?"

Everyone exchanged strange glances. They all knew that back in school, Yu Fei had a crush on Song Wenrou. But then rumors started that Lin Mu had confessed to her, and the two became very close afterward.

Tang Man knows all this. Is she bringing it up on purpose? Is it a warning for Yu Fei, or is she trying to make some other point?

All eyes turned to Lin Mu and Song Wenrou to see how they would react.

Lin Mu's expression was calm, utterly unchanged.

Song Wenrou, however, said with a trace of melancholy, "Unfortunately, he doesn't fancy me."

Chapter 473 We Are Friends Now!

Song Wenrou said she wasn't good enough for Lin Mu?

This statement instantly plunged the private room into silence.

Even Tao Shiyu looked up at Song Wenrou. Seeing her mournful gaze, which didn't seem like a lie, Tao Shiyu's own expression grew dimmer.

"Wenrou, saying that makes us all feel utterly ashamed." Tang Man looked a bit embarrassed, but she quickly managed a faint smile. "You were our class belle. Countless guys were after you. How could Lin Mu possibly not be interested in you?"

Song Wenrou glanced at Lin Mu, pursing her lips without speaking. Ye Tong, for her part, had been silent from the moment she walked in.

Watching this, Yu Fei's expression turned ugly with anger. He was sure that Song Wenrou was saying this deliberately to protect Lin Mu's dignity. But there was no way Yu Fei would let Lin Mu get away with it. He was here today to thoroughly humiliate him!

Yu Fei took out a pack of cigarettes, tapped it on the table a few times, and said, "Come on, everyone, have a smoke."

He went around passing them out, even offering them to the female classmates as a gesture. However, when he got to Lin Mu, Yu Fei pretended not to see him, ignoring him completely.

"President Yu, did you forget Lin Mu? I remember he smokes too." To curry favor with Yu Fei, Glasses chose to humiliate Lin Mu in front of everyone.

"Oh?" Yu Fei slapped his forehead. "My bad, my bad. It's been too long, I completely forgot. Lin Mu, I'm so sorry."

Saying this, he took out his pack again as if to offer one, only to open it and exclaim, "Ah, apologies. Looks like I'm all out."

"So you won't be having one, Lin Mu. You don't mind, do you?"

Yu Fei was smiling, but his eyes were ice-cold. Of course, he had more cigarettes in the pack; he just refused to give one to Lin Mu. This was no longer just verbal humiliation; it was a direct slap in the face.

Lin Mu's eyebrows twitched, and he was about to react, but Song Wenrou placed a hand on his and stood up.

While everyone watched in confusion, Song Wenrou picked up the teapot, and Ye Tong quickly grabbed the teacups. One held the cups while the other poured, and they began serving tea to everyone.

"Ah, thank you, thank you."

Everyone beamed, especially Glasses. The way he stared at Ye Tong, his eyes were practically burning. However, Ye Tong just shot him a glare and handed a cup to Gu Jie, who was sitting next to him.

Glasses's expression froze, and he sheepishly pulled his hand back.

This time, holding the teapot, Song Wenrou asked, "There, is that everyone?"

Tao Shiyu pointed out, "I don't think the class president has any."

"Oh, look at my memory." Song Wenrou smiled apologetically at Yu Fei. "Class President, my apologies. I forgot you drink tea too."

She then deliberately shook the teapot. "Oh dear. Sorry, Class President, the pot's empty."

The crowd fell silent.

They had clearly heard water sloshing inside the teapot. Song Wenrou was deliberately humiliating Yu Fei to get even for Lin Mu.

Yu Fei's face flushed the color of a pig's liver.

Nearby, Tao Shiyu covered her mouth, trying desperately to stifle her laughter.

Even Lin Mu was surprised; he hadn't expected Song Wenrou to be so protective of him. Thinking this, he decided to let it go.

But Yu Fei was different. Having been accustomed to a life of luxury since childhood, he always got what he wanted. That changed in high school when he developed a crush on Song Wenrou, only for her to be stolen away by Lin Mu. He then tried to pursue Tao Shiyu, but discovered she was also getting close to Lin Mu.

New grievances piled on old grudges, and a vicious glint flashed in Yu Fei's eyes. He was about to explode with rage.

Just then, Liu Zijian arrived.

"Ah, Zijian, what took you so long?" Upon seeing Liu Zijian, Yu Fei became incredibly enthusiastic, quickly pulling him over to a seat. "Come, Zijian, sit, sit."

Once Liu Zijian was seated, Yu Fei began the introductions. "Everyone, let me introduce you to the most low-key member of our class, Liu Zijian. This guy is incredible. He's now the deputy general manager at Boheng Pharma, and I hear he even knows the owner of Coiling Dragon Bay. How about that? Impressive, right? Makes you jealous, doesn't it?"

"Oh my God. Boheng Pharma? Coiling Dragon Bay? Liu Zijian is that amazing?"

"Wow, who would've thought? Brother Jian, you've become so successful!" Glasses said, looking at Liu Zijian with pure envy, his tone dripping with adulation.

"I heard Boheng Pharma is one of the top companies in River City. Several of their products are supposed to be incredibly effective."

"More than that, Boheng Pharma also has a branch in Jiangbei. They've been on the financial news several times."

Gu Jie looked on expectantly. "Liu Zijian, Brother Jian, could you maybe give us a few boxes of your skincare products? I tried them once at a friend's place, and the results were amazing."

Boheng Pharma's skincare products weren't just effective; they were also outrageously expensive. A top-tier set cost over one hundred thousand yuan, something only the truly wealthy could afford.

Liu Zijian was about to explain when he noticed Lin Mu sitting in the corner next to Tao Shiyu. Everyone else, even the non-smoking girls, had a cigarette placed in front of them. Liu Zijian was immediately displeased.

He walked over and sat down right next to Lin Mu.

"Hey, Manager Liu, what are you doing over there? I saved this spot specifically for you!" Yu Fei stood up, intending to pull Liu Zijian over. He had reserved that seat for Liu Zijian, a seat he hadn't even offered to Lin Mu.

"It's fine, I like it here," Liu Zijian said, shaking his head.

Yu Fei was a bit frustrated. He knew Liu Zijian and Lin Mu were on good terms, but he forced a smile and said, "Manager Liu, didn't you say you'd introduce me to the person in charge of Coiling Dragon Bay? Are they here yet? How about an introduction for your old classmate?"

"An introduction?" Liu Zijian paused. A quick scan of the room told him everything he needed to know. He glanced at Lin Mu and said, "They're probably not here yet."

"Alright, we'll wait then." Though disappointed, Yu Fei decided to wait patiently. Securing the property management contract for Coiling Dragon Bay would be a massive windfall for him.

Xiao Juan suddenly spoke up. "Speaking of Coiling Dragon Bay, I heard the apartments there are selling for 150,000 per square meter now!"

"My god! 150,000? Who could afford that?!" Gu Jie exclaimed, covering her mouth in shock.

"That place is special," Yu Fei said, blowing a smoke ring. "It's known as Jiangling's Cave Heaven and Blessed Land. Forget 150,000—people would buy it even if it were 300,000! I'm planning to buy a unit in a few days. It'll be the marital home for Tang Man and me."

"Wow, I'm so envious!" Gu Jie gushed, cupping her face. "Tang Man, you're so lucky!"

Tang Man smiled demurely, but a hint of smugness flashed in her eyes. Glancing at Song Wenrou and Tao Shiyu only made her feel more superior.

"By the way, Lin Mu, where are you living now? Did you buy a place or..."

Before Tang Man could finish, Gu Jie cut in coldly, "Him? He can't even afford a car, much less a house. He's obviously renting."

Liu Zijian was about to retort, but Lin Mu shot him a warning look. Fuming, Liu Zijian leaned back in his chair and said nothing, his face grim.

"Lin Mu, this is... for you."

At that moment, Tao Shiyu took an envelope out of her bag and handed it to him.

"This is...?" Lin Mu was confused.

Tao Shiyu forced a smile. "It's five thousand yuan. I knew back then that the money came from you. I figured it out. Please, take this as me paying you back."

Lin Mu was taken aback. He could see that Tao Shiyu was not doing well. Her face showed the strains of hardship, and her eyes held a deep sadness. The outfit she wore was outdated, likely something she had owned for years and rarely wore. Her purse was probably her most expensive accessory, but even it was scuffed and worn, making her look quite shabby.

And yet, she was giving him five thousand yuan. Back then, Lin Mu had only secretly tucked one thousand yuan by her door.

Lin Mu accepted the envelope, took out one thousand yuan, and smiled. "I'll take back what was mine. That's enough. You should keep the rest."

"But..." Tao Shiyu began to protest, but Lin Mu looked at her with a firm gaze.

"Do you not consider me a classmate anymore?"

Tao Shiyu's eyes reddened. She nodded, her voice choked with emotion. "Yes, of course. You've always been my best classmate!"

Lin Mu smiled gently. "From now on, we're friends."

Chapter 474: Not Even Qualified to Carry Shoes!

To Lin Mu, friendship carried immense weight.

Liu Zijian, Song Wenrou, and even Ye Tong knew this better than anyone.

Ye Tong looked at Tao Shiyu, her eyes filled with undisguised envy. These people have no idea how difficult it is to earn Lin Mu's friendship. Given Lin Mu's current identity, status, and his terrifyingly impressive titles, everyone present would be shocked. They would also be filled with regret.

"But..."

Tao Shiyu was rather stubborn; she was determined to repay Lin Mu no matter what.

Back then, 1,000 yuan had been an astronomical figure for her. Even now, it was half a month's salary. She had saved up the 5,000 yuan with great difficulty. She'd thought it was too little, but she never expected Lin Mu to only ask for 1,000.

"Lin Mu, I know this might make you lose face, but there are some things I have to say," Tao Shiyu said, taking a deep breath. "Back then, you dropped out of school to help me continue my education, and you even left me one thousand yuan. But someone else told me that he was the one who gave me the money. I was grateful to him, and eventually, I ended up with him."

As she spoke, her eyes reddened, but she forced a smile. "Maybe you don't know, but perhaps it was karma. Just when we were planning to get married, he was diagnosed with terminal cancer. Before he died, he told me the whole truth. He said he was sorry, that he never should have claimed the money you gave me was his."

Tao Shiyu pushed the money toward Lin Mu. "This isn't just a token of my gratitude; it also represents Wen Jun's remorse!"

Everyone was shocked by her words.

They knew, of course, that Lin Mu had dropped out of school and that Tao Shiyu had gotten together with Wen Jun almost immediately afterward. They just never realized this was the reason.

Lin Mu was also quite moved. He hadn't expected Wen Jun to be dead, especially not right before he was supposed to marry Tao Shiyu.

No wonder she looks so exhausted, he thought. She's been through so much.

"You have to take this money, no matter what!" Tao Shiyu said with a strained smile. "Besides, if you don't mind, I still have a spare house. If you don't have a place to stay, you can move in."

Fearing they might misunderstand, Tao Shiyu quickly added, "It was Wen Jun's place. He and I... we always lived separately."

Song Wenrou knew Lin Mu was in a difficult position, so she spoke up. "Since Tao Shiyu has put it that way, Lin Mu, you should just accept it."

"Zijian, take the money," Lin Mu said, then rose to his feet.

"Please enjoy the rest of your gathering. I won't disturb you any longer." Reaching the door, Lin Mu left them with these words and departed without a backward glance.

Seeing Lin Mu leave, Yu Fei couldn't help but sneer, "I was wondering how long you'd keep up the act. Turns out you're not so special after all."

"Yeah, Tao Shiyu looked like she had a hard time scraping that money together, and Lin Mu actually took it. How disappointing."

"Friends? Don't they know friendship is worthless?"

Tang Man shook her head. "Lin Mu, that was wrong of you. We're all classmates, and Shiyu is clearly going through a hard time. How could you really take her money? Have you no shame?"

Gu Jie and the others chimed in, their words dripping with sarcasm. Who does he think he is, always acting so nonchalant? Does he really think he's that special?

"That's enough!" Liu Zijian finally snapped, slamming his palm on the table and cutting Tang Man off.

"Exactly! Lin Mu, what do you mean by this?" Yu Fei also slammed the table. "You actually told Manager Liu to take the money? Does Manager Liu need your pocket change?"

Glasses chimed in, "Yeah, Lin Mu, times have changed. Do you still think you're the big brother around here?"

Back in the day, Lin Mu had been the leader of their trio, which was why Liu Zijian and Glasses had both called him Elder Brother Mu.

"All of you, shut up!" Liu Zijian suddenly roared at Yu Fei and Glasses. "Yu Fei, Little Glasses, I've been tolerating you for a long time!"

At his words, the entire private room fell silent. After all, while Yu Fei was formidable, Liu Zijian was the deputy manager of Boheng Pharma. He even knew the person in charge of Coiling Dragon Bay. With such status and power, who could possibly compare?

So, as it turned out, Liu Zijian was the true main character of the night.

"What's wrong, Manager Liu?" Yu Fei was stunned but quickly forced a smile. "Ah, Manager Liu, calm down. If I said something wrong, I'll punish myself with three drinks later."

Yu Fei still hoped Liu Zijian would introduce him to the head of Coiling Dragon Bay, so placating him was the right move. As for Lin Mu, he could leave for all he cared.

Liu Zijian snorted. "Yu Fei, you passed out cigarettes to everyone but not to Elder Brother Mu, and I said nothing. You sat him in the corner, and I still said nothing. But..."

His voice turned icy. "You should not have insulted Elder Brother Mu! Hmph, we're all classmates? Do you people even treat Elder Brother Mu like a classmate? You deliberately humiliate him and mock him in front of everyone. Is this the 'classmate friendship' you keep talking about?"

His tone carried an accusatory edge.

"Hey, Zijian, we were just joking, don't take it so seriously," Glasses quickly stood up to play the peacemaker. "Besides, think about our relationship. What's wrong with a little joke, right?"

Internally, however, he was completely baffled. Why is Liu Zijian still so respectful toward Lin Mu after all this time? Elder Brother Mu? Pfft!

Glasses wasn't the only one; the others felt the same way. Sure, back in high school, Liu Zijian and Glasses used to call him Elder Brother Mu all the time, but we were young then. A joke is a joke! Things are different now. We all have status. What gives Lin Mu, a mere security guard, the right?

"Don't you talk to me!" Liu Zijian pointed at Glasses. "Peng Qin, I never thought you could be such an ungrateful little wretch. Back in school, when kids called you Four-eyes and you hid in the bathroom crying, it was Elder Brother Mu who got revenge for you! And you, Gu Jie, you hated it when people called you Fatty. And Zu Xiaojuan, that time your clothes were torn and you couldn't go home, who helped you? It was Elder Brother Mu!

"Now look at yourselves. Is this how human beings act?" Liu Zijian said, his face livid. "I, Liu Zijian, must have been blind to sit with you people. It's disgusting!"

"Manager Liu, I..." Yu Fei's face fell. He never expected Liu Zijian to humiliate them so publicly, and his words left them speechless.

"Manager Liu, calm down, please," Yu Fei said, clearly rattled. He hastily picked up a glass of wine and walked over, intending to apologize.

"Get lost!" Liu Zijian smashed the glass on the ground, his eyes bloodshot. "You look down on Elder Brother Mu, don't you? You think he has no money and no power, is that it?"

"You look down on him?" Liu Zijian's voice dripped with scorn. "You're not even worthy to carry his shoes!"

Chapter 475: Putting on a Great Act!

"Zijian, don't you think you're going a bit too far?" Peng Qin's expression darkened at Liu Zijian's increasingly harsh words. "Even if you want to defend Lin Mu, saying we aren't even worthy of carrying his shoes is a bit much, isn't it?"

"Hmph. Birds of a feather flock together," Gu Jie snorted. "Back in school, they were thick as thieves. I can't believe that after all these years, you're still so eager to be his dog!"

"His dog?" Liu Zijian stared coldly at Gu Jie, his face filled with unconcealed disgust. "Gu Jie, it's not that I look down on you, but someone like you? Even if you wanted to be a dog, no one would have you."

"You..." Stung by his words, Gu Jie could only retort sarcastically, "Well, it seems some people really enjoy being a dog!"

Liu Zijian laughed. "Is that what you all think? Yu Fei, you asked me here today because you wanted me to pull some strings for you, right? To help you secure the property management rights for Coiling Dragon Bay? To introduce you to the person in charge?"

"Well, let me tell you now. The person in charge of Coiling Dragon Bay is sitting right here. It's the very same Lin Mu you've all been mocking and ridiculing!"

"What?"

The world seemed to go dark for Yu Fei as he gasped, "Lin Mu is the owner of Coiling Dragon Bay?"

The others were just as stunned by the news, their mouths hanging open, completely speechless.

The Coiling Dragon Bay project was a massive undertaking worth billions. It belonged to Lin Mu? Did that mean Lin Mu's net worth was in the billions? Moreover, to be able to handle such a massive development, how powerful must his background be? You could figure that out with your eyes closed.

Looking at Gu Jie, Tang Man, and the others, Liu Zijian continued in a mocking tone, "And that's not all. That company you were talking about, Boheng Pharma? It's also one of Lin Mu's businesses."

"Ah?!"

Liu Zijian's words once again drew gasps of shock from Gu Jie and the others, their faces etched with disbelief.

A company as large as Boheng Pharma also belonged to Lin Mu? How was that possible?

At that moment, Tang Man and the others felt as if they'd been punched in the chest, and they struggled to breathe. They had always thought Lin Mu was just a lowly security guard at some company, earning a meager two or three thousand a month. They believed he had no future and was unworthy of sitting at the same table as them.

It turned out they were the unworthy ones.

Yu Fei's family was considered wealthy, weren't they? But compared to Lin Mu, what were they? They were less than nothing.

Lin Mu was someone they could never hope to reach.

Instantly, a wave of regret washed over everyone.

Peng Qin felt it most keenly. He had actually been on good terms with Lin Mu, but he had mocked him just to curry favor with Yu Fei. And for what? He was just an attending physician at a top-tier hospital, not even a department head yet.

What right did I have to look down on Lin Mu? How could I possibly compare to him? I'm not even worthy of carrying his shoes!

"You humiliate and mock him, and then you expect him to give you a set of skincare products? Have you no shame?" Liu Zijian's words were like a heavy slap, making everyone's faces burn.

"No! This isn't true!" Gu Jie clutched her head. "You're making this all up! If Lin Mu is as powerful as you say, why would he... why would he dress like that? And why wouldn't he dare admit it? It's all fake!"

"Right, it has to be fake!" Peng Qin added. "Zijian, I know you and Lin Mu are close, but there's no need to tell such blatant lies just to defend him. We all know what kind of person Lin Mu is. How could he become so rich in just a few years? This isn't a movie."

Peng Qin refused to believe that the Lin Mu from years ago—the one who ate steamed buns and fought over snacks with them—could now be a billionaire.

"Exactly, it must be fake!" Yu Fei didn't believe it either. Coming from a wealthy family, he knew how hard it was to make money. No matter how capable Lin Mu was, building such a vast fortune in less than a decade was simply impossible.

"Believe it or not," Liu Zijian said, his face devoid of emotion. "But I have to tell you one thing. As of today, our friendship as classmates is over."

With that, Liu Zijian turned and walked away.

After he left, the others stood there, stunned. He just left?

"How could he just leave? Why didn't he explain?" Gu Jie said coldly. Seeing no reaction from the others, she pressed, "This isn't real, right?"

"It's definitely fake!" Peng Qin said through gritted teeth. "If Lin Mu were really what Liu Zijian described, he would have said so from the start. I know him too well!"

"President Yu, what do you think?"

Yu Fei took a deep breath. "True or not, we can just go to the Coiling Dragon Bay sales office tomorrow and find out for ourselves."

Peng Qin's eyes lit up. "Right! We'll know as soon as we mention Lin Mu's name."

Yu Fei took Tang Man's hand. "Man, you didn't like our old place, did you? How about we go check out Coiling Dragon Bay tomorrow?"

"Ah? Oh, sure. Alright," Tang Man replied absently, as if just snapping back to reality.

"Xiao Juan, why are you so quiet?" Gu Jie asked, nudging her.

"Oh, it's nothing." Xiao Juan forced an awkward smile.

「Early the next morning」

Yu Fei and the others drove directly to the Coiling Dragon Bay sales office, ready to expose Liu Zijian's lies and confirm Lin Mu's real identity.

"Hmph, I already called and confirmed it last night," Yu Fei said with a confident smile, driving his BMW. "Coiling Dragon Bay used to be Haiyuan Tiancheng, an infamous abandoned project in Jiangling. It was eventually acquired by a company called Qin Corporation. The boss's surname isn't Lin at all!"

"President Yu, is that true?" Peng Qin's face lit up. "I have good news, too. The boss of Boheng Pharma's surname is Su, not Lin. So, Liu Zijian was just lying to us!"

"Hah. To think he'd tell such a lie just to protect Lin Mu," Yu Fei shook his head. "We're better off without a classmate like that."

Gu Jie scoffed, "That guy almost had me fooled yesterday. Good thing we didn't believe him."

Laughing and chatting, the group soon arrived at the Coiling Dragon Bay sales office.

As soon as they got there, they saw that the place was already crowded, and everyone seemed to be wealthy.

"Boss Zhang, Director Wang, President Wei? What are you all doing here?"

As soon as Yu Fei walked into the sales office, his expression faltered. He recognized these men as the heads of prominent property management companies in Jiangling, all more powerful than his own.

"Oh, if it isn't President Yu," a portly, middle-aged man said with a smile. "Looks like you're also here for the property management rights to Coiling Dragon Bay?"

Yu Fei was taken aback but quickly recovered. "Oh, yes. That's right."

Boss Zhang nodded. "I'm going to take a look over there. Let's chat later."

Though puzzled, Yu Fei didn't say anything more.

Just then, Gu Jie suddenly pointed. "Isn't that Tao Shiyu? What's she doing here?"

Everyone turned to look and saw Tao Shiyu standing nervously in a corner of the sales office, looking tense.

Yu Fei let out a cold laugh. So that's it. Lin Mu really put on a good show. We were almost fooled by them!

Chapter 476: This is Not Acting!

"Acting?"

Gu Jie was taken aback. "President Yu, I don't quite understand."

Peng Qin said, "What's not to understand? Didn't Tao Shiyu defend Lin Mu yesterday? She even deliberately gave him money. See? Now she's shown up to get the money back."

"Ah, so you're saying Lin Mu and the others planned this all out beforehand?" Gu Jie exclaimed.

"What else could it be?" Peng Qin sneered. "I knew it was strange when Tao Shiyu randomly gave Lin Mu money yesterday. She was obviously putting on a show for us."

"Sigh. I never thought our classmates would turn out like this. It's truly disappointing," Tang Man said, shaking her head slightly with a hint of disappointment on her face.

"Come on, let's go look at the apartments," Yu Fei said, pulling Tang Man toward the sales office.

Gu Jie's eyes darted around for a moment before she walked over to Tao Shiyu. "Tao Shiyu, are you here to buy an apartment too?"

She knew perfectly well that Tao Shiyu couldn't afford one, which was precisely why she asked. Her only goal was to mock her. Ever since their school days, Gu Jie had been jealous of Tao Shiyu. Tao Shiyu was pretty and a good student, while Gu Jie was the exact opposite, so their teachers had always used her as a bad example. This had left Gu Jie holding a grudge for years. After graduating from college, Gu Jie

found a job at a company. Although her salary wasn't high, she still made four to five thousand a month. This was undoubtedly a more respectable position than Tao Shiyu's, who had been reduced to working as a dishwasher, a fact which gave Gu Jie a strong sense of superiority whenever she was around her.

"I... I'm just looking."

Seeing Gu Jie, Tao Shiyu's expression became somewhat strained. Lin Mu had actually been the one to call and ask her to come over, but she had no idea why.

"Oh, just looking?" Gu Jie said sarcastically. "Take a look around. Is this the kind of place you can just waltz into?"

Pointing at the other prospective buyers, Gu Jie continued, "Look at them. What they spend on a single meal is more than your entire annual salary. You should leave before you embarrass yourself further."

Tao Shiyu's head dropped, and she anxiously clutched her clothes, looking deeply uncomfortable.

Seeing her reaction, the mockery on Gu Jie's face grew even thicker. What she hadn't told anyone was that she had already been fired and didn't even have a stable job anymore.

"Miss Tao, the event is about to begin. Please come over here," a voice called out.

Just then, Zhou Juan from the sales office came over and began to lead Tao Shiyu away.

"An event?" Gu Jie looked puzzled and hurried after them. "What kind of event?"

Zhou Juan explained, "It's the sales event for Coiling Dragon Bay. Miss Tao is the emcee we've invited."

"Her? An emcee?" Gu Jie stared at Tao Shiyu in disbelief, as if she had just heard the most ridiculous joke.

Even Tao Shiyu herself was stunned.

"Yes," Zhou Juan said. "Alright, Miss Tao, we're running out of time. President Lin said he'll explain everything later. Let's go get your makeup done and change your clothes first."

As Tao Shiyu was whisked away in a state of confusion, Gu Jie was left feeling even more baffled.

"Hmph. Go on, put on your little act," she muttered. "Let's see how long you can keep it up!"

「In the Sales Office」

"My dear, which one do you like? Just tell me," Yu Fei said with a confident smile, strolling past the various property displays with Tang Man. He had made a lot of money in recent years and even owned a villa. Buying an apartment here at Coiling Dragon Bay was completely stress-free for him.

"Yu Fei, I..."

Before Tang Man could finish, Wen Xiaojuan, who was standing beside them, chimed in enviously, "President Yu, you're so generous! Buying such a wonderful apartment just like that."

Yu Fei laughed heartily, his face filled with pride. "Well, I'm going to marry Xiao Man, so buying her a home is the right thing to do, isn't it?"

"And what's more," he declared proudly, "I'm going to put the apartment in Xiao Man's name."

His words immediately made several women in the vicinity turn to look, while Tang Man was moved beyond words.

After looking for a little while longer, Tang Man pointed to a rather nice apartment. "Let's choose this one, then," she said, a hint of happiness in her eyes. A man was buying an apartment just for her and was even going to put her name on the deed. She felt like the happiest woman in the world.

"Alright, this is the one," Yu Fei agreed. But just as he was about to say more, his eyes lit up as he saw someone walk through the door. "Isn't that Lin Mu? I can't believe he actually dared to show up!"

Peng Qin and the others also spotted Lin Mu. He was still in his plain, casual clothes, looking as unremarkable as ever.

Hmph. Just watch me expose him! Peng Qin thought with a cold smile as he walked toward Lin Mu.

"Well, well, if it isn't our old classmate, Lin Mu. What brings you here? Looking to buy an apartment?" At that moment, his disdain for him grew even stronger.

What's gotten into Peng Qin? Lin Mu wondered, startled. How dare he keep targeting me?

"Him? Buy an apartment? Don't be ridiculous!" Gu Jie sneered. "Lin Mu, I never would have guessed. You've put on quite a show. We were almost fooled!"

"A show?" Lin Mu asked, slightly taken aback. "What show am I putting on?"

"Old classmate, why keep up the pretense?" Gu Jie said with a scornful look. "Do you really think we're that easy to fool? If you drop the act, we can still be classmates."

Lin Mu waved his hand dismissively. "No, thanks. You're all way out of my league."

"It's good that you know your place!" Gu Jie said with a look of theatrical disappointment. "Lin Mu, it's not my place to criticize, but you really should try to be a more honest person."

"Him? Honest?" Yu Fei couldn't help but laugh. "Lin Mu, no offense, but I really didn't expect you to be this kind of person."

Lin Mu shook his head and was about to explain when the sales manager stepped onto the stage with a microphone. "Thank you all for coming. I'm happy to announce that you will now witness the official

ribbon-cutting ceremony for Coiling Dragon Bay." Although the development had already begun sales, the formal ceremony hadn't been held yet.

The sales manager continued, "And now, please welcome our emcees to the stage!"

As he finished speaking, three women in cheongsams gracefully walked onto the stage. Both their beauty and their figures instantly captivated the audience.

"They're gorgeous! All three of them are prettier than movie stars!"

"Wait... aren't the two in front Song Wenrou and Ye Tong? And the last one is... Tao Shiyu?"

Yu Fei and his friends exchanged shocked glances. The Tao Shiyu standing before them was completely different from the one they had seen earlier. A form-fitting cheongsam accentuated her slender figure, and a touch of light makeup made her look radiant and captivating. Most importantly, against the backdrop specially arranged by the sales office, the three women looked as if they had stepped out of a painting, instantly capturing everyone's gaze.

Their appearance was met with a roar of approval and a wave of thunderous applause.

"Now," the sales manager said with a faint smile, "let's give a warm round of applause to welcome our President Lin to the stage to say a few words!"

A collective hush fell over the crowd. President Lin of Coiling Dragon Bay was famously mysterious, as elusive as a divine dragon whose head is seen but never its tail. Very few people had ever seen his true face.

"Who exactly is this President Lin?"

"I have no idea. All I know is his surname is Lin. I don't know his full name."

Just as the crowd's curiosity peaked, Yu Fei and the others watched in astonishment as Lin Mu began walking toward the stage.

Yu Fei's expression changed, and he moved to pull Lin Mu back. "Lin Mu, what do you think you're doing? Get back here right now!"

This idiot is going to ruin everything! he thought frantically. They weren't calling for him!

Lin Mu turned around and smiled. "What am I doing? You'll find out in a moment."

As soon as Lin Mu set foot on the stage, the sales manager beamed and announced, "This is him! This is the President of Coiling Dragon Bay, President Lin! Please, a round of applause!"

As applause filled the room, Yu Fei and his friends gaped, their faces etched with utter disbelief.

Lin Mu was actually the owner of Coiling Dragon Bay!

This wasn't an act, and it certainly wasn't just for show.

Chapter 477 The Luckiest Person, The Most Regretful Person!

"Is... is this real? How could this be real?"

Shock, fear, and regret flickered across the faces of Yu Fei and his friends. The image of Lin Mu they held in their minds began to blur. The classmate they once knew had vanished. In his place stood a single, towering figure: President Lin, the owner of Coiling Dragon Bay!

Before the stunned crowd, Lin Mu slowly walked onto the stage.

"Greetings, President Lin!"

"Hello, Mr. Lin!"

"Congratulations, Young Master Mu!"

Every person of status greeted him as he passed. Lin Mu simply smiled and nodded in acknowledgment.

"Jiangling's Zheng Mingye has come to congratulate your company on its ribbon-cutting ceremony. I wonder if Mr. Lin welcomes me?"

Just then, a hearty laugh rang out. The crowd turned to see Jiangling's richest man, Zheng Mingye, striding toward them in high spirits, a broad smile on his face.

The wealthiest man in Jiangling came in person?

"Haha, I took the liberty of coming uninvited. I hope Young Master Mu isn't upset?" an elderly man in a Tang suit said, walking forward with two flower baskets.

"Mr. Lin, I, Xie Tuzi, have also arrived!" a bald, burly man boomed, approaching with confident strides.

It was the Jiangling big shot, Xie Tuzi! His arrival sent a ripple of shock through the crowd; their expressions changed dramatically. Xie Tuzi was no ordinary figure. His influence was said to spread throughout Han River Province, and no one dared to provoke him.

"The richest man in Jiangling, a Jiangling big shot, Divine Doctor Sun Tianyang..." Peng Qin whispered, his eyes wide with fear as he recognized the last man.

This was the medical titan who had once visited their hospital, a man even the hospital director had to receive personally. But now, Master Sun, whom their own hospital director had to treat with such painstaking respect, was looking at Lin Mu with a mixture of caution and deep reverence.

What on earth was going on?

It wasn't just them; everyone else was floored. The entire venue fell silent. Everyone stared wide-eyed as each dignitary who arrived was more formidable than the last.

Just who is this President Lin of Coiling Dragon Bay?

It was just a simple ribbon-cutting ceremony, yet so many powerful figures had personally attended. This was undoubtedly the biggest news in Jiangling.

THUMP!

Yu Fei's body went limp, and he collapsed to the ground, his face ashen. Gu Jie and the others looked just as pale, their hearts filled with endless regret as they watched the man on stage.

Their classmate was actually such a powerful and well-connected figure?

Tang Man rubbed her eyes, thinking it was an illusion. Her expression was completely blank. "This... how is this possible? How could Lin Mu be..."

Wen Xiaojuan was on the verge of tears, her mouth agape as if she had just seen a ghost. Gu Jie was so shocked she could only press her hand tightly over her mouth.

Lin Mu, President Lin...

It turned out he was the true tycoon! He was the most successful of all their classmates!

As Lin Mu stepped onto the stage, he nodded slightly to Song Wenrou and the others. Tao Shiyu, too, was lost for a moment, but she quickly took a deep breath, feeling a genuine sense of happiness for him.

"Lin Mu, congratulations," she said with a bright, sincere smile.

Lin Mu smiled back and nodded before walking to the center of the stage.

"This man is the general manager of our Coiling Dragon Bay project and, more importantly, the creator of Coiling Dragon Bay himself—President Lin! Please give him your warmest round of applause as he comes to speak!"

As the sales manager finished, the audience snapped to attention, erupting in thunderous applause. Countless gazes landed on Lin Mu. Many women in the crowd stared at him, their eyes practically heart-shaped as they scanned his figure back and forth. Some of the bolder ones even squealed, "Wow, President Lin is so handsome!"

At this, many of the men scoffed inwardly, feeling a little sour.

Coiling Dragon Bay was nothing short of a myth in Jiangling. Who could have imagined that an abandoned construction project could be transformed into a place like an Immortal Realm? And the creator of this miracle was standing right before them. Although many men felt a twinge of jealousy, they couldn't suppress their admiration for Lin Mu. A worthless abandoned building had become the hottest property in Jiangling, with an average price of one hundred fifty thousand yuan per square meter!

Who could have created such a miracle? Only Lin Mu! By now, he was at the very least a multi-billionaire!

Of everyone present, Ye Tong's feelings were the most complex.

Back then, she was one of the people who looked down on Lin Mu the most. Fearing that he would get close to Song Wenrou, she had demeaned him with her words at every opportunity. And now? Now, Lin Mu was Jiangling's youngest and most successful billionaire. He was also the Invincible Grandmaster, renowned in the Martial Arts World! All of River City respected him! Coiling Dragon Bay was just one of his many properties! And she, Ye Tong, had gone from a proud girl who scorned Lin Mu to a hostess holding a ceremonial ribbon for him... Moreover, a thrill of excitement fluttered in her heart. She felt lucky. Compared to Gu Jie, Tang Man, and the others, she was undoubtedly the most fortunate.

「Onstage」

Lin Mu raised his hands and gestured for quiet, and the venue immediately fell silent. Taking the microphone, he glanced over the crowd. "If I'm not mistaken, I bet everyone here has cursed me thoroughly in their hearts, wondering why the houses at Coiling Dragon Bay are so expensive, right?"

With a slight smile, he added, "Of course, if I were in your shoes, I'd be cursing myself, too."

Laughter rippled through the audience.

Who would have thought President Lin had such a sense of humor.

Lin Mu continued, "But I want to tell you all that whether something is expensive depends on its value. I believe the homes in Coiling Dragon Bay are worth this price, so I don't consider them expensive! An Immortal Realm on Earth cannot be bought for any price!"

His words were met with a fresh round of applause.

"Alright, let's cut to the chase. I'm sure you didn't come here to listen to me ramble," Lin Mu said.
"Today, anyone who buys a house will receive a twenty percent discount."

This announcement triggered an earth-shattering cheer from the crowd.

"President Lin is incredible!"

"President Lin is a legend!"

"..."

With the current prices at Coiling Dragon Bay, a twenty percent discount would save them a huge amount of money.

"Also, there are three people here I want to mention," Lin Mu said, waiting for the excitement to die down a little. "These three are my classmates. They have always supported and encouraged me. They even..." He gestured to Song Wenrou and the other two behind him, smiling. "They were even willing to serve as hostesses for my company's ribbon-cutting ceremony. For that, I, Lin Mu, am incredibly grateful."

"Therefore, I've decided to give each of them a house!"

As soon as he spoke, absolute shock swept through the venue. Everyone stared at Lin Mu in disbelief.

A house for each of them? That's nearly fifty million yuan!

"Mr. Lin is truly generous!" Xie Tuzi declared, giving a thumbs-up. "Today, I, Xie Tuzi, am thoroughly impressed!"

All eyes turned to the three women on stage, filled with palpable envy.

"I never thought being President Lin's classmate came with such an amazing benefit... This old man is dying of envy!" Zheng Mingye clutched his chest with a pained look.

Sun Tianyang sighed. "Indeed. I had to spend over ten million in cold hard cash just to buy one."

THUMP.

Yu Fei's body went limp again as he slumped to the ground. Peng Qin, Wen Xiaojuan, and the others looked equally devastated. At that moment, they were without a doubt the most regretful people in the world.

Chapter 478: You Dare to Steal My Man?

"Lin Mu, I..." Tao Shiyu looked at the property deed in her hand, her voice trembling slightly. "I can't accept this. Please, take the house back!"

After the ribbon-cutting ceremony, Tao Shiyu found Lin Mu, intent on returning the property.

Lin Mu smiled. "What's wrong? You don't like it?"

"No... it's not that. It's just..." Tao Shiyu wiped her eyes and forced a smile. "This is just too valuable. I can't accept it."

Lin Mu looked at her seriously. "Tao Shiyu, to me, friends are more valuable than money."

Tao Shiyu was about to protest again, but Song Wenrou cut in. "Shiyu, just take it. That guy dragged us here at the last minute to be his hosts. We've earned this." Then, she shot a resentful look at Lin Mu. "Isn't that right, Lin Mu?"

That guy. He did it on purpose. How dare he ask me, the dignified Miss of the Song Family, to be his host? If there isn't a good reward for this, I'm definitely not letting him off the hook!

"That's right. This is what you've earned," Lin Mu said with a smile. "If you think it's too valuable, you can come work for me. Consider it your way of repaying me."

"Work for you?" Tao Shiyu bit her lip and said softly, "But I don't know how to do anything."

Lin Mu laughed. "What is there that you can't do? You can just learn. Besides, Coiling Dragon Bay is missing a property management department. How about I put the three of you in charge?"

"Oh, that's great!" Song Wenrou was overjoyed. "Living in such a nice house and getting a good job, too! Lin Mu, you'd better call me next time you have an opportunity this good."

Lin Mu's expression turned serious. "We can be friends, but let me be clear. You must manage Coiling Dragon Bay properly. If anything goes wrong, I will hold you responsible!"

"Yes, sir!" Song Wenrou snapped her feet together and gave Lin Mu a sharp salute.

"Lin Mu, thank you," Ye Tong said, clutching her own property deed tightly as she offered her sincere gratitude.

Lin Mu nodded. "I'll have someone show you around Coiling Dragon Bay later. From now on, you'll be in charge of property management."

"President Lin, rest assured! I definitely won't let you down!" Song Wenrou said earnestly.

Lin Mu shook his head. "I'd prefer it if you just called me by my name instead of President Lin."

Seeing Lin Mu's earnest expression, the three women all silently thanked him in their hearts. Tao Shiyu felt more than just gratitude; she was deeply moved. She had just lost her job, and now Lin Mu had given her not only a house but also a new career. She was overcome with both gratitude and emotion.

「...」

"Excuse me, is... is President Lin available?" Yu Fei, Peng Qin, and the others stood at the entrance to the sales office, cautiously asking a staff member.

"I'm sorry, President Lin is busy and not seeing any visitors at the moment," the staff member replied.

"But we really have urgent business with him," Yu Fei said anxiously.

"That's right," Gu Jie chimed in. "I'm one of President Lin's classmates. He knows me."

The staff member gave Gu Jie a doubtful glance and sneered. "A classmate of President Lin? Then why didn't I see you with him earlier?"

"We were in the audience," Gu Jie mumbled, her face flushing with embarrassment.

"In the audience?" The staff member's expression turned cold. "Do you take me for a fool? If you have no other business, please leave."

"But we really need to see Lin Mu. Please, can't you make an exception?" Yu Fei pleaded, hurriedly offering a cigarette.

The staff member slapped his hand away, clearly annoyed. "Who do you think you are, calling him by his name? Address him as President Lin!"

"Yes, yes, of course. President Lin," Yu Fei said awkwardly. "Sir, please, just let us see President Lin."

Yu Fei and the others had come to apologize to Lin Mu, hoping that if he accepted, all their problems would be solved.

"Yu Fei, I can't believe you still have the nerve to come looking for Elder Brother Mu." Liu Zijian walked over, looking at the group with mockery. "I told you yesterday, Elder Brother Mu is someone completely out of your league. Hurry up and leave. Don't embarrass yourselves here."

"Manager Liu, it's my fault," Yu Fei said, quickly adopting a placating tone. "Please, just let us see Lin Mu. We're all classmates, after all."

"Yes, we're all classmates! Yesterday was just a misunderstanding," Peng Qin added hastily.

"A misunderstanding?" Liu Zijian said with disgust. "Peng Qin, you're nothing but a damn ingrate. Still talking about misunderstandings? Get lost!"

"Liu Zijian, you...!" Peng Qin's face fell, shocked that Liu Zijian would be so blunt.

"If you don't get lost right now, don't blame me for getting rough!" Liu Zijian's expression turned ugly. He had absolutely no sympathy for any of them.

"Manager Liu, Brother Jian, I'm begging you. We just want to apologize to Lin Mu in person," Tang Man said with a fawning smile. "Please, just help us out. I'm begging you."

"An apology won't be necessary."

At that moment, Lin Mu emerged with Song Wenrou and her friends. He cast an indifferent glance at Yu Fei's group.

"Lin Mu! President Lin, we..." Seeing Lin Mu, their faces lit up, and they moved to approach him.

However, several security guards stepped in their way, their gazes sharp.

"Lin Mu, how can you treat your old classmates this way?" Tang Man demanded indignantly. "What are you so proud of? So what if you're rich? Do you really think you're so important?"

"Shut up!" Yu Fei spun around and slapped Tang Man hard across the face. "Are you trying to get us all killed?!" he snarled.

This foolish woman, Tang Man, is a complete liability! I was still hoping Lin Mu would give me the property management contract for Coiling Dragon Bay. If he refuses out of anger because of her, how could I even bring it up?

"Sorry, but I don't deserve to be called your classmate," Lin Mu said, glancing at Yu Fei before turning and walking away without a second look.

Song Wenrou gave Yu Fei a pitying look. "Yu Fei, you might as well save your breath. Lin Mu has already given the three of us the property management rights to Coiling Dragon Bay." She then turned to the others. "And as for the rest of you, since you never treated Lin Mu like a classmate, don't humiliate yourselves by trying to suck up to him now."

After saying her piece, Song Wenrou quickly left with Ye Tong and Tao Shiyu.

Yu Fei could only stare, lost and dejected, at Lin Mu's retreating figure as it grew smaller in the distance. Peng Qin and the others instantly turned pale, filled with limitless regret.

"Lin Mu, wait!" Tang Man yelled, chasing after him breathlessly. When Lin Mu finally stopped, she smoothed her hair, forced a smile, and asked, "Lin Mu, you don't have a girlfriend yet, do you?"

Lin Mu was taken aback, wondering what on earth this woman wanted now.

Tang Man did a little twirl in front of him. "I broke up with Yu Fei," she said with a grin. "So now's your chance."

Lin Mu was stunned for a second, then burst out into incredulous laughter.

Just then, a white Maybach pulled up in front of Tang Man, engulfing her in a cloud of dust.

Qin Luoli stepped out of the car like a queen. She gently took Lin Mu's arm, lifted her chin, and fixed Tang Man with a cold, haughty stare, her powerful aura on full display.

"What's this? You dare try and steal a man from me, Qin Luoli?"

Chapter 479: Maternal Grandfather Passes Away!

"You dare try to steal my man?"

Faced with Qin Luoli's question, Tang Man's expression became flustered.

"I... It's not what you think..."

Tang Man's family background was not very good; in fact, it could be said to be quite ordinary. But ever since she was young, she had longed for a better life—to eat well, dress well, and live well. That's why, after starting high school, she chose to be with Yu Fei.

Yu Fei was a playboy and had countless girlfriends during their time together, but Tang Man didn't care at all, as long as he could give her what she wanted. So, over the years, she had him wrapped firmly around her finger, to the point they were even discussing marriage.

That was, until Lin Mu appeared.

Only then did Tang Man realize that among the people she knew, there was someone more outstanding and wealthier than Yu Fei. That person was Lin Mu.

At the class reunion, she had intentionally approached Song Wenrou just to show off how well she was doing. Targeting Lin Mu was a way to make him understand the gap between him and Yu Fei.

Tang Man only regretted her decisions after Lin Mu's identity was revealed. She regretted not choosing Lin Mu over Yu Fei from the start. She regretted deliberately targeting Lin Mu at the gathering instead of trying to win his favor. She only came to this realization after Yu Fei slapped her.

She believed that by leaving Yu Fei, a woman of her caliber could easily find a man more outstanding than him. Thus, Lin Mu became her top choice. As far as she knew, he probably didn't have a girlfriend, so she thought her chances were high. Still, Tang Man feigned reservation, telling Lin Mu he "had a chance" as a hint that he could pursue her.

But she had never expected a woman who drove a luxury car, was more attractive, had a better figure, and possessed a more refined temperament than her to appear by Lin Mu's side.

A beauty capable of toppling nations, peerless and unparalleled!

Those were the only words Tang Man could think of to describe Qin Luoli. That aloof and icy gaze perfectly defined what it meant to have a powerful aura.

"Is the ribbon-cutting ceremony over?"

Completely ignoring Tang Man, Qin Luoli carefully straightened Lin Mu's clothes.

"Yeah, I was just about to call you," Lin Mu smiled. "Let's go, it's about time."

The sedan started and sped away, leaving Tang Man standing in place, her face alternating between pale and flushed.

"Lin Mu..."

After a long moment, she finally forced his name out, her voice filled with venomous resentment.

"Luo Li, about that person just now..." In the car, Lin Mu felt he should offer an explanation.

Driving the car, Qin Luoli said, "There's no need to talk about other women."

She reached out a hand and gently took Lin Mu's. "Because I trust you."

I trust you.

Those three simple words contained Qin Luoli's absolute trust in Lin Mu. At that moment, he felt that among the millions of women in the world, not a single one could compare to her.

As far as the eye could see, across the vast sea of stars, she was the only one.

「River City. Qin Family Old Residence.」

By now, Lin Mu's status in the Qin Family was a world apart from what it used to be. Even Qin Hongshu would greet him with a nod and a broad smile. It couldn't be helped. After all, he was now the most sought-after figure in the Qin Family. He had the methods, the strength, and the ability to make money.

It could be said that the Qin Corporation owed its firm position as River City's number one family entirely to Lin Mu. This was something everyone in the Qin Family, from top to bottom, understood. The Qin Family was truly the Earth Emperor of River City. Qin Luoli was the queen of River City, and Lin Mu was its helmsman, operating from behind the scenes.

"Young Lin, you must have had a tough time in Jiangling recently," the Old Madam said at the dinner table, personally placing a piece of food in Lin Mu's bowl. "Business is important, but you must also take care of your health."

"I'm doing fine, Old Madam," Lin Mu replied quickly, accepting the food. "You should take care of your health as well."

"Call me Great-grandma," the Old Madam said, dissatisfied.

"Alright, Great-grandma."

The Old Madam instantly beamed, and a warm, cheerful atmosphere filled the dining room.

Seeing Lin Mu chatting and laughing with the Old Madam, Qin Hongshu sighed heavily to himself before squeezing out a smile.

"Lin Mu, don't blame your Second Uncle for being nosy, but you and Luo Li aren't getting any younger. Aren't you planning on having a child?" Qin Hongshu said with a sigh. "Our Qin Family is so large and prosperous now, and among the younger generation, everything rests on you two. You'd better hurry."

Indeed, Qin Hao had been driven out of the Qin Family. As for his son Qin Ming, Qin Hongshu knew the situation all too well, so his words were also an attempt to curry favor with Lin Mu.

"Second Uncle, what are you talking about?" Qin Luoli's face flushed slightly, and she kicked Lin Mu under the table.

Lin Mu's expression remained unchanged. "Thank you for your concern, Second Uncle, but the Qin Family's business is just getting started. Luo Li and I don't have any plans for that yet."

"No plans?" the Old Madam interjected disapprovingly. "This time, I think your Second Uncle has a point. It's time to consider it."

Lin Mu put down his chopsticks and said earnestly, "Great-grandma, it's not that I don't want to have a child. But as you know, our Qin Family may look impressive, but our foundation is unstable. I want to wait until the Qin Family is on completely solid ground before having children."

"Completely solid ground?" Qin Hongshu was taken aback. "Lin Mu, our Qin Family is the most powerful family in River City, and the Qin Corporation is flourishing. How can our foundation be unstable?"

"It is precisely for that reason that our foundation is unstable," Lin Mu said. "A tall tree catches the wind. Second Uncle, surely you understand this principle?"

The expressions of everyone at the table grew serious.

Qin Luoli added, "Lin Mu is right. Although we're number one in River City, in Jiangling, we're nowhere near the top."

"You mean..." Qin Hongshu's eyes widened with a hint of shock, as if he had guessed something.

Lin Mu smiled faintly. "If we're going to do this, we'll aim to be number one in all of Handong Province!"

His declaration shocked everyone into silence.

"Lin Mu, you weren't serious about what you said earlier, were you?" On the way back, Qin Luoli looked at him, her face still showing a trace of disbelief.

This guy just can't say something without it being completely shocking. Number one in Handong Province? What is he thinking?

"Why would I lie?" Lin Mu said with a smile. "Once I've handled things here in River City, I plan to focus on developing in Jiangling."

"Alright," she agreed. Qin Luoli always supported Lin Mu's decisions and would never object.

As soon as they returned to Qin Zhu Courtyard, Lin Mu saw his mother sitting on the living room sofa, silently crying.

Seeing them, Mother Lin quickly wiped her eyes and stood up. "Xiao Mu, Luo Li, you're back? Have you eaten? I'll go get you some food."

Lin Mu walked over, took his mother's hand, and asked with concern, "Mom, what happened?"

"It's nothing, Xiao Mu. Your mom is fine." Her eyes were red, still holding a hint of pain.

"Mom, what exactly happened?" Lin Mu spoke with a tone of reassuring firmness. "Tell me, and your son will find a way to help you."

Mother Lin could no longer hold it in. She hugged Lin Mu tightly and sobbed, "Xiao Mu, your grandfather... he's gone!"

Chapter 480 Roll Out!

Wufeng County is a small county under the jurisdiction of River City.

The population is small, and its income and consumption levels can't compare to River City's.

Here, a family with several hundred thousand or even a million yuan would be considered wealthy. If you had several million, you'd be a super-rich tycoon.

Wufeng County is surrounded by mountains and farmland, and many families still rely on agriculture to make a living.

At the Wufeng County bus station, Lin Mu dragged a large suitcase, with his mother, Su Rou, following behind him.

"Xiao Mu, why don't you head back? I can go by myself," Mother Lin said with a hint of complaint.

"Mom, I don't have much going on recently anyway. Besides, I haven't been back in years. This is a good chance to see my childhood friends." Lin Mu wore a smile, but a cold glint flashed in his eyes.

Last night, he had overheard his mother on the phone, seemingly begging her family to let her return for her father's funeral, but she had been refused.

That was why Lin Mu had pulled his mother straight to the station first thing in the morning.

If it weren't for pressing matters at the Qin Corporation that required Qin Luoli's personal attention, she would have come with them.

"Sigh."

Knowing Lin Mu's temperament, Mother Lin didn't argue. She only said, "Xiao Mu, once we get to your grandfather's house, no matter what they say or do, you must act as if you haven't heard a thing. Do you understand?"

"Mom, don't worry. What could I possibly do?" Lin Mu smiled faintly, but his heart stirred.

It seems Mom's life back home wasn't very pleasant.

"Xiao Mu, you have to promise me!" Mother Lin looked at him intently, as if she needed to hear the words from his own lips.

"Alright, I promise you. Happy now?" Left with no other choice, Lin Mu had to agree.

He had, however, already made up his mind. As long as the Su Family doesn't cross the line and lets Mom pay her respects to Grandpa, I'll pretend nothing happened. But if they push their luck, they'll find that I'm not to be trifled with.

On the way, Mother Lin had briefly explained the Su Family's situation to him.

The Su Family was considered a major clan in Wufeng County. With numerous members, wealth, and connections, they were naturally influential.

Therefore, Old Master Su's funeral was an incredibly grand affair.

Anyone with status in Wufeng County would come to offer incense for the old master and see him off on his final journey.

The old master was one of the first people in Wufeng County to venture into business, and he had built a substantial family fortune.

But as he grew older, Old Master Su began to hand over the family's affairs to the next generation.

Mother Lin had four siblings: her eldest brother, Su Dahai; her second brother, Su Dafu; her eldest sister, Su Yumei; and her younger sister, Su Xiaomei.

Her two older brothers and older sister managed the Su Family's business. As for her younger sister, Su Xiaomei—Lin Mu's aunt—she had no say in the family, just like Mother Lin.

Even her husband, Xu Xiaotian, was treated as an unwelcome son-in-law.

The only reason Mother Lin knew about her father's death was that Su Xiaomei had secretly told her.

Thus, Lin Mu and his mother were on their way to pay their last respects, unbeknownst to the rest of the Su Family.

"Second Sister, over here!"

Just as they walked out of the bus station, a middle-aged woman with a sallow complexion waved at them. Lin Mu's vision was excellent, and he instantly saw the resemblance between the woman and his mother, confirming that she was his aunt, his mother's younger sister, Su Xiaomei.

"Xiaomei!"

As expected, Mother Lin walked over excitedly and grabbed the woman's hand, her eyes instantly turning red.

"Xiaomei, Dad... he..."

Seeing his mother's heartbroken expression, Lin Mu sighed inwardly and wrapped an arm around her shoulders.

"Second Sister, Dad passed suddenly. I only found out yesterday myself." Su Xiaomei's eyes were also red. She wiped away a tear before looking at Lin Mu. "Are you... Xiao Mu?"

"Hello, Aunt Xiaomei. I'm Lin Mu," Lin Mu said with a slight nod.

He had some faint memories of this aunt. When he was a child, he had visited Wufeng County and stayed at her house. He even remembered she had a daughter named Xu Yao, his cousin.

"It's been so many years. Xiao Mu has grown so much."

Seeing Lin Mu seemed to lift Su Xiaomei's spirits. She forced down her sorrow and said, "Come on. Dad's memorial service is tonight."

"So soon?"

Mother Lin's expression changed. She grabbed Su Xiaomei's hand and demanded, "Xiaomei, tell me the truth. What really happened to Dad?"

Faced with her sister's intense gaze, Su Xiaomei looked flustered before explaining, "Second Sister, you know how it is. Ever since you... fell out with the family, Dad's health declined day by day. He spent his last few days confined to his sickbed."

Hearing this, Mother Lin couldn't help but start crying again. But thinking of her son standing right there, she took a deep breath to suppress her grief. "Let's go," she said, her voice firm. "Let's go home!"

"Second Sister..."

Su Xiaomei grabbed her arm. "Our eldest and second brothers... they don't want you to come back."

"They dare!"

A wild glint flickered in Mother Lin's eyes. It was the second time Lin Mu had seen such an expression on his mother's face. The first was when she had seen him kill someone and told him to leave River City. This was the second.

Her voice was resolute. "I am Dad's daughter! How can they stop me from paying my respects?"

"I, Su Rou, would like to see who dares to stop me!"

Su Rou glanced at Lin Mu and said firmly, "Xiao Mu, come with me. We're going to pay our respects to your grandfather!"

「Half an hour later.」

The Su Family's estate was located in the suburbs of the county town and covered a significant area.

According to local custom, a married daughter returning to her natal home for a funeral must follow a set of procedures. At the very least, she should have communicated with her family, who would then arrange for someone to formally receive her.

But no one from the Su Family had informed Mother Lin, nor was anyone there to receive her.

When Mother Lin reached the Su Family's main gate, she saw the estate decorated in a sea of white. The sounds of crying and mournful music drifted out from within. She could no longer hold back and suddenly collapsed to her knees.

"Dad! Your unfilial daughter, Su Rou, has come to see you off!"

Her sorrowful cry instantly drew the attention of people inside the estate. Among them were relatives and friends of the Su Family, and of course, members of the family itself.

"Su Rou?"

A sharp voice suddenly rang out. A middle-aged woman in mourning clothes rushed out, pointing an angry finger at Su Rou. "You bitch, you still have the nerve to come see Dad? Get out! The Su Family doesn't welcome you!"

"Eldest Sister, Second Sister is just..." Su Xiaomei hurried forward to intervene, her eyes also turning red.

"Su Xiaomei, so this was your doing!" Su Yumei slapped her hand away and gestured furiously at Su Rou. "The moment she left with that bastard, she stopped being a member of our Su Family! Dad already disowned her. What right does she have to come back and pay her respects?"

"Su Rou, get out! You're not welcome in the Su Family!"

Kneeling on the ground, Su Rou was sobbing uncontrollably.

"Eldest Sister, I'm begging you. Just let me see Dad one last time. I just want to kowtow to him."

Still on her knees, Su Rou tried to move toward the estate, her voice hoarse with grief.

Many of the funeral guests looked on with sympathy and sorrow.

Enraged, Su Yumei pointed at Su Rou and yelled, "Guards! Throw this woman out!"

Two young men from the Su Family stepped forward, intending to drag Su Rou away.

"I'd like to see who dares touch her!"

Lin Mu strode forward and shielded his mother. His eyes were like cold stars as he snarled in an icy tone, "Get lost!"