

Chapter 151: The Fate of a Scumbag

Ever since Xiao Zhengyang's family returned to the village, the atmosphere was different.

Someone build a free road for Taoyuan village. Everyone was happy.

Then, the rumors came that the Xiao Family wouldn't allow the people who fanned the flames that night to come to the Little Cattle King's pen anymore. If they were found out, they would be treated as thieves and sent to the police station.

Then, another piece of news came from the Chen and Lan family villages. Those who participated in the fight were detained for 15 days. They were fined 500 RMB and had to give 200 RMB to Xiao Zhengyang as compensation. As people returned from the police station, some of them paid the money, and Xiao Zhengyang accepted it.

However, there were some who refused to pay. Xiao Lingyu immediately reported them. The officers came, and these people were so scared they coughed up the money immediately.

Many people said that Xiao Lingyu was very scary. She would go to the police for the smallest thing. They wouldn't dare to do something like that.

However, Chen Sanhua, Lan Hongxing, Chen Dahua, and Lan Erying were still locked up since they were masterminds. They were fined and would be sentenced in court. If they didn't pay the money, their personal property would be confiscated and turned into money to compensate the Xiao Family. As for their sentence, there was news that the four would be imprisoned for at least three years.

There were four criminals from two villages. It didn't take long for the reputation of these two villages to be ruined, especially the Chen family village. People started to call them the Criminal Village.

The people of the Chen Family were furious. They went to Chen Dahua and Chen Sanhua's places and smashed them into pieces. Everyone related to Chen Dahua was criticized and mocked. People related to Chen Dahua wouldn't even dare to go out.

As for Chen Ran, the officers decided to return him to Chen Dahua's mother or Chen Ran's grandmother. However, when they arrived, Old Madam Chen barred the door. She was still waiting for her children to take care of her! She could barely look after herself, so how could she take care of a cripple?

Since the Old Madam Chen refused to take Chen Ran, the officers had to find the other relatives. However, no one from the Chen Family or the Lan Family was willing to take him. Chen Erhua said directly, "You might as well let me strangle him to death. It'll save us the trouble."

Chen Ran was the source of their trouble. If he didn't betray Xiao Lingyu, she wouldn't need to retaliate, and the two villages wouldn't suffer.

How much they tried to curry favor with Chen Ran in the past was how much they hated him now. They hated him so much they wanted to cut him into pieces so he wouldn't be around to harm people again. He was a real troublemaker.

In the end, the officers had no choice but to drop Chen Ran off at the rescue station. There were many mentally deranged patients there. When they saw Chen Ran, they saw a new toy. The admin there was too busy to care about one cripple. As long as they didn't kill Chen Ran, they turned their eyes away from what the other patients did to Chen Ran.

They stuck Chen Ran with pins and needles. They fed him chili water and hot peppers...

Chen Ran was unable to resist. The former favored child of heaven became a toy for mental patients. Then again, he was only paying for the sins he committed in his previous life.

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Xiao Lingyu made a call. When the call was picked up, she showed a grateful smile. "Brother Jiang, thank you so much."

Jiang Tao, in a white robe, lay on the sofa and smiled, "I didn't help much. Chen Dahua and the others did commit horrible crimes. I merely made sure they were punished." Jiang Tao wouldn't break the law for anyone, not even Xiao Lingyu.

Thankfully, Xiao Lingyu didn't ask him to do anything that violated his principles. She only asked him to pay more attention to this case.

Xiao Lingyu smiled, "Regardless, Brother Jiang, I need to thank you. If not for you, a few of them would have escaped the punishment of the law."

Xiao Lingyu knew that Lan Hongxing's father, Lan Chongcai, was a junior high school classmate with the town police station's deputy director. In her previous life, the Lan Family relied on this relationship to plunder from the Xiao Family. However, this time, Xiao Lingyu had a more powerful connection!

Jiang Tao frowned when he heard Xiao Lingyu. There were always one or two worms in every unit. Jiang Tao said, "Lingyu, if you really want to thank me, treat me to a meal."

"No problem!" Xiao Lingyu agreed readily, "You can decide the time and place!"

Jiang Tao opened his mouth. He wanted to say, 'Come to my place to cook for me.' But in the end, he said, "We'll go to Uncle Chen's. You can decide the time."

Xiao Lingyu replied, "I'm fine with any time. I will go to the county town every day anyway."

"Oh, you've bought a car. I just remembered!" Jiang Tao smiled. "That means it'll be more convenient for you to come to the county town."

"That's right." Xiao Lingyu said, "Brother Jiang, how about tomorrow morning? Are you free?"

"It's fine with me!" Jiang Tao agreed.

After hanging up, Xiao Lingyu went to check on the fields. According to her plan, the strawberries should have been transplanted a few days ago. However, many incidents had delayed it.

Xiao Lingyu hired people to dig up the soil, and she started to transplant the strawberries.

Due to the delay, the strawberry seedlings had grown larger. However, due to a lack of space and nutrients, their stems were slender. Xiao Lingyu told everyone to be careful as they moved the seedlings. The villagers had seen strawberries but not their seedlings.

When they saw the strawberry seedlings, they exclaimed, "They look like raspberry seedlings!"

"They do!" Someone chimed in. "This is the first time I'm dealing with a strawberry seedling. It's quite novel. Normally, we can't even afford to buy one strawberry. If Lingyu manages to grow the strawberries, she promises to sell some to us at a low price. Then, we'll finally get to taste strawberries!"

"Yes. I will buy some too!"

Xiao Lingyu naturally would sell the villagers at a lower price than the market.

"Lingyu is such a good girl. That Chen kid is awful. He deserves to end up like this."

"What will happen to Lingyu in the future? Will she still find a good husband?"

"Why not? Did you not see Lingyu's friends? They are all young and talented. The girl is so nice. She'll find a good man. Plus, we're entering a new age. Even widows can remarry, so why not Lingyu?"

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Ever since Xiao Lingyu's rape was exposed, many felt pity for her. They berated Chen Ran. If he didn't like Lingyu, he should just break up with her. However, he did such a despicable thing. He drugged his girlfriend and then gifted her to an old man to ruin her reputation. This was shocking to the simple villagers. They had not seen someone as evil as Chen Ran.

Of course, there were also people who mocked Xiao Lingyu. A raped woman would be drowned in the olden days. Even now, many rape survivors committed suicide. As Zhang Chunjiao said, there was an example in a nearby village.

However, Xiao Lingyu lived her life like nothing was wrong. No one knew her miserable situation in her previous life.

Xiao Lingyu hired a lot of people since she planned to have all the strawberries planted in one day. There were 18 people, including her fourth uncle and aunt. The six Mu of land was planted.

After that, Xiao Lingyu helped water the strawberries. Xiao Lingyu prepared the water with the spring water.

All the strawberries were planted around dusk. Xiao Lingyu had some strawberry seedlings left. She planned to plant them in her family's backyard. They would be decorative, and she could see the effects different locations had on the berries.

However, there was a small interlude. It was about the two families who refused to rent Xiao Lingyu their land after being persuaded by Zhang Chunjiao. They wanted to start their own strawberry fields. When they heard that Xiao Lingyu had some leftover seedlings, they directly asked her for them.

"Lingyu, I heard that you still have some strawberry seedlings left. I also want to plant some. Why don't you give them to me?" Zhang Xiaoqiu asked with a smile.

Xiao Lingyu said with a fake smile, "I'm sorry, Auntie Zhang. I really don't have any leftover strawberry seedlings."

"But... what about those?" Zhang Xiaoqiu pointed at the pile of strawberry seedlings. She was already a bit angry about being refused.

"Oh, you're talking about these. These aren't the leftover," Xiao Lingyu said coldly, "I plan to grow them in my backyard. Auntie Zhang, if you want strawberry seedlings, you need to go to the county town. See if anyone sells them."

Zhang Xiaoqiu said angrily, "Just say that you're stingy. Why give me so many excuses?!"

Xiao Lingyu nodded. "Fine, I would rather let them rot than give them to you. Are you satisfied now?"

Everyone, "...."

Chapter 152: Grandfathers

Although Uncle Chen's restaurant was remote, he had quite a number of customers. They were his old acquaintances and foodies of Xing Yin County.

People had to make appointments before coming, or they could be turned away. After all, this was a hobby for Uncle Chen, and he didn't really need customers. He had a rule, which was only to receive two tables of guests per meal, so only four tables per day.

On this day, another group of regulars came to Uncle Chen's place.

Uncle Chen grumbled, "You old farts, I already told you I would only serve four tables per day. If you want to come, you have to make an appointment. But you come daily without making an appointment and then refuse to leave until I cook for you. Do I owe you people or something?"

Yuan Hongjun said, "Chen Dafu, since you only serve four tables a day, we know you're very free. We came to give you a chance to exercise your arms. You should thank us!"

Uncle Chen scolded with a smile, "As if! I'm already busy with four tables. But you people came to drink tea, chat and play chess. You only add to my workload. Why don't you go back home and cook for yourselves? It's a perfect exercise!"

"We don't have your cooking skills." Qian Aiguo said with a smile.

"I can teach you." Chen Dafu sneered and said, "You people are too free anyway. Cooking is a good exercise."

"But cooking requires talent." Yuan Hongjun said, "And we don't have that talent. My wife told me that even pigs wouldn't eat the things I cook. Speaking of, the dishes we have these days are different from before. They were simple vegetarian dishes, but they had a great aftertaste."

"Yes, they taste amazing. They are sweet and fragrant. They might be the best vegetables I've ever eaten." Qian Aiguo said.

"I agree with you," said Yuan Hongjun.

"Come on, Chen Dafu, we've been eating your cooking for decades, but we have never tasted such delicious vegetarian dishes before. Where did you get your new source of vegetables?" Yuan Hongjun asked curiously.

"That's right, where did you get them?" Qian Aiguo said curiously, "I want to buy from your supplier. I won't steal your business, I promise."

Chen Dafu snorted coldly and said, "As if you can steal my business from me!"

"Oh Chen, you should buy more of these vegetables in the future. Consider the extra as your purchase for me." Yuan Hongjun said shamelessly, "Or you can tell me where you get the vegetables, and I can go buy them myself."

Qian Aiguo also smiled and asked, "Oh Chen, I'm of the same mind as Oh Yuan."

Just as Chen Dafu was about to say something, he saw Xiao Lingyu come over. Chen Dafu immediately smiled happily and said, "Lingyu, you're here."

Xiao Lingyu smiled and said, "Uncle Chen!" She looked around and realized there were more customers than usual. Xiao Lingyu had been to Uncle Chen's a few times, but every time, there was only one table of customers. This was the first time she saw the place full. Then again, the restaurant only had two tables.

"Lingyu, so nice to see you!" Auntie Chen walked over happily when she saw Xiao Lingyu.

Xiao Lingyu glanced around Chen Dafu's restaurant and said with a smile, "Auntie Chen, Uncle Chen, you have very good business today."

"These are just some old friends." Auntie Chen said, "Lingyu, you should sit here first." Auntie Chen pointed at a small table that could only seat two. She reserved it for Xiao Lingyu and Jiang Tao, or else it would have been taken earlier.

After Xiao Lingyu sat down, Auntie Chen served the tea. She asked, "Lingyu, where's Tao Zi?"

Xiao Lingyu said, "Brother Jiang said he's busy with a case. He'll be here soon."

Auntie Chen said, "That child only knows how to work. When will he stop working and find a girlfriend? Isn't he afraid of dying alone?" Auntie Chen purposely said this in front of Xiao Lingyu. She was trying to set them up. However, she noticed Xiao Lingyu didn't react the way she preferred.

Xiao Lingyu said with a smile, "That's right. We should advise Brother Jiang not to be too busy with work. He should get a girlfriend. Many girls are willing to be his partner. If he finds someone, I will give them my best wishes." This clarified that she had no interest in Jiang Tao.

Auntie Chen sighed secretly. Xiao Lingyu was such a good girl, but sadly, she was not into Tao Zi.

Auntie Chen smiled and said, "Lingyu, you can sit here for a while and wait for Tao Zi."

"Okay."

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On the other side, Uncle Chen said, "Don't you want to know where I bought the vegetables from? It's from that girl, Xiao Lingyu."

Uncle Chen pointed at Xiao Lingyu, and he shouted, "Lingyu, these old farts are addicted to your crops. They want to know where you get them. Do you have any extra? Can you spare to sell them some? As for the price, these old farts are all rich. Sell them as expensive as possible."

Qian Aiguo immediately said, "Oh Chen, what are you saying? Our families are rich, but we don't have money trees growing in the backyard."

Then, Qian Aiguo looked at Xiao Lingyu and said, "Young lady, if you really do have these vegetables to sell, you have to sell them to us. You should sell them at the same price you sold Oh Chen."

Yuan Hongjun also said, "Yeah, Oh Chen is too unscrupulous. Young Lady, since you're selling vegetables, it doesn't matter who you sold them to. If you don't have any extra, you can take out some portion from Oh Chen's and give them to us."

Chen Dafu scolded with a smile, "You old farts are too much! Never mind, Lingyu, don't sell them anything. They have so much money, but they don't want to spend it. They are too stingy."

"Chen Dafu, if there's a stinginess competition, you'd definitely win first place." Qian Aiguo said loudly. "You recently got a new stock of wine. But you refuse to let us taste them."

Chen Dafu huffed. "The last time I let you taste the wine, you finished one-third of it instantly! That is not wine tasting!" Chen Dafu added, "Speaking of, the Gu Family Hotel has started to launch this wine. You can go there to buy it. Also, the dishes at the Gu Family Hotel are equally delicious. Why don't you go there? Instead, you come here every day. Don't you know that I don't welcome you old farts anymore?"

Qian Aiguo said, "We've been to the Gu family hotel before. It was my grandson who brought my wife and me there. Initially, we thought he was being supportive of his friend. But after the food was served, we were surprised by the fragrance. Then, the taste was even more memorable. After that, the brat would occasionally bring some vegetables home for us to cook. Wait a minute..." Qian Aiguo finally realized the connection. "Oh Chen, you got your vegetables from this girl, and you said the Gu Family Hotel also had dishes as delicious as yours. Does this mean the Gu Family Hotel and my brat also got their supply from you?"

The last sentence was directed at Xiao Lingyu. It was filled with suspicion.

Xiao Lingyu looked at Qian Aiguo, who looked to be in his seventies. His hair was white, and his face was red. He looked somewhat like Qian Yifan. Xiao Lingyu confirmed that this old man was very likely Qian Yifan's grandfather.

Xiao Lingyu smiled and said, "Grandfather, if the vegetables your grandson brought home taste the same as the ones served by Uncle Chen, then he probably got them from me."

"Oh, is that so?" Qian Aiguo narrowed his eyes and stared at Xiao Lingyu with an experienced light as if he wanted to see something from her face.

Xiao Lingyu smiled at the elders. She was not overbearing or servile.

Chen Dafu immediately guessed what Qian Aiguo was suspecting. The latter suspected Xiao Lingyu was trying to use this opportunity to approach his grandson.

After all, Qian Aiguo's son was Xing Yin County's deputy magistrate. Many people couldn't wait to curry favor with him.

Uncle Chen immediately said unhappily, "I say, OI Qian, what is your meaning? Are you trying to fault me for introducing Lingyu to the Gu Family kid?"

First, it was Gu Family who found Xiao Lingyu to collaborate, not the other way around.

Second, the Gu Family kid was good friends with Qian Yifan, and the Gu Family kid was in a business relationship with Xiao Lingyu. Wouldn't it be normal for Qian Yifan to grab some vegetables from the Gu Family kid and bring them home?

Third, and it was the thing that angered Uncle Chen the most, who gave you the right to suspect Lingyu?

Qian Aiguo looked at how protective Chen Dafu was of Xiao Lingyu, and he was momentarily stunned. Then, he laughed loudly, "OI Chen, did I say anything? I was just wondering how the girl knew my little brat. Now that you bring it up, I understand it."

"No, wait, I understand something too." Uncle Chen suddenly said. "OI Qian, your grandson brings Lingyu's crops back to your home, so why are you still coming to my place? Have you no shame as a freeloader?"

"Also, OI Yuan, since the Qian Kid had brought Lingyu's vegetables home through the Gu Kid, then your brat would have his portion too. Speaking of, OI Zheng would be included as well. OI Zheng is not here, so I'll hear you two's explanation first."

The Qian Kid, Yuan Kid, and Zheng Kid were good friends with Gu Ziyue. Since Qian Yifan got a portion of the vegetables from Gu Ziyue, then the rest of them should have their portion too.

"Erm..." Yuan Hongjun didn't expect the flames to turn to him.

Qian Aiguo and Yuan Hongjun did not expect to stumble upon this 'truth'. The vegetables they had been having at home and at OI Chen's places came from the same person.

Yuan Hongjun said, "Brother Chen, we're here to accompany you. We don't want you to be lonely!"

Qian Aiguo immediately echoed, "Yes, that's right."

The real reason was otherwise.

For one, even though the ingredients were the same, Chen Dafu could cook them better.

For two, Chen Dafu had a bigger selection. Their brats brought the vegetables home, but the whole family fought over them. There was no respect shown to the elderly. They could barely eat anything during mealtimes. Therefore, they came to Chen Dafu's place to eat to their fill. Of course, they couldn't tell Chen Dafu the real reason. With his temper, once he found out the real reason, he might stop cooking for them.

After Uncle Chen served the last dish, he sneered, "Do you think I don't know what you two old farts are thinking? You can't get enough food at home, so you come here to freeload. Hmph, never mind. I have a solution. From tomorrow onward, I'll only buy enough for my small business. You old farts can go back home. Lingyu, I'll only take a few catties from now on. There's no need to give me extra."

Yuan Hongjun and Qian Aiguo immediately stopped him. "Dafu, let's talk it out." Then, they turned around and told Xiao Lingyu, "Girl, since you can supply Ol Chen with your vegetables, can you supply us too? Those brats bring back too little portions every time. We won't have the energy to fight with the younger generations, and we often don't have enough to eat."

Xiao Lingyu, "..."

Everyone, "..."

Chen Dafu, "... This bunch of old farts sold me out just like that.

Chen Dafu said, "Shoo, shoo. You should be thankful that Lingyu is willing to share her crops with your brats. Don't you know that she doesn't even have enough to supply the Gu Family Hotel? The girl has a limited amount of vegetables per day. How do you want the girl to supply you with the extra? Girl, don't be afraid of them. Uncle Chen has your back."

Yuan Hongjun, "..."

Qian Aiguo, "..."

Did we do anything to scare the girl?

Qian Aiguo immediately retorted, "Ol Chen, you just said you didn't need so much supply in the future. Girl, the portion that Ol Chen doesn't want, you can sell it to us!"

Chen Dafu, "... Why did I say that earlier?

Chen Dafu snorted coldly and said, "Hmph, I take it back. I want my normal supply again." He raised his head high and proud.

Everyone, "..."

They were being so childish.

Chapter 153: The Arrival

Jiang Tao arrived when Chen Dafu was arguing about the vegetables with the other old men.

Even though Jiang Tao was not a local, the few seniors at Uncle Chen's place were powerful individuals at Xing Yin County. Jiang Tao knew them, and they knew Jiang Tao.

Jiang Tao was a naturally aloof person. He was calm and rational in his work. He was exceptionally serious at work, as he analyzed every trace of evidence so the case could be solved. He was cold-hearted and impartial at work. He was called the iron-faced King of Hell by the people in Xing Yin County.

In any case, the seniors admired Jiang Tao's work principles.

“Chief Jiang, nice to see you here!” Yuan Hongjun said with a smile.

Jiang Tao said expressionlessly, “Uncle Yuan, Uncle Chu, Uncle Li, Uncle Zhang!”

The other seniors replied cheerfully, “Chief Jiang, did you just get off work?”

“Yes,” Jiang Tao replied. Then, he walked to the opposite side of Xiao Lingyu and sat down. He smiled and greeted Xiao Lingyu, “I’m sorry for being late, Lingyu.”

Xiao Lingyu smiled and said, “You’re a busy person. Unlike me, I’m unemployed. I understand.” She poured a cup of tea for Jiang Tao.

The seniors were surprised to see Jiang Tao was so familiar with Xiao Lingyu. They were not surprised that the two knew each other, but the frost on Jiang Tao’s face was replaced by warmth and kindness. They had never seen Jiang Tao be so gentle around a woman before. They were shocked.

Qian Aiguo asked curiously, “Chief Jiang, is this girl your girlfriend?”

Jiang Tao shook his head and said, “No, she’s just a friend.” He wanted them to move further, but he could not muster up the courage to say anything. He was merciless around criminals, but he was a coward before Xiao Lingyu. He was afraid. What would he do if Xiao Lingyu rejected him? They might not even be friends anymore. Therefore, that fear kept them as normal friends.

Of course, there was another reason. Uncle Chen and Auntie Chen had helped him send out the feelers. Xiao Lingyu was clearly not interested in him. Her rejection was clear.

Even though he was disappointed, he was okay with the current state of their relationship. Furthermore, there was no telling what might happen in the future. Perhaps after they got to know each other, they might get closer. At least that was Jiang Tao’s plan.

However, Jiang Tao didn’t expect a meteorite would slam his plan into pieces. That meteorite was a baby. Sometimes, a duo was not meant to be together.

When Xiao Lingyu heard Jiang Tao say they were just normal friends, she sighed secretly in relief. She was really worried that Jiang Tao would claim her as his girlfriend in front of the elders. She would correct him and make him lose face. That wouldn’t be good for either of them.

Even though Jiang Yao hadn’t expressed it explicitly, based on what Auntie and Uncle Chen said, Xiao Lingyu knew his intention. She also hoped that Auntie and Uncle Chen would help relay her intention back to him.

Jiang Tao was a good person. Xiao Lingyu couldn’t be with him because she was not worthy!

She had slept with a strange man, and it was very likely that she had a baby in her stomach. This time, she would not give up on her child. Xiao Lingyu believed that not many men would help her raise a child who didn’t belong to them.

Therefore, for the sake of Xiao Tong, she had to reject all her pursuers, even if they were as wonderful as Jiang Tao.

Qian Aiguo asked again, “Are you sure you’re just normal friends?”

“Yes, they are!” Uncle Chen came to their rescue when they saw the hint of embarrassment on Xiao Lingyu and Jiang Tao’s faces. “You antiques! Do you think we’re in feudal China where a woman and a man have to be husband and wife since they’re sitting together? In today’s age, there are plenty of platonic relationships!”

The other seniors knew what Chen Dafu was doing so they stopped pressing. They chatted among themselves and stopped bothering Jiang Tao and Xiao Lingyu.

Uncle Chen cooked three dishes for Jiang Tao and Xiao Lingyu and gave them a bottle of light wine.

“Uncle Chen, Brother Jiang still has to go to work. He shouldn’t drink.” Xiao Lingyu said.

“It’s okay. I can drink a little. It won’t affect anything,” Jiang Tao smiled.

Uncle Chen chimed in, “Tao Zi has a good tolerance for alcohol. A little drink shouldn’t affect his work. However, he can’t drink and drive. Lingyu can drive him to the station instead.”

Xiao Lingyu nodded, “Alright!” Xiao Lingyu raised her glass. “Brother Jiang, let me toast to you! Thank you for helping me!”

Jiang Tao raised his eyebrows and asked, “Lingyu, do you know how to drink?”

Xiao Lingyu smiled and shook her head. “I’m really not a drinker, but since you have done me a favor, a toast is the least I can do.”

Jiang Tao frowned slightly and reached out to take her glass. He said, “If you don’t know how to drink, then don’t drink. Plus, I still need you to drive me back to work. You can’t get drunk.”

Xiao Lingyu put down her hand and sighed, “Alright then.”

Xiao Lingyu picked up her chopsticks and picked a piece of fish. However, when the piece of fish reached her mouth, she felt nauseous.

Xiao Lingyu was excited. ‘Could it be? It must be!’ Xiao Lingyu calculated the date in her mind. Xiao Lingyu moved her hands to her stomach. ‘Xiao Tong, mommy has waited so long for you.’

Xiao Lingyu had been worried because she was afraid of the butterfly effect. Zhao Wenman, her father, Chen Ran all had different endings after her rebirth. She was worried that Xiao Tong wouldn’t come because of what she did. But he was there after all.

‘Xiao Tong, thank you!’ Xiao Lingyu gently stroked her stomach and said gratefully, “I will treat you so much better this time.”

So what if Xiao Tong had an unknown father? As long as his mother was strong enough, no one would dare bully him. In the future, Xiao Lingyu would see if anyone dared to call him a bastard. Since Mother Xiao could challenge these people with a knife, why couldn’t she?

“Lingyu, what’s wrong?” Jiang Tao noticed the daze on Xiao Lingyu’s face, and he asked with concern, “Are you alright?”

Xiao Lingyu nodded. "I'm fine." She put down the fish and picked the vegetables instead. Her crops were good for pregnant women, and they could help their appetites. It was why her vegetables were so famous among pregnant women.

After she had the vegetables, she didn't feel like vomiting anymore.

Xiao Lingyu was excited, moved, and happy because of Xiao Tong's imminent arrival. Her appetite soared and she ate three bowls of rice in one go.

This confused Jiang Tao. He had eaten with Xiao Lingyu a few times in the past. Xiao Lingyu normally only ate one or a half bowls of rice. Jiang Tao was shocked that she had suddenly finished three bowls.

Jiang Tao smiled, "Lingyu, you have a good appetite today!"

Xiao Lingyu burped and smiled embarrassedly, "I usually can't eat so much, but I'm really hungry today."

After they finished eating, Jiang Tao looked at his watch and said, "Lingyu, I have to go to work."

"Alright, let's go!" Xiao Lingyu nodded. The two got up and prepared to leave.

The few seniors were anxious when they saw this. Qian Aiguo snatched a piece of vegetables and called out to her, "Girl, are you leaving already?"

Xiao Lingyu nodded and said, "Yes."

"But you haven't promised if you'd sell your vegetables to us yet." Qian Aiguo reminded.

Xiao Lingyu thought about it and began, "Unc..." Then she stopped herself, "Sirs..." She was influenced by Jiang Tao and went ahead to call them uncles.

"I don't like the term, Sir. Call me Grandpa. You're almost the same age as Qian Yifan, so you can call me Grandpa Qian!" Qian Aiguo waved his hand and said.

"..." Xiao Lingyu said, "Grandpa Qian, I really don't have any extra vegetables. At most, I can only give you one or two catties."

Qian Aiguo and Yuan Hongjun were disappointed, but it was better than nothing.

"Can't you give us more?" Qian Aiguo said unwillingly.

"Sorry!" Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said.

"Girl, then sell your vegetables to us." Uncle Li and Uncle Zhang said, "We haven't bought your vegetables before. The others have the chance to try them daily. How dare they ask you for extras? They are too greedy." The old seniors complained, "Girl, since you have a limited stock, then don't give them extra but sell them to us. Don't mind them."

"Li Jianhua, what do you mean?" Qian Aiguo asked in a loud voice, "First come, first served! My family knew the girl first, so we should have priority!"

Li Jianhua said disdainfully, "When have you ever followed that rule? You are the person who likes to cut in line the most, so aren't you ashamed to bring that up? Girl, don't listen to them. Don't feel forced. Just sell them to us."

Qian Aiguo said, "Girl, my family is your regular. You have to consider that, right?"

Everyone, "..."

Xiao Lingyu, "..."

She was an ant crushed between the fights of elephants. 'Can't you seniors not bully a junior like me? No matter what I do, I'll be at fault.'

Xiao Lingyu smiled and said, "I'm very grateful that grandpas like my vegetables. However, I have limited stock. Other than serving the Gu Family Hotel, I really don't have much left. But I'll try my best to satisfy everyone." Xiao Lingyu gave a vague answer before adding, "I will deliver vegetables to Gu Family Hotel daily. Grandpas, can you go to the hotel to pick up the stuff in the future?"

"Yes, that's no problem!" The few old men agreed.

Xiao Lingyu nodded. Xiao Lingyu secretly heaved a sigh of relief.

Xiao Lingyu and Jiang Tao left.

In the car, Xiao Lingyu felt the need to clarify things. It was not good to drag things out. Moreover, with the arrival of Xiao Tong, many things would be more complicated.

"Brother Jiang, a good man like you will find a wonderful woman to match you." Xiao Lingyu said seriously, "I am not good enough for you."

Jiang Tao was stunned when he heard this. Then, he became flustered. Jiang Tao opened his mouth to say, "But you are good enough!"

"You may not know this, but I... I was..." Xiao Lingyu felt it was a crude thing to do, but she had to make a decision. If she dragged it out, it would only make things worse. It would only hurt them in the long run. "I was drugged and framed. I slept with an unknown man, and I might even have a child in my stomach. If that's true, I've decided to keep this child. I've already decided to stay single."

Jiang Tao was astonished. He never thought Xiao Lingyu had such a dark past. No wonder Xiao Lingyu had been openly and subtly rejecting him. She believed she was not worthy of him.

Xiao Lingyu said again, "Brother Jiang, I am glad to be your friend, but it is impossible for us to take another step further. However, if your impression of me changes and you can't even be my friend anymore, I won't blame you. We can be strangers."

Jiang Tao was still caught in disbelief. His mouth opened and closed, wanting to say something, but no sound came out from his throat.

Xiao Lingyu looked at the man. She nodded with understanding. "Brother Jiang, I get it. From now on, we'll... be strangers." Her eyes revealed some disappointment.

If it was possible, she really did not want to lose Jiang Tao as a friend, not because of his background but his personality.

But if he thought low of her... then forget it.

Xiao Lingyu drove away, and Jiang Tao finally snapped out of it. Xiao Lingyu misunderstood him. She took his shock as frustration and disgust. He didn't mean that, so why would she take it that way?

Jiang Tao wanted to chase after her to explain, but his subordinate gave him a call. They found an important clue about the headless murder case at the Gantang vegetable market.

Jiang Tao thought to himself, 'I'll need to explain myself the next time we meet.'

Chapter 154: A Loving Family

Xiao Lingyu was a little disappointed in losing a friend like Jiang Tao. However, since they were not meant to be friends, then so be it.

She cheered herself up with the thought of Xiao Tong. She would have to watch her diet and body better. In her previous life, Xiao Tong was very obedient. He never made a fuss and was very lovable.

If not for a missing father and a mother who hated him, he would grow up happily and wouldn't die when he was only five. When he died, he was thin and malnourished. It was pitiful. In this life, she had to make up to Xiao Tong and give him a happy childhood.

When Xiao Lingyu returned to the village, she saw a large crowd at her house. Xiao Lingyu frowned and got down from the car.

"Chen Qiuying, why is it that everyone in the village can come to your house to pick up manure, but not my family?" A sharp woman's voice sounded in Xiao Lingyu's house. From her tone, one would think Chen Qiuying owed her something.

Mother Xiao replied in a chilling tone. "Zhang Xiaoqiu, you know very well why you are not welcome here anymore. I didn't say anything explicitly because I wanted to help you save face. Do you really want me to spell everything out?"

Zhang Xiaoqiu revealed a sense of guilt. Her eyes flickered a few times, but she quickly acted dumb and said, "Chen Qiuying, what are you talking about?"

Mother Xiao sneered and said, "Zhang Xiaoqiu, now you want to play dumb? Then why didn't you act dumb that night? Since you want to play dumb, then fine. I will enlighten you. I've already put the word out that we refuse to let those who fanned the flames that night come to collect Little Light's manure anymore.

"My family is not a family of fools or saints. We are not going to forgive people who clearly harbor ill intentions towards my family. We are not that dumb to thank those who have harmed my family. Now, do you understand?"

Zhang Xiaoqiu's face became even more guilty, but she refused to give up. There were more than 180 families in the village. Apart from a few, almost every family had the chance to collect the Little Cattle King's manure. Everyone who had used it knew how good it was. It was a natural fertilizer which was better than chemical fertilizer. It allowed the crops and vegetable fields to grow especially well.

Zhang Xiaolan opened her mouth and was about to argue. However, Mother Xiao cut her off first. "Don't say you didn't say anything that night. There were many people that night. I was not the only one who heard what you said."

Then, Mother Xiao said loudly, "Everyone knows what kind of person my Yu 'Er is.

"She has been smart and sensible since she was young. She studied hard and worked hard. After she went to university, apart from the first semester, she earned the rest of the tuition on her own.

"She worked under the scorching sun and in the cold wind. She studied and worked at the same time. As parents, we weren't there for her. We felt so bad."

Mother Xiao wiped away her tears and continued with a sob, "After she graduated, she found a good job and joined a large company. She worked hard and without complaint. She was strict on herself and didn't do anything unconscionable.

"If it wasn't for that kid from the Chen family, who drugged my Yu 'Er, would she encounter such a thing? She has already suffered a lot. If you don't feel any heartache for her, at least don't challenge her parent's need to protect her. Therefore, if I hear anyone speak ill of my Yu 'Er again, I will never forgive them!"

Zhang Xiaoqiu, "..."

Everyone, "..."

Mother Xiao resumed, "Therefore, those people who kicked my family when we were down that day should be self-aware. They shall not try to take advantage of my family again. If they want to challenge me, it will not look good for everyone. The fortune has turned. My family is no longer the same as before."

'In the past, our family is the poorest, but now, we're the richest. We don't need to beg others, but others have to beg us.' Of course, Chen Qiuying didn't say that. It was to give everyone face.

Everyone present had strange expressions.

To be honest, ever since they learned that Xiao Lingyu's innocence had been ruined by a strange man, some sympathized with her, others despised her. Behind Xiao Lingyu's back, many people jeered at her.

'No wonder she suddenly returned to the village. Something like this happened to her in the city. She didn't have the face to stay in the big city anymore. So what if she was the top-scorer? She is now a ruined woman. No respectable family will want a daughter-in-law like her.' That was many people's thoughts.

However, Xiao Lingyu's family was different from before. The villagers couldn't afford to offend them, so they could only say these things among themselves.

Xiao Lingyu had been hiring people from the village to work for her. She paid good money so only idiots would openly offend Xiao Zhengyang's family.

Then again, the village did have a few idiots.

They were Xiao Fugui and Zhang Chunjiao, who always fought against Xiao Zhengyang. Then, there were people close to Zhang Chunjiao like Zhang Xiaoqiu and Xiao Chengbao, Liu Changnu and Xiao Chengcai, and so on. Birds of a feather flock together.

When Chen Dahua and Lan Erying came to cause trouble, Zhang Chunjiao, Zhang Xiaoqiu, Liu Changnu, and a few others said loudly that many men had come to find Xiao Lingyu. They instigated the brawl by tarnishing Xiao Lingyu's reputation.

Mother Xiao said, "I will protect my daughter unconditionally. If I find out anyone has been slandering my Yu 'Er's name, I will destroy their house. And that is a promise!"

People gasped. Many mothers loved their daughters, but no one loved them as much as Chen Qiuying loved Xiao Lingyu. This was the era where sons were favored over daughters. A daughter was to be married off. They would be the in-law's responsibility.

Therefore, when a family had both son and daughter, the son would take priority. For example, if the family could only send one child to school, it was the son. They wouldn't care if the girl was a genius. The son would be going to school. The son was responsible for carrying on the family lineage. They were illiterate, but their sons couldn't be.

In contrast, most villagers at Taoyuan Village pulled their daughters out of school. It was because parents wouldn't need to care for their daughters' future. The in-laws would. At most, the girls would only continue to junior high school. After that, even when they scored better than boys, they would have come home to help the family or get married directly. That was the culture at the time.

However, Xiao Zhengyang and Chen Qiuying never favored one child over another. From the moment Xiao Lingyu was born, she had been doted on by the couple and the rest of the Xiao family. Xiao Lingyu was the first girl in the Xiao family, and she was very beautiful.

No matter how hard their lives were, Xiao Lingyu had new clothes to wear every year and candy to eat, which made the other girls in the village extremely envious.

When Xiao Lingyu went to school, the Xiao Family realized the girl took to studying like fish to water. They had a family discussion. Their lives would be difficult, but they couldn't let their children suffer. They would sell everything they have to give their children a better future.

Xiao Lingyu didn't disappoint them. She was the top student every year until she got into the famous university in Xing Yin County.

Xiao Lingyu was the Xiao Family's pride. The Xiao Family's love for her hadn't changed.

If some other families encountered a situation like Xiao Lingyu's, they would definitely be ashamed of her. They wouldn't dare to show their faces anymore.

If a girl was mocked and ridiculed by her family, where was she going to find the courage to survive?

Therefore, many girls, both urban and rural, committed suicide after they were raped. Their families pushed them to it.

Xiao Lingyu was thankful that she was born into a family of love. No matter how big the mistake she made, her family always welcomed her with love and tolerance.

In her previous life, she was blinded, and she caused everyone in the Xiao Family to fall with her.

"Lingyu is back!" While she was thinking, someone noticed Xiao Lingyu.

Xiao Lingyu's expression was calm. When she saw everyone standing there, she asked suspiciously, "What is happening?"

Someone replied immediately, "It's nothing. Someone is thick-skinned enough to come to take the Little Cattle King's manure, so they are being lectured by Mother Xiao."

They talked bad about the Xiao Family but still wanted to take advantage of them. It made no sense.

Xiao Lingyu nodded. "Oh?" Xiao Lingyu walked over. Zhang Xiaoqiu's face was red with embarrassment and anger. Just as she was about to turn around and leave, she saw Xiao Lingyu come in, and her eyes immediately looked away.

Xiao Lingyu said, "Auntie Zhang, two days ago, you asked me for strawberry seedlings, but I refused. Now, you came to pick up Little Light's manure. Auntie Zhang, do you think my family is that foolish?"

Zhang Xiaoqiu's expression was a little embarrassed, but she immediately put on a serious expression and shouted sternly, "Xiao Lingyu, I'm your elder. Is this how you talk to your elder? Where is your sense of decorum? Your mother has not taught you well!"

Mother Xiao immediately retorted sharply, "That is none of your business. If you want your juniors to respect you, then start acting as a respected elder. Don't go around bullying your juniors!"

Zhang Xiaoqiu could not retort at all.

She had a good relationship with Zhang Chunjiao and had a big mouth. Ever since she found out that Xiao Lingyu's innocence had been ruined, she looked down on Xiao Lingyu and gloated over her misery.

Zhang Xiaoqiu knew she wouldn't get anything, so she left with the tail between her legs.

Zhang Xiaoqiu was just an example for the villagers to see. After Mother Xiao and Father Xiao came back from the hospital, they would hear people say horrible things about their daughter all the time. How could they not be angry? However, they couldn't stop the whole village from talking.

Thankfully, Zhang Xiaoqiu came to volunteer her service.

Zhang Xiaoqiu was a horrible person. First, she listened to Zhang Chunjiao and refused to rent the land to Xiao Lingyu. When Chen Dahua came to cause trouble, she made things worse. Then she had the cheek to ask Xiao Lingyu for strawberry seedlings. After being rejected, she went around badmouthing Xiao Lingyu. Now, she had the face to come to demand the manure from Mother Xiao. The woman truly was ridiculous.

Once Mother Xiao made an example out of Zhang Xiaoqiu, the other villagers knew they had to think twice before saying anything bad about Xiao Lingyu. If they were caught, they would end up the same as Zhang Xiaoqiu.

In the countryside, farming was everything. The crops were their main source of income. The Little Cattle King's manure was better than chemical fertilizers. The Xiao Family allowed them to pick it for free. It saved them a lot of money, and the manure helped their plants grow better. Who would go against that?

So if they wanted these benefits, they had to keep their mouths shut.

After dinner, Xiao Lingyu returned to her room. She couldn't help but feel excited and touched.

'Xiao Tong is coming. Xiao Tong is coming.'

Xiao Lingyu knew she was a horrible mother in her previous life. However, Xiao Tong still loved her.

Xiao Lingyu leaned against the headboard of the bed, her hand laying on her stomach. Drops of tears fell from the corners of her eyes as she said, "Little Tong, in this life, Mommy will love you well! Mommy will take up both posts of mother and father, and I will give you a happy childhood this time.."

Chapter 155: Competition

There was a long period of peacefulness.

Xiao Lingyu shuttled back and forth between Taoyuan Village and the county town every day.

People started to know that Xiao Lingyu was selling vegetables in the county town. Because of her good business, she would go in the morning and return in the afternoon.

Mother Xiao was worried about her daughter, and she told Xiao Lingyu to live in the county town. Xiao Lingyu didn't agree at first. After all, there were more than 20 Mu of land to farm at home. Mother Xiao couldn't watch the huge farm on her own. Father Xiao still needed to rest.

However, Xiao Lingyu remembered the child in her stomach. She was in the early stages of her pregnancy. She needed to be very careful. Too much traveling was not good for her.

Therefore, she hired her fourth aunt and Auntie Zhou, or Xiao Chengbang's wife, to work for her. Auntie Zhou, her fourth aunt, and Mother Xiao would water the field every day. They only needed to water the farm once per day. Xiao Lingyu handed the bottles of spring water to Mother Xiao. She told her to pour the required amount of water into the watering can every day.

After that, Xiao Lingyu only returned every three days to restock her mother with the spring water.

...

At the same time, Zheng Haiyang had already informed the owner of the shop that he would take back the shop. He required her to move elsewhere.

The owner, Liang Fengying, was furious and annoyed when she heard the news.

'This landlord is too much. I haven't even told him I didn't want to continue my lease. Why would he take back the shop?'

The shop had a good location, and she had good business. During the weekends and holidays, her shop would be full. She had good monthly profits. After she moved out, where was she going to find a spot as good as this?

Liang Fengying remembered hinting to the landlord that she wanted to rent the shop but with a lower rent. At the time, the landlord didn't say anything. However, one month later, he suddenly told her that

he didn't want to rent her anymore and told her to move out. It was ridiculous. Where would she find a new shop and could it be better than this place?

Liang Fengying was unwilling to move. She asked Zheng Haiyang to allow her to continue renting. She wouldn't even ask for the rental discount anymore.

Zheng Haiyang said, "Based on my market research, the rent I gave you is already very cheap. Furthermore, based on our contract, the rental should be paid every three months. However, you always come crying to me, saying that business is bad and you don't have money. You begged me to give you more time. Since you can't make good money here, then why not move somewhere else? Perhaps your business will improve there."

Liang Fengying was simply slapped in the face by her previous words.

She actually had the money to pay the rent every time, but she wanted to save the money in the bank to generate interest. The interest for three months' rent was quite high.

Whenever she delayed the rent, she would wait until the next cycle. In other words, instead of paying once every three months, she would pay every six months. Furthermore, she would round down the amount. For example, if the rental was 130 RMB per month, she would pay 700 RMB instead of 780 RMB for six months.

Zheng Haiyang didn't mind it in the past because he didn't have the time. He was in the real estate business. He had to deal with many projects. Thankfully, he didn't have that many tenants like Liang Fengying, or he would be doing a losing business.

"Oh, please pay the overdue rental before the lease is up." Zheng Haiyang took out the account. "This is the record of all the money you've owed me. You can look at it to make sure." He handed the document to Liang Fengying.

Liang Fengying's expression was exceptionally ugly when she saw the document. When she saw the amount she supposedly owed, she was consumed by anger.

The money that she skimmed over three years accumulated. Furthermore, she hadn't even paid the rental for the latest three months. She had collected a lot of savings over the years, but it still pained her heart to cough up such a big amount of money all of a sudden.

Her eyes moved about. Since the landlord won't rent her the shop after this, she didn't need to pay her rental anymore. She didn't even plan to return the money she owed.

Zheng Haiyang looked at her expression and immediately guessed her plan. His face darkened, and a sharp light flashed in his eyes. He spoke kindly, "Boss Liang, you know I'm in the real estate business. When you want to find a new shop location, I'll help you ask around. I'll have them give you a discount." Zheng Haiyang wrapped his warning in a pretty package. 'If you don't clear your debt, you'll be blackballed in this business.'

Liang Fengying owned a boutique selling branded clothes. She needed a place with good foot traffic, or else how people were supposed to find her shop?

Zheng Haiyang had connections in the rental and real estate business. He could squash Liang Fengying's business easily.

Liang Fengying's face immediately turned red after being threatened by Zheng Haiyang. Anger appeared in her eyes. She gritted her teeth and said, "Boss Zheng, are you threatening me?"

"Boss Liang, why would I do that?" Zheng Haiyang said disdainfully, "You're not worth my time." Then, he lost his patience. "Boss Liang, you are going to pay me everything you owe before the lease is up. Otherwise, you should know the consequences."

After saying that, he turned around to leave.

Liang Fengying questioned loudly, "Boss Zheng, you're doing because you want to push me out to rent this shop to another person, right?"

Zheng Haiyang was speechless.

This Liang Fengying was really weird.

Zheng Haiyang ignored her and continued to walk away. Suddenly, Liang Fengying ran to stop him and begged, "Boss Zheng, please let me continue renting this place! Don't worry. I will pay the rent on time in the future!"

Zheng Haiyang glanced at Liang Fengying impatiently and said directly, "You're right. My friend is going to rent this place, so I need you out. Do you understand now?" He walked away.

Liang Fengying looked at Zheng Haiyang, and her eyes burned with resentment. However, she knew she couldn't do anything to Zheng Haiyang. But that didn't mean she couldn't do anything to the person who was going to rent this place after her. As long as she could make that person fail to rent this place, Zheng Haiyang would have no choice but to find Liang Fengying back. Then, she wouldn't need to find another shop location.

Xiao Lingyu had no idea that she was targeted. Then again, even if she knew, there was nothing she could do. This was not even her fault. Liang Fengying owed the rent and offended Zheng Haiyang, so how was that Xiao Lingyu's mistake?

When Xiao Lingyu heard from Zheng Haiyang that she would get the shop in a few days, she started to look for someone to do the renovation. Zheng Haiyang was helpful again. He was in the real estate business, so he naturally knew people from the renovation industry. He introduced a reliable company to Xiao Lingyu.

At the company, Xiao Lingyu looked at the design drawings, and she was not satisfied. The main designer, Li Yang, walked over to ask, "Miss Xiao, what kind of design are you looking for? Can you tell us?"

Xiao Lingyu thought for a moment and said, "I wish to open a vegetable and fruit shop selling high-end produce. The designs are too common, and they don't meet my needs."

Li Yang was a little surprised. He had never heard this kind of demand before. He knew of high-end shops that sold organic, green, and pollution-free vegetables and fruits, but there was none in the

county town. Even in big cities, there was a limited number of such stores. The demand for this market was very small.

For the sake of Zheng Haiyang, Li Yang said tactfully, "Miss Xiao, we're at the county town, but not everyone is rich. Most people will go to the market to buy their products." In other words, a store that only sold high-end crops wouldn't work.

After all, many people knew that the stuff inside the high-end stores came from the same place as the stuff sold at the market. However, the price at the store would be much higher than at the market. For example, baby cabbage would be sold for 1 RMB per catty at the market, but in the store, they could go for 2 RMB. Therefore, most people would purchase the ones at the market.

Xiao Lingyu understood Li Yang's kind intention. She smiled and said, "I know, but I still want to give it a try."

Li Yang looked at her and did not say anything else.

He nodded and said, "Alright, Miss Xiao, please give me three more days. I will definitely give you a design that you will be satisfied with."

Xiao Lingyu nodded and smiled, "Thank you, Director Li!"

Her shop was not big, but Sunshine Decoration company was one of the top renovation companies in Xingyin County. She felt a little flattered and grateful to be able to get the director of the company to design the shop for her.

Li Yang smiled and said, "Miss Xiao is too polite. You are Haiyang's friend, so you are my friend. One must be kind to one's friends, plus you're also my client."

"Haha." Xiao Lingyu smiled. "Thank you, Director Li."

After Xiao Lingyu left, Li Yang immediately called Zheng Haiyang and asked, "Haiyang, do you know that your friend bought the shop to sell vegetables?"

Zheng Haiyang said lazily, "I know!"

Li Yang was slightly surprised and said, "Then why didn't you stop her? Why would she need a high-end renovation for a vegetable store? Isn't that a waste of money?"

"Yang Zi, you don't know this yet, but her crops are not ordinary crops." Zheng Haiyang explained, "You'll see soon enough."

Li Yang was puzzled. "Not ordinary crops? Did they come from heaven then? Even so, with a high-end renovation and a high rental, her product price will be very high. Will she find customers?"

"You don't need to worry about that." Zheng Haiyang asked, "Did Xiao Lingyu come to your company today?"

Li Yang answered, "Yes. She looked at the designs, and she was not satisfied. She told me she wanted a high-class shop design." At this point, he asked, "Haiyang, where did you find Miss Xiao?" He was suspicious. "She's not your girlfriend, is she? How can you hide her from us?"

“She is not!” Zheng Haiyang slammed the phone.

Li Yang’s mouth twitched. He looked at the phone and said, “Then, so be it. Why the need to be angry?” Li Yang put down the phone and submerged himself into the sea of design.

...

In the general manager’s office of the Yi Family hotel, Zhou Huaming sat in the boss’s chair with a gloomy face.

He just defeated his competitor, the Gu Family Hotel, by poaching their head chef, two chefs, and their vegetable supplier, Green Source. Overnight, the business for the Yi Family Hotel shot through the roof. In comparison, the Gu Family Hotel started to bleed money. The Gu Family Hotel would close in three months. Then, he would buy them out and turn the place into the Yi Family Hotel branch. That would greatly annoy the Gu Family.

However, he didn’t expect fate to turn for the Gu Family Hotel all of a sudden. Gu Ziyi found a mysterious vegetable supplier, and it immediately brought business to the hotel. Moreover, the business was getting more and more popular.

At first, Zhou Huaming suspected the vegetables were drugged with addictive spices like poppy shells, so he called the police.

The police brought the vegetables back for analysis. They found nothing. On the contrary, the vegetables contained a type of nutrient that was good for the human body. Once this police report was out, more people frequented the Gu Family Hotel.

Zhou Huaming had inadvertently helped his competition’s business. At the same time, business at his own hotel worsened. Zhou Huaming was stifled when he thought about this.

“Have you found that supplier?” Zhou Huaming asked with a dark face. If they wanted to bring down the Gu Family Hotel, they had to cut off the vegetable supply. They had done it once, so they could do it again. If they could persuade the new supplier to join the Yi Family Hotel, the result would be wonderful. It would be a huge blow to the Gu Family Hotel.

The subordinate reported, “We’ve found it.”

“Then do everything you can to intercept the supplier. Get them to supply us instead of the Gu Family Hotel.” Zhou Huaming ordered.

“Yes!”

Chapter 156: Forced Business

Early in the morning, Wang Zhimin came to Xiao Lingyu’s place to pick up the supply. After counting the amount, he quickly left.

Not long after Wang Zhimin left, Xiao Lingyu exited the house. She decided to go back to Taoyuan Village that day. However, as she walked out the gate, two very strong men blocked her way. They were tall and muscular, with bare arms and a black skull tattoo on their arms. They looked scary.

Xiao Lingyu's heart skipped a beat, and then she asked calmly, "Who are you?"

One of the men said, "Miss Xiao, our boss invites you to join him."

Xiao Lingyu's delicate brows furrowed, and she asked doubtfully, "Who is your boss?"

"Our boss is the purchasing manager of the Yi Family Hotel, Zhou Hongwei!" A man replied. She clenched her fists but quickly let go. She doubted she could defeat two trained, large men.

It was clear that these men came prepared. One of the men said firmly, "Miss Xiao, we've received orders to bring you to the Boss. Please cooperate with us!"

This was a threat. The sun was just coming up, and her house was remote. Even if she shouted for help, no one would come. She took a deep breath and said, "Since Boss Zhou wants to talk business with me, at least let me prepare some documents and files first. Is that okay?"

"Sure!" The man replied. "However, our boss will only talk to Miss Xiao alone. He does not wish for Miss Xiao to bring any company."

This was coercion. This was how the Yi Family Hotel intercepted Green Source from the Gu Family Hotel! If Xiao Lingyu pulled out her phone, she would be kidnapped by these men immediately.

Xiao Lingyu was speechless. She didn't care about the way the Yi Family Hotel handled things. How could they wish for good cooperation when they relied on threats and coercion the first time they met?

Xiao Lingyu said, "I understand. I will go take the contracts. Wait here."

The man warned her sternly, "Miss Xiao, I hope you won't play any tricks. We have sharp hearing, and we can hear the buzz of a mosquito from ten meters away. Our boss also said he wanted to congratulate Miss Xiao because your little brother has gotten first place again in the county town's mock exam."

Xiao Lingyu's breathing stopped, and anger surged out of her eyes. She told herself to stay calm and not to panic.

Then, she said, "Then, I have to thank Boss Zhou for his concern. He must be generous to care so much about my family."

Xiao Lingyu turned to enter the house. The two men stood guard at the door. They listened attentively. They wanted to make sure Xiao Lingyu didn't call anyone. They were confident Xiao Lingyu couldn't escape. She had no way of asking for help.

However, Xiao Lingyu soon returned. She did carry a folder with her.

The men led her out of the alley, and she saw a black park parked across the road. The men invited her to get in the car.

Xiao Lingyu was brought to a two-story mansion.

“Miss Xiao, please.” The man opened the door for her. Xiao Lingyu got down and looked around. She asked calmly, “Where am I?”

“Miss Xiao has finally arrived! Sorry for not coming out to welcome you earlier!” A young man’s voice came from inside the house. He walked out the door. He was a man in his twenties. He was medium-sized, his skin was a little dark, and his face was full of pockmarks. His hair was fixed with hair gel.

He had beady eyes, and they narrowed slightly. He began with a smile. “Miss Xiao is such a beauty. I thought that the people selling vegetables are all middle-aged women who are dirt-poor.”

Xiao Lingyu asked directly, “Are you Zhou Hongwei, these two’s boss?” She pointed at the two men behind her.

Zhou Hongwei nodded and said, “That’s right, I’m Zhou Hongwei, the purchasing manager of the Yi Family Hotel. Miss Xiao, I’m sure you know why we’ve invited you here. We’re here to talk business.”

Xiao Lingyu said sarcastically, “So, this is how Boss Zhou does business with others. It’s really an eye-opener for me!”

Zhou Hongwei let the insult slid. As long as he achieved the goal, he didn’t mind going low.

Zhou Hongwei smiled, “I’m afraid that Miss Xiao didn’t know the way to come here, so I arranged my men to invite you.”

“Is that your version of an invitation?” Xiao Lingyu didn’t buy it. “You used my little brother to threaten me. Is that how Boss Zhou conducts business? If that’s true, then I’ll be direct. I’m not interested in your business. Can I go back now?”

“...” Zhou Hongwei smiled. “Miss Xiao, please don’t be mad. I was only happy after I found Miss Xiao has such a wonderful little brother. With regards to the business, since I’ve invited you here, naturally, we have to talk business before we can let you go.”

Xiao Lingyu narrowed her eyes and said coldly, “What if I refuse?”

Zhou Hongwei narrowed his eyes, raised his eyebrows, and said with a smile, “Then I’ll have trouble Miss Xiao to stay here for two days as my guest.”

“You want to imprison me?” Xiao Lingyu sneered and said sharply.

“Haha, Miss Xiao, you are funny. Why would you use the word imprison?” Zhou Hongwei smiled sinisterly and said, “Business is about making friends. I just want you to stay with me for a while... as a friend.”

Xiao Lingyu nodded. “Is that how Boss Zhou befriended the manager of Green Source?”

When Zhou Hongwei heard this, the smile on his face immediately fell. He said gloomily, “It seems that Gu Ziye is really good friends with you. He even told you about this.” He looked Xiao Lingyu up and down. He said with a hint, “But perhaps you don’t know that Gu Ziye is only using you.”

“Using me?” Xiao Lingyu was confused. “Why would Boss Zhou say that?”

Zhou Hongwei said with a smile, "Gu Ziyue is insidious and cunning. He will do anything to achieve his goal. There was a seafood supplier who once worked with us, but he was stolen by Gu Ziyue."

"And?" Xiao Lingyu asked because that didn't answer anything. What she understood was, 'You people are the ones going around stealing people's suppliers. Where do you find the confidence to frame others?'

"The boss has a daughter around 18. Gu Ziyue used all kinds of methods to approach her. When the girl fell for him, he revealed his true face. He had the daughter persuade her father to stop working with us and work with the Gu Family Hotel instead. The boss listened to her daughter, and he stopped working with us. When Gu Ziyue achieved his goal, he told the girl that he only saw her as his little sister, and he didn't love her."

At this point, Zhou Hongwei sneered and said disdainfully, "Hmph, it was clear that he was only using the girl. The girl was also stupid for believing him. In the end, they really ended up as siblings, and she treated Gu Ziyue as her brother. Miss Xiao, don't you find that funny?"

At this point, Xiao Lingyu finally understood Zhou Hongwei's intention. He assumed Xiao Lingyu had fallen in love with Gu Ziyue, and it was why she was helping him. Zhou Hongwei's plan was to sow discord between her and Gu Ziyue.

Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said, "Boss Zhou, I can't tell whether the story is funny or not. And I think only the girl involved can say if she was being dumb or not. Am I right?"

Xiao Lingyu had no idea if the story was true or not. She was merely speaking her mind. However, in Zhou Hongwei's ears, Xiao Lingyu was defending her love for Gu Ziyue. It meant that Xiao Lingyu would continue to work with Gu Ziyue and not the Yi Family Hotel.

Zhou Hongwei's face darkened, and his tone was not as polite anymore.

He said straightforwardly, "Miss Xiao, don't make this hard on yourself! I'm going to have to force you to stay here for two days. We can talk business every day. I am more than willing to talk business with a beautiful woman like Miss Xiao every day." As he said the last sentence, a hint of lust appeared on his face. He even licked his lips with his tongue.

The intention was clear. He was threatening to rape her.

Xiao Lingyu's face sank, and she asked sharply, "Boss Zhou, you are not giving me any choice, aren't you? You will imprison me and then threaten me with my personal safety. Isn't that too despicable?"

"This is the way of the business world. What's wrong with that?" Zhou Hongwei said sternly, "Since Miss Zhou doesn't know the business world's way, I will have to teach you about it." Then, he paused for a moment. "However, if Miss Xiao agrees to cooperate with us, I will personally drive you back. Now, Miss Xiao, the choice is yours."

Just as Zhou Hongwei finished his sentence, the sound of a siren was heard from outside.

Zhou Hongwei and the two men's expressions changed at the same time.

Zhou Hongwei sternly asked, "You called the police?"

Xiao Lingyu did not deny it. "Yes, I did."

The two men looked at each other in confusion. They asked, "When did you do that? We would have known if you did!"

With their sharp ears, they would have heard her call the police. Even if she asked someone else to call the police for her through messaging, they would hear it too. Even if the phone were muted, they would hear the keys clicking. But they didn't hear anything when they were at Xiao Lingyu's place.

Xiao Lingyu smiled. "Why should I let you know that I was calling the police? To let you stop me?"

In reality, Xiao Lingyu entered the farming space immediately once she returned to her room. The time in the space was slower than outside. One minute outside was equivalent to ten minutes inside. Ten minutes were more than enough for her to come up with the SOS message and mute her phone. Once she exited the space, she sent the text message out. She sent it directly to Gu Ziyi. The man should know his competitor best. She told Gu Ziyi that two of Zhou Hongwei's men had invited her to talk business with Boss Zhou. She asked him to call the police.

Xiao Lingyu only took ten seconds to do all that. Therefore, it was impossible for the two men to realize anything had happened. The two had no idea Xiao Lingyu had sought outside help.

When Zhou Hongwei heard that Xiao Lingyu had called the police, he angrily slapped one of the men, "Useless thing, why didn't you take her phone away from the start?"

"Sorry, Boss!" The two men quickly lowered their heads and admitted their mistake. "We didn't expect that she would call the police directly!" They glared at Xiao Lingyu fiercely. They had really underestimated Xiao Lingyu.

They thought that she was just a weak woman. However, she had surprised all of them.

After hitting the two men, Zhou Hongwei undid the two buttons on his chest, revealing a scar on his chest. He looked a little scary.

Zhou Hongwei said, "Hehe, Miss Xiao, you have impressed me. To think you have the guts to call the police. Do you think I will be afraid of the police? Let me tell you. Even if the police are here, it's useless. Do you know why?"

"Why?" Xiao Lingyu asked in puzzlement.

"Because of my background," Zhou Hongwei said proudly and confidently, "The deputy director of the police station, Zhou Tanxiong, is my uncle. Otherwise, do you think I can be in the business for so long? Haha. When the Green Source's boss heard the name of my uncle, he softened immediately. He begged me to cooperate with him.

"You see after he cooperated with us, the business of the Yi Family Hotel thrived. It would be a matter of time before the Gu family hotel closes down. Once they go bankrupt, I will have my revenge. This scar on my chest was left by Gu Ziyi ten years ago. I will always remember it.

"However, you suddenly appeared to help the Gu Family Hotel and raise them from the dead. In contrast, the business of the Yi Family Hotel when downhill. If this continues, when will the Gu family hotel go bankrupt?"

“Miss Xiao, I was sincere to do business with you. Since you’ve refused, you can’t blame us in the future. On account that you are a woman, I want to give you a good price at first. But now...”

Xiao Lingyu frowned when she heard such a direct threat.

At this moment, someone knocked on the door.

“Open the door. We’re the police!”

Chapter 157: Threats

The police were at the door, but Zhou Hongwei walked into the house to call his uncle.

As soon as the call was connected, he said anxiously, “Uncle, what’s going on? Why did the people from the police station come to my place? Why didn’t you inform me?”

The voice said chillingly, “Deputy Chief Zhou is in the bathroom.”

Zhou Hongwei frowned and asked suspiciously, “Who are you? How dare you answer Deputy Chief Zhou’s Call? Who gave you the guts?” He was harsh.

“I’m Jiang Tao!” Jiang Tao’s cold voice sounded, “Chief of the police station!”

Zhou Hongwei’s face turned pale, and he quickly hung up the phone. At that instant, he felt a little uncertain. However, he quickly calmed down.

After all, he only invited Xiao Lingyu over as a guest, and he had not done anything to her.

He glared at Xiao Lingyu and warned, “Xiao Lingyu, you are brave to call the police. But I’ll see what you can do even if the police are here. After this is over, we’ll settle this score.”

“Open the door! This is the police!” The officers were still shouting.

“Ol’ Three, get the door!” Zhou Hongwei ordered one of the men.

“Yes, Boss!” Ol’ Three replied.

The moment he opened the door, four policemen rushed in. They pointed their guns at them and shouted loudly, “Raise your hands!”

Zhou Hongwei and his two subordinates raised their hands.

Zhou Hongwei asked in puzzlement, “Officers, what’s going on? We aren’t doing anything. We are good citizens who follow the law.”

As soon as he said this, another three people walked in. The first was a young man in a police uniform; the second was an officer in his forties; and the last... it was someone Zhou Hongwei would recognize anywhere. He knew all three of them.

The first was Jiang Tao, the police chief; the second was his uncle, Zhou Tanxiong, the deputy chief, and the last was...

He gritted his teeth and shouted, "Gu Ziyue, why are you here?"

Then, he looked at Jiang Tao. When he met Jiang Tao's cold and merciless eyes, he looked away in panic. He shot his uncle a gaze as if asking, 'What is going on?'

He had threatened other people before to do business with him. There were some who called the cops on him, and every time only the junior officers would come. Most of the junior officers knew Zhou Hongwei because he would find excuses to visit the police station. Over time, people knew he was the deputy chief, Zhou Tanxiong's nephew.

Therefore, when people received a report about him, most officers would just go through the motion.

Furthermore, Zhou Hongwei rarely had to rely on actual beatings. His threats were enough to make people bend to his favor. Therefore, the police couldn't touch him without physical evidence. He never thought that it would fail one day.

Regardless, with his uncle around, Zhou Hongwei slowly calmed down. He asked very calmly, "Chief Jiang, why did you bring so many police to my place? I don't think I've done anything wrong."

Zhou Tanxiong looked at Xiao Lingyu, who had been standing there calmly, "Chief Jiang, this has to be a misunderstanding. Hongwei invited this miss over here as his guest."

Then, he shot a sharp look at Gu Ziyue and questioned him sternly, "Gu Ziyue, I know that you have always had a bad relationship with my Hongwei. Hongwei stole your business a few times, and you were angry. However, you shouldn't misuse police resources. You told us there was a kidnapping. Does this look like a kidnapping to you?" Xiao Lingyu looked too calm. There was not a hint of fear on her face. She definitely didn't look like a kidnapping victim.

Moreover, she was pretty. She matched Zhou Hongwei's taste. With that in mind, Zhou Tanxiong said, "This is my Hongwei's girlfriend. They are getting together. Do you need to call the police for that?"

However, once he said that the expressions of everyone present changed, especially Zhou Hongwei. He hadn't notified his uncle earlier, and it had caused a huge mistake. Xiao Lingyu worked with Gu Ziyue, so they had to know each other. Gu Ziyue would know if Xiao Lingyu was Zhou Hongwei's girlfriend.

'Wait. But I can go with this!' Zhou Hongwei suddenly had a flash of inspiration. He nodded and said, "That's right. She had just agreed to be my girlfriend." Then, he looked at Xiao Lingyu and said, "Lingyu, you said you'd bring me to visit your brother. So you can't go back on your words." Zhou Hongwei turned to Zhou Tanxiong and said kindly, "Uncle, you may not know this, but Lingyu's younger brother, Xiao Lingye, is very good at his studies. He is the top student at No One High School. He is the best student in the entire county in the latest mock exam. He'll definitely get into a good university... assuming nothing happens to him."

Xiao Lingyu's sharp eyes flashed.

'This Zhou Hongwei is disgusting. Even now, he is using Ye 'Er to threaten me. If I don't cooperate, Ye 'Er will be in danger.'

Zhou Tanxiong knew his nephew well. He caught the hint immediately. He had said something wrong earlier.

If only Jiang Tao weren't here...

Zhou Tanxiong knew Jiang Tao very well. He was cold-hearted and impartial. He would never tolerate evil and bad deeds. If he started to doubt Zhou Hongwei, he would look into his past. Once his past deeds were dug up, it would be a huge problem. Therefore, the most important goal was to dispel Jiang Tao's doubt. He needed to make Jiang Tao believe that Gu Ziyue was using them to come after Zhou Hongwei.

After hearing his nephew, he knew Xiao Lingyu's cooperation was extremely crucial. He smiled sinisterly, "Is that so? That's wonderful news." Then, he turned to Xiao Lingyu, "Lingyu, next time, you should bring your little brother along. Let us see the future top scorer."

Gu Ziyue's pupils contracted. He cursed in his heart, 'How shameless is this pair of uncle and nephew? They are threatening Lingyu with Lingye!'

But, Gu Ziyue was not worried. He was smiling instead. Other women might be threatened by them, but did they forget who they were dealing with?

This was someone who knew the police chief and managed to draw out the gentleness from him.

Zhou Tanxiong and Zhou Hongwei's plan was doomed.

"Lingyu, when did you agree to be his girlfriend?" Jiang Tao was anxious. When he heard Xiao Lingyu agreed to be someone else's girlfriend, his brain was blank, and his heart was a mess. Naturally, he didn't spot the loopholes.

Gu Ziyue wanted to roll his eyes. 'I have no idea Chief Jiang can be so flustered. Hello! Is that the point here?'

However, Gu Ziyue grinned when he noticed the expressions on Zhou Tanxiong and Zhou Hongwei's faces. Gu Ziyue couldn't deal with Zhou Hongwei because he had Zhou Tanxiong supporting him. However, they didn't expect that Jiang Tao and Xiao Lingyu actually knew each other. More importantly, Chief Jiang was also interested in Xiao Lingyu. Zhou Hongwei had openly claimed Xiao Lingyu as his girlfriend, which wouldn't put him in Jiang Tao's good book.

When Zhou Tanxiong threatened Xiao Lingyu with her younger brother, she was furious. The young one was shameless, and the old one was worse.

'They want to threaten me? Two can play at that game!'

Seeing the sinister smile on Xiao Lingyu's face, Zhou Hongwei immediately felt that something was wrong.

Then, he heard Xiao Lingyu say to Jiang Tao, "Chief Jiang, you've misunderstood. I was forcibly dragged here by the two of them, and I'm not Boss Zhou's girlfriend."

Xiao Lingyu pointed at the two strong men with bare arms, and then she said,

"They told me that their boss wanted me to talk business with them. However, I have no interest in talking business with rude people. Regardless, they refused to let me go. When I went to my room to get

my files, I sent a message to President Gu, telling him that I was being kidnapped. I asked him to call the police!”

Gu Ziyue chuckled and told Zhou Hongwei, “Zhou Hongwei, now you know why I’m here?” At this point, he looked at the man contemptuously and said, “Zhou Hongwei, you’re really despicable. Lingyu doesn’t want to do business with you, but you forced her to come here. If this isn’t kidnapping, then what is?”

Zhou Tanxiong glared fiercely at Gu Ziyue, but the latter was not afraid because Jiang Tao was there. Furthermore, the Gu family and the Zhou family had been enemies for decades, so what was one more conflict?

Zhou Hongwei gritted his teeth and looked at Gu Ziyue, and shouted loudly, “Gu Ziyue, I didn’t kidnap anyone. I just... wanted to do business with Miss Xiao. It was too dark, so I had my men protect Miss Xiao as they brought her here.” There was probably no one else who could disguise a kidnapping as protection.

“Zhou Hongwei, if this is a normal business meeting, why have it way before dawn?” Gu Ziyue asked sharply.

“Erm...” Zhou Hongwei was stumped. Then, he said, “This is my habit. I need to talk business with people very early in the morning.”

“But is that the other party’s habit?” Gu Ziyue pointed out sharply, “You’re going around handing out ‘protection’ without asking for the other party’s wishes. If that is not kidnapping, what is?”

“Gu Ziyue!” Zhou Tanxiong shouted sternly, “You’re not a police officer. You don’t have the right to speak here!” If Gu Ziyue continued, he would only cut more holes in his nephew’s story. What Zhou Tanxiong needed to do now was to neutralize Xiao Lingyu and then bring his nephew back to the station. When he was back at that station, he’d have ways to clear Zhou Hongwei’s name.

However, Zhou Tanxiong didn’t expect his loud rebuke would help Jiang Tao snap back into focus. Jiang Tao focused on Xiao Lingyu, “What is going on?”

Xiao Lingyu walked up to Jiang Tao, opened the folder in her hand, took out a recording pen, and handed it to Jiang Tao, “Chief Jiang, Zhou Hongwei threatened my family and me. There’s a recording here to prove it.”

When Zhou Hongwei saw the recording pen, his expression changed drastically. He didn’t expect the woman to be so cunning. The two men also shivered when they saw the recording pen. When Xiao Lingyu went back home to get her ‘business contract’, she had done so many things.

Zhou Hongwei gnashed his teeth and told Xiao Lingyu, “Xiao Lingyu, just say so if you don’t want to cooperate with me, why do you have to resort to such despicable means?”

Xiao Lingyu sneered and said, “Boss Zhou, a person in a glass house shouldn’t throw stones. I have already rejected you, I didn’t want to work with you, but you used my younger brother’s safety to force me to come. How can I not come? I knew you had bad intentions, so I came prepared.”

Gu Ziyue clapped his hands.

Zhou Hongwei liked to threaten people. Now he would have a taste of his own medicine.

Jiang Tao held the recording pen and said coldly with an expressionless face, "Take them away!"

Then, he looked at Xiao Lingyu and said, "Lingyu, you also have to go back to the police station to make a statement."

Xiao Lingyu said, "Okay!"

After saying this, she suddenly thought of something and said to Jiang Tao, "Director Jiang, if something happens to my brother in the future, can I sue the Yi Family? Boss Zhou did say he is the purchasing manager of the Yi Family Hotel!"

Everyone, "..."

Zhou Hongwei glared at Xiao Lingyu with hatred in his heart. He had underestimated this woman. He thought that she was just a weak woman. Once he threatened her, she would immediately cooperate with him.

But Xiao Lingyu was an iron maiden. She had turned her target to the Yi Family.

...

Zhou Hongwei was temporarily arrested. Zhou Hongwei's other uncle was the general manager of the Yi Family Hotel, Zhou Huaming.

The Zhou Family had three sons, and only the second son gave birth to a grandson. The rest were granddaughters. The grandson was Zhou Hongwei. Therefore, Zhou Hongwei was the sole heir of the Zhou Family.

The Zhou Family treated boys better than girls. Zhou Hongwei was doted on by all the elders.

Now that Zhou Hongwei was caught, the Zhou family naturally had to help him.. And they knew the key was Xiao Lingyu.

Chapter 158: The Zhou Family

With Xiao Lingyu's concrete evidence, Zhou Hongwei and his two subordinates were convicted of threatening, illegally restricting the freedom of others, and kidnapping.

Jiang Tao ordered a thorough investigation of Zhou Hongwei. Zhou Tanxiong, as a person of interest, was to stay away from work temporarily. If he was found innocent, he could return to work.

When Gu Ziyue heard the news, he immediately bought more than a dozen big firecrackers and fireworks. He called his friends and had a party.

"Ziyue, what's the matter? Why are you so happy?" Zheng Haiyang asked in puzzlement, "You are setting off fireworks in broad daylight. Other than the loud pop, there's nothing to see. This is so wasteful." He looked at the wrappers on the ground and smiled, "And these fireworks are not cheap. They are of the highest quality, but we can't see anything in the day. This is such a shame."

"Why is it wasteful? I'm just so happy!" Gu Ziyue huffed, "Don't come to rain on my parade."

“Fine. But can you tell us why you’re so happy?” Yuan Xuanhao was confused. He guessed, “Did you get a new girlfriend?”

Qian Yifan nodded and said, “It does look like it!”

Gu Ziyi, “...” What are these people on about?

Gu Ziyi said excitedly, “Zhou Hongwei was arrested, and Chief Jiang made it into a criminal case!”

The other three were surprised. “Ziyi, did you finally take down Zhou Hongwei?”

“It’s not me!” Gu Ziyi shook his head and said, “It’s Xiao Lingyu!”

“Ah, Xiao Lingyu?!” The other three were surprised. “How did the two even know each other?”

Gu Ziyi said with a contemptuous smile, “That bastard, Zhou Hongwei wanted to deal with Lingyu the same way he dealt with Green Source. Lingyu found an opening to message me, telling me that the Yi Family Hotel sent two men to escort her to their boss. She asked me to call the police.”

“But calling the police would be useless.” Zheng Haiyang pointed out. “Zhou Hongwei’s uncle is the chief deputy. The police won’t do anything.”

“That’s why I didn’t call the police. Instead, I called Uncle Chen. Then, Uncle Chen called Jiang Tao.” Gu Ziyi said proudly, “In the past, I had to be cautious around Zhou Hongwei because of the deputy chief, Zhou Tanxiong. Everyone at the station has been hiding Zhou Hongwei’s crimes from Jiang Tao. However, Xiao Lingyu exposed the man’s crime right before Jiang Tao. Zhou Tanxiong wanted to cover it up, but he couldn’t. Even now, Zhou Tanxiong is on house arrest, waiting for an internal investigation. He can’t help Zhou Hongwei this time.”

The three nodded. “In that case, this is indeed a happy occasion.”

“But, Zi Ye, I’ve heard that Zhou Hongwei is a very cunning person. He always used verbal threats and never physical threats so that he wouldn’t leave behind evidence. So how did Xiao Lingyu pin the crime on him? What evidence could she get?” Qian Yifan analyzed. “The man is clever, or else even with Zhou Tanxiong, and he wouldn’t have survived for so long.”

“The devil meets his match this time.” Gu Ziyi said happily, “None of them expected Lingyu to bring a recording pen and record everything. The evidence is ironclad.”

“Oh, a recording pen?” The three of them were surprised. “How did Lingyu think of bringing a recording pen? She’s too smart.”

“But, with Zhou Hongwei’s cunning and vigilance, why didn’t he search Xiao Lingyu?” Qian Yifan was full of doubts.

“Yes, he’s always careful in his evil dealings, or else he would have been accused already. He never leaves any evidence behind,” Yuan Xuanhao agreed.

“Perhaps it was because Lingyu is a girl?” Zheng Haiyang guessed.

“Tsk, as if the man is such a gentleman. His actions in the past showed that he is not. Take, for example, the seafood boss’ daughter. Zhou Hongwei had his men strip her before he started to threaten her.” Gu

Ziye said disdainfully, "The girl was so traumatized and ashamed that she tried to hang herself. Thankfully, she was saved. Her father moved away from this place because he didn't want his daughter to stay here anymore."

"So, why didn't Zhou Hongwei search Xiao Lingyu?" The four of them were puzzled.

Suddenly, Gu Ziye thought of something. "I think I know!"

"Why is it? Tell us!" The other three said.

Gu Ziye shared. "From the beginning, Xiao Lingyu was extremely compliant. She didn't resist like the rest. She said politely that she needed to grab the business contracts. Zhou Hongwei's men were too careless. They didn't expect Xiao Lingyu to be able to be so calm under duress.

"They had confidence Xiao Lingyu wouldn't do anything because they were threatening her with Xiao Lingye's life. Lingyu wouldn't take risks to protect her brother. Therefore, they didn't expect Lingyu to use the time to call me and grab the recording pen. Plus, Xiao Lingyu held the pen openly inside the file in her hands. They didn't think anyone would be so brazen."

Gu Ziye laughed, thinking back to Zhou Hongwei and Zhou Tanxiong's faces when they saw Xiao Lingyu open the folder and take out the recording pen.

The others laughed. "Haha. Zhou Hongwei really deserves this." They agreed unanimously. "This is indeed worth celebrating."

...

While the four were celebrating, the Zhou family was in a state of upheaval.

Old Master Zhou was in his seventies. His sideburns were white, and his face was full of wrinkles. He also had a rat's beady eyes like Zhou Hongwei. Similarly, they hid a cunning and ruthless light.

He knocked the ground with his walking stick. He was angry and dignified. Before him were his two sons. Their heads were lowered in shame.

"What is going on?" Zhou Guojian asked in a stern voice, "How did Wei 'Er get caught?"

Zhou Huaying, the only one who sat on the sofa, was anxious and said angrily, "Dad, I heard it was third brother who personally arrested Wei 'Er."

Zhou Guojian had three sons, the eldest, Zhou Huaming, the second, Zhou Huaying, and the third, Zhou Tanxiong.

Zhou Huaming had two daughters. Zhou Huaying only had one son, Zhou Hongwei, and Zhou Tanxiong also had two daughters.

In the newest generation, Zhou Hongwei was the only male, so he was naturally favored by Zhou Guojian. His father thus enjoyed the highest status among Old Master Zhou's sons.

After hearing his second son, Zhou Guojian turned his fury to Zhou Tanxiong. "Tanxiong, what is going on? You have to explain everything today, or else there will be consequences!"

“Third brother, haven’t I asked you to take care of Wei ‘Er, your nephew? Instead of doing that, you arrested him instead!” Zhou Huaying was furious. “You owe me an explanation.” He paused before saying. “I know that you’re jealous that I have a son, and you only have two daughters. But you can’t place Wei ‘Er in danger just to take revenge on me.” Zhou Huaying looked pained.

Zhou Huaying lorded over his brothers because he had given birth to the only male in the Zhou Family. He was the greatest contributor to the Zhou Family lineage. Everyone in the family had to bow to him. They offered him money and power. Therefore, even though he didn’t have a job, he had the most comfortable life. He spent his days around women. When he was out of money, he would find his eldest brother. If he needed someone cowed or something removed, he would go to his third brother. In conclusion, he was the typical second-generation young master.

Zhou Huaming and Zhou Tanxiong had no choice but to tolerate their second brother. He was the one who gave birth to a son. Their future was dependent on Zhou Hongwei.

The Zhou Family was still stuck in the olden times even though the world had moved on.

Zhou Tanxiong was bitter when he was questioned. He didn’t want to arrest Zhou Hongwei, but he was set up by Jiang Tao. Jiang Tao went on a mission and asked him along. Zhou Tanxiong only knew they were responding to a report against Zhou Hongwei when they were halfway there. He tried to inform Zhou Hongwei on the way to the scene. Once Zhou Hongwei released his captive, there would be no crime.

Zhou Tanxiong asked to use the toilet, but actually, he wanted to make a call to his nephew. However, he couldn’t find his phone. He thought he had lost his phone. He later saw Jiang Tao toying with his phone. When the police arrived at Zhou Hongwei’s place, Jiang Tao answered the call before him.

After answering the call, Jiang Tao returned the phone to him and said innocently. “I’m sorry, I didn’t realize I got the wrong phone.” Then, he asked with a puzzled face. “But Deputy Zhou, who is this Zhou Hongwei? Why is he so arrogant? I believe I heard him call you his uncle. Is the man your nephew?”

Zhou Tanxiong was so furious his face was green. It was bullshit. They didn’t even have the same model, so how could Jiang Tao mistook his phone. Furthermore, there was no reason for Jiang Tao to answer his call for him.

However, there was nothing he could do at that moment. When he entered the house and saw Zhou Hongwei’s latest victim was a beautiful young woman, he came up with the plan to make the girl into his nephew’s girlfriend. However, he had no idea the woman knew Jiang Tao.

Fortunately, his nephew was smart and quick-witted and immediately gave him a hint. They coerced the woman to submit by using her younger brother as a threat.

However, the woman surprised them by producing a recording pen. She had stabbed them in the back. After Zhou Hongwei was arrested, Zhou Tanxiong also had to stay at home to cooperate with the investigation.

Zhou Tanxiong said, “Second brother, Hongwei is my nephew, but I’ve treated him like he is my son. I’m also very anxious that he’s arrested. I’m not jealous of you at all.” Even though he was, he didn’t dare to say it out loud. Otherwise, his second brother would make his life hell.

He treated Zhou Hongwei like his son, but Zhou Tanxiong really couldn't care for Zhou Hongwei's father.

Zhou Huaying sharply asked, "Are you really anxious? Then, why are you sitting around at home and not at the station helping Wei 'Er?"

Zhou Tanxiong was speechless. Immediately after, a wave of anger surged up as he loudly said, "I'm at home because Wei 'Er is arrested. I was told to stay away from the case by my superiors due to a conflict of interest. Do you think I like to stay at home?"

Zhou Guojian and Zhou Huaming instantly fell silent, their faces solemn. They didn't think this matter would be so serious.

Jiang Tao intended to look deeper into this investigation. The whole Zhou Family would be implicated, and how many of them would escape unscathed? This would draw out many problems.

Only the simple-minded Zhou Huaying didn't realize the severity of the issue. He said disdainfully, "Hmph, this is only your excuse!"

Zhou Tanxiong's face turned livid with anger, but he had no choice but to swallow his anger.

Zhou Guojian glanced at his second son and sternly shouted, "Shut up!" He doted on his second son, but he was no fool. The reason his second son could live so freely was because of the Zhou Family. And the pillars of the Zhou Family now were Zhou Huaming and Zhou Tanxiong.

Zhou Huaying tactfully shut his mouth, but he still blamed his third brother, Zhou Tanxiong. He planned to take revenge for this in the future.

"Tanxiong, explain everything to me now!" Zhou Guojian asked with a serious face.

After Zhou Tanxiong explained everything, he asked anxiously, "Dad, what should we do now?"

Zhou Guojian leaned on his walking stick. His face was solemn and angry, and his eyes were cold and fierce. He said, "We need to go to the source!"

Zhou Huaming and Zhou Tanxiong were stunned for a moment, but they immediately reacted and asked, "Dad, you mean...."

Chapter 159: Zhou Huaming's Compromise

After Zhou Hongwei was arrested, Old Master Zhou said, "The one who unties the bell must be the one who ties the bell". That clarified the minds of the Zhou Brothers.

Zhou Hongwei was arrested and convicted. The key witness in his case was Xiao Lingyu.

However, Xiao Lingyu was extremely sensitive or extremely lucky. All the people sent by the Zhou Family couldn't find her.

The Zhou Family knew where Xiao Lingyu stayed and where Xiao Lingye attended school, so they should be able to find her easily. But that was not the case.

When Zhou Hongwei was arrested, Xiao Lingyu requested protection from the police until Zhou Hongwei was convicted. Jiang Tao knew her intention immediately. Xiao Lingyu's evidence was the most important in Zhou Hongwei's case.

The Zhou Family was a powerful family in Xing Yin County, but Xiao Lingyu was just a normal person. Therefore, her personal safety and the safety of her family were greatly threatened.

Jiang Tao thought for a moment. He sent people to protect Xiao Lingyu and Xiao Lingye. He also released a statement to warn the Zhou Family. If something happened to Xiao Lingyu, the key witness, the Zhou family would be the first target of the investigation.

The Zhou Family thus couldn't do things openly. Instead, they had to rely on bribery and inducement.

Of the three Zhou Brothers, two were influential men in business and politics. They had connections in Xing Yin County. They were a powerful family, and Xiao Lingyu had no power or money. They could get her easily. However, Xiao Lingyu was always absent.

The only time she showed up was when Wang Zhimin arrived to pick up the daily supply for the Gu Family Hotel every morning. The Zhou Family couldn't approach Xiao Lingyu then because Wang Zhimin was around. After that, Xiao Lingyu would hop into her car and drive to God knows where.

The Zhou Family found out about Father Xiao and Mother Xiao, but they didn't dare to make a move on them. If they went overboard, Xiao Lingyu might cause Wei 'Er's death. That would not be worth it.

It was why the people from the Zhou Family were very cautious.

"You idiots!" Zhou Huaming was furious. He sat at the office of the Yi Family Hotel. "I told you to go invite her, not threaten her. What are you so afraid of? As long as you lower your attitude and speak politely, what are you so afraid of? What if the police are watching? We aren't doing anything wrong!"

Zhou Huaming tugged at his tie. He was so angry at these stupid subordinates that he wanted to crack open their heads. He wanted to see if they had brains.

These two subordinates said aggrievedly, "But, CEO Zhou, how can we lower our attitude and speak when we can't even approach Xiao Lingyu?"

Zhou Huaming asked doubtfully, "Isn't she a vegetable vendor? Go to her stall!"

One of the subordinates said with a bitter face, "Yes, but she only appears to sell vegetables to the Gu... Wang Zhimin every morning. But every time we go over, there will be one or two people guarding her door. We can't get close at all. They will leave once Xiao Lingyu leaves. Moreover, sometimes the God of Death would be at her door. We were too scared even to get close."

Zhou Huaming was shocked. "You mean she is protected every day, and sometimes Jiang Tao will be there in person?"

"Yes!" The two subordinates nodded and said, "They are there every time."

Zhou Huaming was even more confused. "That's strange. Did Jiang Tao arrange all these?" However, what was the relationship between Jiang Tao and Xiao Lingyu? The Zhou Family hadn't found out that yet.

“We don’t know.” The two men shook their heads and said. Then, one of them asked, “CEO Zhou, are we still going to watch Xiao Lingyu?”

“Why?” Zhou Huaming scolded, “What is watching her going to help us?”

“Then, CEO Zhou, what should we do now?” One of the subordinates asked.

“How would I know?” Zhou Huaming shouted. He was really furious. After shouting, he said, “I will think of another way. You can go now.”

After the two of them left, Zhou Huaming leaned back in his chair, feeling a little tired. He was smoking and thinking at the same time.

Then, he made a call.

As the call was answered, Zhou Huaming asked, “My people can’t even get close to Xiao Lingyu, so what should we do? Are we going to target Xiao Lingye then?”

When Zhou Tanxiong heard his big brother, he frowned and narrowed his eyes slightly, “There are only seven days left before Wei ‘Er’s indictment. We have to make the best out of these seven days. Xiao Lingyu is still the key.”

Zhou Huaming slightly frowned and said, “So, what do you mean?”

Zhou Tanxiong thought for a moment and said, “Since we can’t get her from behind, then we’ll attack her from the front!”

“Hmm...” Zhou Huaming pondered. After thinking for a moment, he said, “You’re right.” At this point, he paused and asked worriedly, “Tanxiong, how are things on your side?”

Zhou Tanxiong said, “There’s no movement on my side at the moment. Don’t worry, Big Brother. There won’t be any problems.” He had made sure he wouldn’t leave behind any trails.

Zhou Huaming sighed lightly and said, “That’s good. Be careful.” After putting down the phone, he took another puff of his cigarette. The smoke lingered in front of him, making his eyes a little misty.

“Since we can’t get her from behind, then we’ll attack her from the front!” He smashed the cigarette butt against the ashtray.

...

“Miss Xiao, our boss wants to see you!” They finally got the chance to accost Xiao Lingyu. They were at the entrance of Number One High School. Xiao Lingyu was waiting for her brother.

Xiao Lingyu saw the two people blocking her way and frowned. Then she asked coldly, “Are they sent by the Zhou Family?”

The expressions of these two people instantly stiffened. They nodded and replied, “Yes!”

“Who is your boss? Why are you looking for me?” Xiao Lingyu asked. “The last time someone said they wanted to see me, it was Zhou Hongwei from the Zhou Family. That man is very impolite. I don’t like him.” She was reminding these two men not to treat her like a fool.

The two men calmed down. They smiled and said, "Don't worry, Miss Xiao. Our boss really wants to invite you and your brother for a meal. You can choose the location!" This was to let Xiao Lingyu feel at ease, and it also showed the sincerity of the Zhou family.

Xiao Lingyu raised her eyebrows. The two men had no idea what Xiao Lingyu meant. They looked a little anxious and asked, "Miss Xiao, what do you think?"

Xiao Lingyu smiled, and her eyes sparkled. Then, she directly replied, "I'm not going!"

"Miss Xiao," the two of them were anxious.

Xiao Lingyu chuckled, "Until now, I still don't know who your boss is. I won't make the same mistake twice." She was not going to play their games.

"Miss Xiao, let's not beat around the bush," One of them, Zhao Hu, said, "Our boss is Zhou Huaming. He really wants to treat you and your brother to a meal..."

"Stop!" Xiao Lingyu raised her hand to make the man stop. Her expression was serious as she said in a sharp tone, "Tell your boss to stay away from my brother. Or there will be consequences."

'The whole Zhou Family is the same. Do they think I'm so easily bullied? They have threatened me with Ye 'Er twice already.'

They said they were sincerely inviting them to dinner, but in fact, the man was warning her that if she didn't cooperate, he would harm her family. They were testing Xiao Lingyu's bottom line.

Zhao Hu's brows were tightly knitted. He opened his mouth to explain, but he did not know what to say. In the end, he sighed, "Miss Xiao, don't misunderstand. Our boss did not mean that."

Xiao Lingyu sneered, "Then, what does he mean? In any case, I'm not going to waste any more time with you." She thought for a while and said, "Go back to tell your Boss Zhou that I agree to his dinner invitation. It'll be at the Gu Family Hotel three days later. I'll be there waiting. If he doesn't come, then I can't help him."

Zhao Long's face was a little ugly as he said, "You're ridiculous! You know that our Boss Zhou and the Gu family hotel are sworn enemies! How can you ask our boss to go to his sworn enemy's place? This is a direct insult!"

"I don't feel safe going anywhere else. In fact, I don't feel safe sitting at the same table with the Zhou Family. So I have to find a place where I can be more at ease." Xiao Lingyu said firmly, "I've already stated the conditions. It's your boss' choice whether to agree or not."

Zhao Hu and Zhao Long's faces were stiff.

Zhao Long was about to say something to Xiao Lingyu when Zhao Hu pulled on his sleeves. Zhao Hu said, "Alright, we'll convey Miss Xiao's intentions to Boss Zhou truthfully." The two left.

Zhao Long immediately complained, "Brother, the bitch is too much. You should have let me scold her."

Zhao Hu's expression froze as he said very seriously, "Zhao Long, use your brain. Even if Boss Zhou came in person, he had to be polite to Xiao Lingyu. The Zhou Family needs her. Besides..." Zhao Hu narrowed

his eyes, "We're just lackeys. Boss Zhou is the one making the decision. So, why should we risk our future to offend the woman? No wonder Zhou Huaming called us idiots. You've dragged our overall intelligence down."

Zhao Long rubbed his head and said in a silly voice, "Brother, you're right!"

Zhao Hu, "..."

After Zhou Huaming heard Zhao Long and Zhao Hu's report, his face turned green and then white. He was incensed.

He gritted his teeth and shouted, "Xiao Lingyu, you've really gone too far!"

The Gu Family and the Zhou Family were rivals. How could she ask him to treat her at the Gu Family Hotel? This was a slap to his face.

"Did she say anything else?" Zhou Huaming asked again.

"She said she wants the Zhou family to stay away from her younger brother. Otherwise, there will be consequences." Zhao Hu replied truthfully.

How could Xiao Lingyu, an ordinary person, be a threat to the powerful Zhou Family? It was because Zhou Hongwei was too dumb. In his criminal case, Xiao Lingyu was the key witness. She also requested protection from the police.

Once something happened to her, the Zhou family would be the primary target of suspicion.

Because of this, the Zhou family had to be careful. They couldn't take risks unless it were absolutely necessary.

Zhou Huaming took a few deep breaths and tried his best to calm himself down.

Then, he gritted his teeth and said, "Alright, I'll go meet her!"

After Zhou Hongwei's matter was settled, and Xiao Lingyu lost the police's protection, they would take serious revenge!

Chapter 160: Matters of the Gong family

When Zhuo Guojian heard his eldest son say that Xiao Lingyu had agreed to the invitation, his eyes were filled with disdain. His expression was indifferent as he coldly snorted, "I knew this would work. After we throw her enough money and benefits, she'll be tempted to work with us."

"But Dad, Xiao Lingyu had decided to have dinner at the Gu Family Hotel!" Zhou Huaming said. Their purpose in inviting Xiao Lingyu was to bribe and entice her. But how could they do that under the eyes of their enemy? It was basically giving the Gu Family something to use against them. Furthermore, having dinner at their sworn enemy's place was already a big insult to them.

Xiao Lingyu had to be doing it on purpose. However, for now, they could only compromise.

“What?” Zhou Guojian was surprised, and then a hint of anger appeared on his face. He held the dragon head of the walking stick and slammed the stick to the ground. He growled, “How dare this woman treats the Zhou Family like this? Is she doing this for the Gu Family?”

Zhou Guojian cursed loudly. His old eyes glowed darkly. Then, he said in a calmer voice, “Go with it for now. Our priority is to save Wei ‘Er, but once that is over, hmph...”

Zhou Huaming nodded and replied, “Dad, I have the same idea.”

“Good, I’m glad that you can look ahead.” Zhou Guojian nodded and said, “Huaming, you’ll need to suffer for the family this time.” A firm determination appeared in the old man’s eyes. “For Wei ‘Er, no matter how the woman and the Gu Family humiliate you, you have to endure it. Our plan depends on it. Wei ‘Er is the lifeblood of the Zhou Family. We need him for the family’s future. You also need him to look after you when you’re old.” Zhou Goujian reminded Zhou Huaming to do his best to save Zhou Hongwei.

After all, Zhou Hongwei was the Zhou Family’s only grandson.

Zhou Huaming smiled bitterly inside. He had two daughters, and his third brother had two daughters. In these past years, the two brothers had tried their best to produce a son, but it was to no avail. Both he and his third brother had many mistresses, but they either couldn’t get pregnant or gave birth to more daughters.

There were women who came to the Zhou Family carrying boys. They claimed the boys were part of the Zhou Family.

The first thing the Zhou Family did was to do a paternity test. The result was clear. None of them was telling the truth. As the men got older, they lost their energy. They poured their hope on Zhou Hongwei.

If Zhou Hongwei could give birth to three sons, then each of the brothers would adopt one. Every branch would have an heir. However, strangely enough, while Zhou Hongwei had many girlfriends, none of them got pregnant. The Zhou Family secretly sent out people to check, but they couldn’t find anything. However, Zhou Hongwei was still young.

The key issue now was to rescue Zhou Hongwei. Otherwise, with his list of crimes, the man would be sentenced to years in prison. When he came out of prison, he would be too old for marriages and children.

Therefore, the three brothers had to do everything to help Zhou Hongwei. However, Old Master Zhou’s repeated warnings made Zhou Huaming’s heart chill. It meant that his father doubted his intentions.

Zhou Huaming told Zhou Jianguo. “Father, I know that. Even third brother knows that!” They still needed to depend on Zhou Hongwei in the future.

Zhou Guojian frowned. “How is the situation with your third brother?”

Zhou Huaming said truthfully, “He said they hadn’t found anything. Third brother has handled everything cleanly, and they won’t be able to find anything.”

“That’s good!” Zhou Guojian nodded his head in satisfaction. “Once his name is cleared, he will be able to rise faster in the political career. And that means Wei ‘Er will have a stronger backing.”

“Dad, you’re right!” Zhou Huaming replied.

“Therefore, this time, you need to hang in there!” Zhou Guojian reminded his eldest son again. “Even if they break your teeth and ruin your face, you have to stomach everything! We can take revenge after this thing blows over!”

“Yes, father.” Zhou Huaming said.

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As Xiao Lingyu drove her brother back to Taoyuan Village, Xiao Lingye looked at the newly paved road, and he sighed. “They sure work fast. After this road is done, we can travel between the village and town in ten minutes by car. That’s unimaginable in the past!”

Xiao Lingyu laughed. “That’s the power of money.” The road would be done in a few more days.

“Sis, Mom said that Mr. Gong wanted to build a house in our village. Has the house been built?” Xiao Lingye asked, “Since the road is almost done, the house must be done already.” It had been almost twenty days since Xiao Lingye last returned home, so he didn’t know many latest updates.

Xiao Lingyu explained, “The house is built already. It was done a few days ago. Even the renovation is done. Now they only need to let the place air for a few days. Then, once the furniture arrives, the owners can move in.” The house was built using non-chemical compounds, so people could move in immediately.

Xiao Lingye asked with interest, “Sis, is the house beautiful? I heard the rich like to live in villas with European styles. In the cities, a villa is worth tens of millions. However, it won’t cost that absurd amount in the countryside, right?”

Like his sister, Xiao Lingye had good results since he was young. He had gone to big cities to participate in various competitions. He knew more about capitalism than most villagers.

Xiao Lingyu said with a smile, “If you’re so curious, you can go take a look for yourself.”

To be honest, the house was quite ordinary. It was built with green bricks and glazed tiles and had a large courtyard. Of course, in the eyes of the people of Taoyuan Village, it was already very grand.

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“Tianhao, the roads have been repaired and the house built.” Li Yuanhang said, “After some time, we can send some furniture over, and then the old master can move in.”

Gong Tianhao frowned and asked curiously, “So fast? What about the paint smell and so on?”

Li Yuanhang expected this question because he had the same question earlier. He got the explanation from the local builders.

Li Yuanhang said with a smile, “Tianhao, we employ rural builders this time, and they use natural materials. For example, instead of plywood, they used solid wood cut directly from the forest. The house has a natural scent, and there is no need for a waiting period for the chemical stuff to aerate.”

Hearing Li Yuanhang's explanation, Gong Tianhao was expressionless and only nodded slightly. He said, "Buy a set of mahogany furniture and send it over. Also, prepare grandpa's things. We'll go take a look ourselves in a few days."

"Okay!" Li Yuanhang nodded and replied. Then, as if he thought of something, he asked, "Tianhao, have you discussed this with the old master?" They had prepared everything, but the person in question still didn't know about it.

Once Li Yuanhang asked that question, Gong Tianhao's expression froze.

Li Yuanhang asked suspiciously, "Tianhao, have you not talked to the old master about this?" This was not good. The old master was very stubborn. If he didn't want to move to Taoyuan Village, there was nothing they could do.

Gong Tianhao immediately stood up, picked up the suit on the hanger, slung it over his wrist, and prepared to leave.

Li Yuanhang immediately asked, "Tianhao, where are you going? There are still some documents that haven't been signed yet."

"I'm going home!" Gong Tianhao replied, "I'll come back to sign the documents in the afternoon!" The business contracts weren't more important than his grandfather.

Li Yuanhang hesitated and asked, "Tianhao, do you need me to go with you?"

The pair of grandfather and grandson had very similar temperaments. They were both stubborn and overbearing. They would share less than three sentences before getting into a big fight. Of course, it always ended with Gong Tianhao compromising.

If Li Yuanhang was here, at least he could act as a mediator.

Gong Tianhao stopped in his tracks and shook his head. "There's no need!"

When Gong Tianhao returned home, he saw his second grandfather's oldest son, Gong Jianjun, with his eldest wife, Bai Lianhua, and their eldest son. They were arguing with the guards at the courtyard gate.

Gong Jianjun was dressed in a straight black suit. He looked refined and polite, but he was black-hearted.

Bai Lianhua was tall and dressed like a noblewoman. She looked noble and elegant. Just like her name, she was a real white lotus.

Gong Jianjun and Bai Lianhua were from the second Gong Family branch. They were always jealous of the family's main branch. The main branch had few members but all the power.

The second branch wanted that power. The main branch only had one grandson, Gong Tianhao. Once this grandson was gone, the second branch would gain all the money and asset of the Gong Family. Therefore, when Gong Tianhao was young, he was already the target of many assassinations. Thankfully, Gong Tianhao was lucky and smart. He also had his grandfather's protection. Once Old Master Gong found out, he warned his second brother's family severely. "If something happened to my eldest grandson, all of you will die with him!"

Old Master Gong was former military, so he was strict and imposing.

The second branch finally stopped. Then, they switched policy. They would play to Old Master Gong's emotions. Old Master Gong's second brother often brought his children and grandchildren to come to accompany the old man. He had his grandchildren befriend Gong Tianhao.

This policy worked. Old Master Gong became closer to the second branch and would help them from time to time.

However, the second branch had never ceased to try to consume the Gong Family. Thankfully, they knew Old Master Gong's bottom line. As long as it didn't affect Gong Tianhao's safety, Old Master Gong would give them whatever they wanted.

There were changes when Gong Tianhao came of age and assumed power.

Gong Jianjun had always wanted his son, Gong Tianlong, to replace Gong Tianhao and become the only Young Master Gong.

At this moment, they were barred outside the courtyard.

Bai Lianhua was so anxious that her face was flushed red. She pointed at the guards and cursed loudly, "Do you know who I am? I am the eldest daughter-in-law of the Gong family and the only mistress of the Gong family. I want to go and meet Old Master Gong. How dare you stop us? When I see the Old Master, I'll have him fire all of you!"

The two guards stood at the gate, holding guns. No matter what Gong Jianjun or Bai Lianhua said, they didn't move. However, once Gong Jianjun or Bai Lianhua took a step forward, the guns would be pointed at them. Gong Jianjun wanted to try his luck. The guards fired. The first shot was a warning. However, it scared Gong Jianjun and Bai Lianhua so much that they wobbled to the ground. They moved away and scolded and insulted the guards from a distance. The guards were unfazed.

"Beep, Beep..."

When Gong Jianjun and Bai Lianhua heard the car honk, they were shocked. When they saw that it was Gong Tianhao's car, they immediately took a few steps back. Their expressions changed slightly.

"Eldest young master!" The two guards saluted Gong Tianhao and opened the gate.

Gong Tianhao rolled down the car window. His deep dark eyes looked at Gong Jianjun and Bai Lianhua. There was no warmth in them.

He warned them directly, "Gong Jianjun, Bai Lianhua, if I see you guys making a scene outside my house again, the Bai Corporation will suffer more than a shake."

Bai Lianhua was shocked and said in surprise, "It's you! You are the one behind the chaos at the Bai Corporation!" She was angry and scolded, "Gong Tianhao, how can you do this? Do you know how much effort my family has used to build up the company? They almost lost everything because of you. Do you want the Bai Family to go bankrupt?"

"Bingo!" Gong Tianhao smiled.

Bai Lianhua was stunned. Then, her face turned white and red. She was angry and anxious. Gong Tianhao couldn't be clearer.

She roared, "How dare you! The old man will punish you once he finds out!"

Gong Tianhao glared fiendishly at her, which shut her up nicely. "Bai Lianhua, I better not hear your shrieking at this place again." Then, he drove away.

The two were left behind stomping angrily.