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Chapter 531 Losing Everything

“Uh, this...” Nan Xing wished not to reply to that question, so he changed the topic. “The weather’s quite nice today. Why don’t we take a stroll?”

“It’s cold and raining, but you’re telling me that the weather is nice? Are you blind? You’re just trying to avoid answering me, aren’t you?”

“No, it’s just that...”

“I get it. You don’t like me. You’re just toying with me, you b*stard,” Ouyang Qing suddenly cursed out.

Ouyang Qing placed much importance on her image, but now, she could not care less.

Upon hearing her curse at him, Nan Xing became annoyed. I can’t believe you’re cursing at me! If not for my brother asking me to tolerate you, I’d have slapped you by now!

Left without a choice, Nan Xing muttered, “Of course I like you. You’re so pretty. Who wouldn’t like you?”

He was absolutely reluctant, for he really did not like her.

“Good. You have to put up the notice in the top three media companies in Flower City for this. The words you use should be as exaggerated as possible. Apologize to me and say that you love me. You can’t hide away after putting up the announcement. You have to show yourself in public, so the reporters would have the chance to interview you, and that way, you’ll be able to say that you love me on camera. Only then will the others believe you were the one to pay for the notice. In other words, make this as high profile as possible,” Ouyang Qing summarized.

“But I don’t like being high profile...” Nan Xing mumbled weakly.

“You’re always keeping a high profile, but now you’re telling me you don’t like having a high profile? So you’re just reluctant to do this, aren’t you? You’re not the only one, though, because I’m reluctant to.” Ouyang Qing laughed.

Nan Xing then sneered. “If you’re reluctant to do this, then why have you called me here? You’ve even made us meet up in such a remote place as if you’re going to throw yourself at me at any time. I’d say you’re eager to do this. How can you say that you’re reluctant?”

“Scram out of the car right now!” she snarled.

“Do you think I want to spend another second in here?”

Nan Xing then got out and stormed toward his car.

Why should I bear the brunt of your horrible temper? You're the one doing all these things, but you're asking me to announce to the world that I'm courting you? Dream on!

However, after getting into his car, he thought about what Nan Chen had said again.

If I've crossed Ouyang Qing, and she's determined to make things troublesome, what then? I've told Chen that I'm going to settle this thing. At the very least, temporarily settle it.

Thus, without a choice, he tamped down his anger and walked back to her car.

Truthfully, Ouyang Qing was regretting her words when she saw Nan Xing storm off.

Nan Xing was her only hope for turning the tables, and yet, her arrogant attitude had driven him away. What am I going to do now?

Right as she was panicking and wondering if she should go after him to get him back, Nan Xing returned.

Instantly, joy danced in her heart, and she quickly wound down the window. “Let's have another talk.”

Hearing that, Nan Xing realized she was the kind he had to be firm with.

If he were any nicer to her, she would just become more and more haughty.

“There's nothing we can talk about. I won't do the things you said earlier,” Nan Xing insisted.

“How would you know you can't do it unless you have a talk with me? I swear I won't make you do such a high-profile act anymore. Come into the car first. Someone might sneak a photo of us if you stay out there,” Ouyang Qing softly said.

Her tone was a stark contrast to her earlier tone.

It was only then Nan Xing went back into the car. The moment he did, Ouyang Qing leaned closer to him and stated, “All you do is be mean to me. What kind of man are you to bully a girl?”

“When did I bully you? You're clearly the one bullying me. You drugged me, and you tried to forcibly bed me. Then the next second, you tried to kick me out. Now, you're asking me to make a public announcement. Do you know my grandfather has always

been one to keep a low profile? He won't let me do this. How am I going to explain this to him if I were to do what you're requesting? If he's angry, there will be dire consequences. Moreover, Chen won't agree with me doing this. Therefore, even if I have to make a public confession, I have to discuss the matter with my family members first."

Finally, Nan Xing had thought of a better excuse to reject Ouyang Qing.

"All right, I understand where you're coming from. We can make things less theatrically, but at the very least, you have to let the public know that we're dating."

"Dating?"

"That's right. Didn't you say you like me? Since those things have happened, of course we have to be dating. You can't possibly be thinking of marrying me right away, right? That's not something to be rushed. We've got to spend some time with each other first," Ouyang Qing uttered.

Keep dreaming, you woman!

Contrasting his thoughts, Nan Xing replied, "Yes, yes. It's not something to be rushed. We have to take this slow."

"So, now..."

"Now? The car isn't a good place, so let's not?" Nan Xing gasped.

"What are you thinking about? I was asking where we should go now. Let's have a meal. Then, we'll get a few reporters we're familiar with and have them take a few photos of us to post on the internet. The public will then find out that we're dating, and that way, I will be getting less pressure."

Nan Xing did not want to agree to that, but he could not possibly reject everything she said, so he nodded.

Just as they were about to drive off, someone ran over to them.

It took Nan Xing a while to identify the somewhat familiar face—Ouyang Qi.

As it turned out, Ouyang Qi never left; he had been hiding a distance away from them the entire time.

Opening the car door, Ouyang Qi stared at Nan Xing for a while before asking, "Are you the third or the fourth child?"

"Make a guess," Nan Xing responded with a smile.

“You’re the fourth one. The third one doesn’t smile.”

Ouyang Qi had gotten down most of the Nan brothers’ characters by then.

“I guess so. What do you want? Why are you here? Are you here with your sister to force people into a marriage?” Nan Xing questioned.

“Force people into a marriage? Why do you make it sound so horrendous?” Ouyang Qi snapped.

“Ugh... Forget it. Let’s not talk about it anymore.”

“Hand it over. Bank transfer or by card?” Ouyang Qi then stuck out his hand.

“What? Hand what over?” Nan Xing was taken aback by the other man’s abrupt statement.

“Money. I don’t want much, just the same as her offer. Two hundred thousand,” Ouyang Qi replied.

“What the heck? You’re selling your little sister for such a cheap price?” Nan Xing cried out.

Not liking what he was hearing, Ouyang Qi yelled, “Another hundred thousand for that! Now it’s three hundred thousand!”

Ouyang Qing then shouted at her brother, “Why are you causing trouble? Why haven’t you left yet? Get lost!”

“This has nothing to do with you. If he wants to be with you, then he has to solve my financial crisis first. The two hundred thousand you’ve given to me isn’t enough at all. You need to give me more. If he doesn’t, then I’ll tell Dad you didn’t go overseas. Not only have you not gone overseas, but you’re even secretly dating this boy. That way, you won’t be able to get together with him anymore, and you’ll have to go overseas. Money isn’t something he’s lacking. Three hundred thousand for him is a paltry amount. All he needs to do is to hand it over, and this matter can be resolved peacefully. Moreover, how are we supposed to be a family in the future if he won’t even part with three hundred thousand?”

Ouyang Qi had said everything so passionately, and somehow, his words seemed to make sense.

Nan Xing was impressed, albeit in a negative way.

What difference is this from a robbery? The siblings are ganging up together to rob me. Ouyang Qing is after me, and Ouyang Qi is after my money. I’m the fourth son of the

Nan family, but I have to lose both myself and my money? Am I going to lose everything? No way!

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Chapter 532 It Is All Right

“So are you going to hand it over or not?” Ouyang Qi was starting to get impatient.

Right then, Nan Xing asked, “You’re the Ouyang family’s only son. Why would you need to lower yourself and ask me for three hundred thousand?”

“I’m not lowering myself! My dad canceled my card. I want the money to spend, so who am I supposed to ask if not from the two of you?” Ouyang Qi retorted.

“So you’re asking for the money from me? What if I say no?”

“Then I’ll call my dad right away and tell him that Ouyang Qing is still in the country. He’ll be furious, and he’ll definitely tell her to leave the country right away. If that happens, the two of you won’t be able to be together anymore. You’ll be forced to separate. Isn’t that terrible?”

Upon hearing that, Nan Xing nearly leaped in joy. That was exactly what he wanted.

If Ouyang Qing were to leave the country, he would not need to pretend to be dating her. That would be an even better choice than what they had agreed on.

“You want three hundred thousand?” Nan Xing asked as he looked at Ouyang Qi.

“If you have the money, I don’t mind getting a little more. At most, I’ll pay you back the extra a while later,” Ouyang Qi replied.

Then, Nan Xing said, “I won’t give you anything.”

“What?”

“I said, I won’t give you anything at all! Keep dreaming.”

“Are you that stingy? You’re such a miser, but you’re thinking of dating my sister?” Ouyang Qi spat.

Nan Xing raised a brow at that.

She’s the one trying to date me! Also, since she’s trying to date me, why are you asking me for money? You’re quite the siblings, aren’t you?

“Nope. I won’t give you anything at all. You can do whatever you like.”

Ouyang Qi then turned to his sister. “Did you hear that? This guy won’t even give me three hundred thousand, but you still want to be with him? What kind of life will you have if you’re with someone like him?”

“I don’t want you sticking your nose into my business!” Ouyang Qing snapped.

“It’s not like I want to. I’m just here for the money. I need money!” Ouyang Qi returned loudly.

“Get lost! Stop embarrassing me here!” By then, Ouyang Qing was absolutely embarrassed by him.

“You’re the embarrassing one. You failed to court Nan Chen, then now you’re—”

“Shut up! Nan Xing, get rid of this person right now. I don’t want to see him!” Ouyang Qing bellowed.

“I can’t do that. This is your brother. I can’t do anything to him. Why don’t I leave the two of you to have a private chat?” Nan Xing wanted to take the opportunity to leave as quickly as possible.

“No! We haven’t talked everything through yet. Ouyang Qi, get lost right now! I don’t want to see you in my line of sight,” Ouyang Qing snapped.

“I don’t want to see you too. Give me the money. Once you give me the money, I’ll make myself scarce right away. I won’t third-wheel anymore. It’s just three hundred thousand. All you need to do is to give that to me. Why are you so stingy?” Ouyang Qi asked with a frown.

All he really wanted was some money and nothing else.

As far as he knew, three hundred thousand was but a small amount for the two of them.

Hence, he thought he would be able to get the money easily. Yet, to his surprise, Nan Xing rejected him again.

“I don’t have the money. You can do whatever you like, and no matter what you do, I still won’t give it to you,” Nan Xing insisted.

“All right, then, I’ll call my dad now.” With that said, Ouyang Qi took out his phone.

“You’re shameless! I’ll give you the money.”

Left with no options, Ouyang Qing took out her bag and fished out a card.

“Give me the card I gave to you earlier. I’ll give this one to you.”

“How much is in the card you now have?” Ouyang Qi queried, staring at the card in Ouyang Qing’s hands.

“There’s more in this card, so give me the one I gave you earlier.”

“Why don’t you give me both? I won’t spend recklessly. Don’t worry.”

“I can’t feel at ease if I do that! So give me the one you have now.”

Ouyang Qing is one of a kind too. Does she really have to be so petty with her brother over two hundred thousand? Nan Xing thought, unable to watch their interaction anymore.

However, he did not want the matter to resolve so easily. The more intense their conflict was, the better it was for him.

“You can’t give him the card. If he’s so anxious to get the money, he must be up to no good. If you give it to him, and if he does anything bad, won’t your dad blame you for it later?” Nan Xing stopped Ouyang Qing.

His words infuriated Ouyang Qi. You brat. It’s one thing for you not to give me any penny, but you’re even stopping my sister from giving me money?

“What does this have to do with you? Shut up!”

“Oh? Do you hear yourself? You’re the one who asked for money from me. I didn’t give anything to you, so you asked your sister instead. This started with me, so how can this have nothing to do with me? This money can’t be yours. You can do whatever you like. Honestly, I’ve never come across a man as shameless as you. You’re really an embarrassment.”

Nan Xing had deliberately worded his words into terrible ones, for he aimed to make Ouyang Qi enraged.

As long as Ouyang Qi was livid, he would then sabotage Nan Xing’s supposed relationship with Ouyang Qing. Ouyang Qi would then have their father force Ouyang Qing out of the country, and Nan Xing would not need to deal with her anymore.

However, Ouyang Qi was not one to be easily enraged. He was already a bad character himself, so the verbal attacks were nothing to him.

The awful words had a limited effect on him. What he was most concerned about was still the money.

“All right. I’ll call my dad right now to tell him you’re sneakily on a date here.” Ouyang Qi then pretended to make a call.

“Take it!”

Panicking, Ouyang Qing no longer cared about her previous card and threw the other card at her brother.

Instantly, disappointment washed across Nan Xing. Oh, no. My plan failed.

Finally getting the card he wanted, Ouyang Qi beamed.

“That’s more like it. Enjoy your time, then. I’m going to leave now.”

Nevertheless, Ouyang Qi mulled over what Nan Xing had said and turned to jab a finger at Nan Xing. “I finally found out what kind of person you are now. You’re way too stingy. There’s no way we can click in the future.”

“Well, that’s good, then,” Nan Xing responded with a smile. “I don’t want to be on good terms with you, anyway.”

“That’s enough. Ignore him. He’s nothing but a fool,” Ouyang Qing interjected.

“You’re already siding an outsider before you even marry him? You’re an ingrate!” Ouyang Qi hissed.

“You’ve already gotten the money, so scram! Do you really need to spit out all this nonsense?” Ouyang Qing growled.

“Bye. I’ll call you when I’ve spent them all.” Ouyang Qi waved and left.

At that moment, Nan Xing was sobbing internally. He’s gone? That means I have to deal with her again!

“Let’s go. It’s time for lunch now, so come with me for a meal. Don’t you dare think of taking me to a hotel because we aren’t at that stage yet,” Ouyang Qing stated.

At that, Nan Xing turned speechless. Please! I don’t even want to take you to the hotel. When did I ever say that? That’s what you want, not me.

Despite his thoughts, he squeezed out, “No need to rush. Let’s take it slow.”

“All right, let’s go eat now. Find a nice restaurant, and I’ll get the reporters to come to take sneak shots of us.” Ouyang Qing then took out her phone.

“We’re going to announce to the public today? Are we really in such a rush?”

“Of course. I’m under great pressure right now, so I have to get myself out of this situation as soon as possible. I can’t stand this anymore.”

“Okay, then,” mumbled Nan Xing.

This is just a scandal. It’s fine if I have another one since she’s not the only one who has a scandal with me.

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Chapter 533 Enlightened

As Ouyang Qing had wanted, the scandal between her and Nan Xing spread across the people.

It was because the reporters had “sneakily” taken photos of the two of them having a meal together and being intimate.

After that, some people said that what had happened earlier was a misunderstanding.

They said that Nan Xing and Ouyang Qing were dating, so there was nothing wrong with them having a lover’s spat.

Just as Ouyang Qing thought she would be able to settle the matter, another kind of comment appeared on the internet again.

A netizen commented that Ouyang Qing had gone to Nan Xing in hopes of getting back on good terms with the man to clear her name.

However, Nan Xing was unwilling to do that. Hence, Ouyang Qing had resorted to threatening Nan Xing to comply with her request. If he did not agree with her, she would sue him for harassment. Not wanting any trouble, Nan Xing had no choice but to agree to date her.

That was something an ordinary citizen posted on a discreet website, but soon, that post began trending.

Once again, the netizens cursed Ouyang Qing and called her a shameless b*tch.

Essentially, the netizens had depleted their dictionary of curse words, and the cursing she received was much worse than the previous time.

At that, Ouyang Qing could only shed tears in silence. She did not know who was slandering her, for she never said she was going to sue Nan Xing.

At Orchid Club, Ouyang Duo did not strike her this time. Instead, he stared at her in utter disappointment.

Ouyang Qing was crying the entire time, but her tears were more or less forced out.

She was not upset; she was furious and reluctant to admit defeat.

Ouyang Qing was only crying to gain her father's sympathy. It was so that he would let her stay and not force her to leave.

Before Ouyang Duo could begin berating her, Ouyang Qing explained, "I didn't leave because Nan Xing invited me, and when he did, I thought about what you said about marrying into the Nan family, Dad. That's why I wanted to use the opportunity to develop my relationship with Nan Xing to realize your aim."

Ouyang Qing knew her father was the kind who paid most attention to the pros and cons of a matter. As long as she told him the benefits of her action, the chances of her persuading Ouyang Duo would then greatly increase.

"Nan Xing was the one who invited you out?" Ouyang Duo asked.

"That's right. Dad, I've already packed my things and was about to leave. However, he invited me, and I wanted to find out what he was going to tell me."

"What did he say, then?" Ouyang Duo questioned.

"He told me about his interest in me. To be honest, he said something similar in the past, but I didn't pay that much attention to that back then."

"So you've decided to take a step back and get together with Nan Xing now?"

As his daughter had expected, Ouyang Duo was a man who cared only for the pros and cons of a matter. When he heard her actions were beneficial to his plan, his interest was piqued, and his rage dissipated a bit.

"I think Nan Xing is a good choice. He has potential, and he's part of the Nan family. Moreover, he has equal chances of inheriting the family assets; there's a chance of him becoming the head of the Nan family. Furthermore, in comparison with Nan Chen, Nan Xing will be easier to control," Ouyang Qing continued.

Those words were the exact words Ouyang Duo wanted to hear.

The entire time, Ouyang Duo wanted to control Nan Chen, but he realized that was a difficult feat to achieve.

Nan Chen was far too strong. At the start, Ouyang Duo thought of him as a wolf, but later on, he realized the younger man was actually a lion.

It was too difficult to tame a lion, and that was why that matter had always been a major headache for Ouyang Duo.

However, Ouyang Qing's words enlightened him.

She's right. Nan Xing and Nan Chen are the same. If we have control over Nan Xing and use him to replace Nan Chen, won't we have the Nan family in our hands, then? Why didn't I think of this earlier?

The moment Ouyang Qing saw the changes in her father's expression, she knew he was interested.

"Nan Chen is no simple man. Even if I marry him, it's close to impossible to control him. Even if I manage to do it in the end, I would have spent a lot of time and effort on it. Moreover, emerging victorious in this isn't guaranteed. On the other hand, Nan Xing is a simple-minded man. If Nan Chen disappears while Nan Xing is within our control, we can put Nan Xing on the throne. That way, he would be the head of the Nan family. Moreover, Bai Hua has always been on my side, and Nan Zhiyuan listens to his wife. By then, they'll all be on our side. We won't need to worry about whether or not we'll be able to control the Nan family," Ouyang Qing went on.

Ouyang Duo did not speak, but his eyes lit up brighter.

"How is your relationship with Nan Xing now?" Ouyang Duo queried.

At that, Ouyang Qing froze. Until now, nothing but a scandal had happened between her and Nan Xing.

"He's currently courting me, but I haven't said yes yet," Ouyang Qing replied.

Hearing that, Ouyang Duo nodded in approval. "Don't say yes so easily, or else he'll think that you're an easy person. Still, you can't be too distant from him because young people nowadays change their minds quickly. Keeping an appropriate distance from him is very important. What about this? Make some arrangements. I'd like to meet with Nan Xing."

"You want to meet him? What are you planning to tell him?" Ouyang Qing asked, surprised by his words.

"You're still young, so you don't have a good judge of people's characters. I'm going to meet him and find out what's on his mind. Nan Xing isn't the same as his brother. He's a playboy. You have to be careful and not be fooled by him," Ouyang Duo worriedly remarked.

Upon hearing his words, Ouyang Qing sneered. "Don't worry about that, Dad. With that brain of his, he should thank his lucky stars that I haven't fooled him yet. There's no way he'll be able to fool me. You've said it too. He's just a playboy. The easiest kind of people to deal with in this world is a playboy."

As Nan Xing had always presented himself as a weak character around Ouyang Qing, she had underestimated him.

However, being underestimated, in certain circumstances, was a good thing, as there were things he could do.

"No. I still don't feel at ease. Tell him he has to go through me first if he really wants to be with you. Have him arrange for a time to meet me," Ouyang Duo insisted.

With that, Ouyang Qing had no choice but to say, "All right. I'll tell him about it."

While Ouyang Qing was cursed non-stop by netizens, the movie, I Am You, had started filming again.

Although Ning Ran had rejected him a few times, Nan Chen still insisted on having the driver send Ning Ran to the film site in his Rolls-Royce.

The filming would only be in Flower City for a short while. After that, they would be heading southwest for more outdoor scenes.

However, wanting to keep a low profile, Ning Ran asked the driver to park the car a far distance away so that she could walk to the filming site instead.

Nevertheless, Nan Chen's car was too eye-catching, and the people on the production team still spotted it.

"Wow, look at that. She was sent here in a Rolls-Royce. How impressive."

"Indeed. She's one of Chen's people, and she's particularly good at sleeping with others. She managed to sleep with Nan Chen and even give birth to their kids. Now, she's living the good life!"

"So that's how she climbed up the ranks. That's not a great way, is it?"

Those people would not dare to voice those things in front of Ning Ran, but jealousy was a green-eyed monster that made them talk bad about her behind her back.

"What are you talking about? Are you seriously talking bad about someone behind their back?"

The one who stood up for Ning Ran was none other than Tang Jing.

She had chosen the perfect timing to say that—when Ning Ran was close. That way, those people would not dare to say anything else.

At the same time, Ning Ran would be able to encounter her standing up against the extras for her and realize that she was on Ning Ran's side.

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Chapter 534 Strong Presence

By then, how the others thought that Ning Ran was good at sleeping with others and bearing children to get a better life was no longer anything new to Ning Ran.

Every time there was any news about her, the people on the internet would say the exact same thing. Moreover, those people were not the minority.

Never mind on the internet, there would be people who would say those things offline as well.

Nonetheless, it was not to say that she was unfazed by those things.

Even if she was, there was nothing she could do about it. Their mouths were not hers, and there was no way she could stop them from saying what was on their minds.

Therefore, all she could do was not kick up a big fuss over those matters, or else she would be the only one furious.

However, when those people heard what Tang Jing had said, they instantly retorted, "It's not like we're talking about you. This is none of your business."

"You're talking bad about Ding, so you're picking a bone with me!" Tang Jing responded.

Tang Jing's aim was to make things more serious than it was to make Ding Mi join her.

As long as Ning Ran were to join in, those extras would not dare to cross her.

For them to talk behind her back meant that they were fearful of Ning Ran. They did not have the courage to criticize Ning Ran in her face.

Indeed, once they spotted Ning Ran coming toward them, they fell silent.

"Ding, you're here," Tang Jing greeted Ning Ran.

"Hi," Ning Ran greeted back with a smile. "What are you all talking about?"

“Some people just keep talking bad about others behind their back. I can’t stand it anymore, so I finally said something about it,” Tang Jing explained.

Meanwhile, those people who had been commenting about Ning Ran dared not say anything.

“What did they say?” Ning Ran asked, still smiling.

“Uh…” Tang Jing was stumped.

“Why don’t you tell me about it? I’m rather curious,” Ning Ran continued.

“Forget it. Some people were deliberately slandering you. Don’t mind them, Ding.”

Despite her words, Ning Ran went on, “Did someone say that I only got a role in the movie because of the Nan family again? Are they talking about me climbing up the social hierarchy with dirty tricks again?”

That stumped Tang Jing even more. She never thought that Ning Ran would initiate such an awkward topic herself, so she did not know how to respond to her.

“They’re all saying it’s my fault—that I’m to blame for having done that with Nan Chen and to have a child with him. However, you can’t put all the blame on me. I mean, it takes two to make a child, right? Moreover, I didn’t want Nan Chen to take such good care of me, but he insisted on giving me a chance to be in a show. There’s nothing I can do about that, right? Of course, we can’t blame this on the gossip mongers either. They, too, want to have a child with Nan Chen and get treated as nicely as Nan Chen does with me. Nevertheless, they don’t have that opportunity, so they have no choice but to feel jealous. Yet, despite their jealousy, there’s nothing they can do. What then?” Ning Ran asked Tang Jing.

Vaguely knowing what Ning Ran was trying to do, Tang Jing chimed in, “That’s when they’ll talk mean things behind someone’s back.”

Ning Ran nodded with a smile. “That’s right. They can only do that. So, do you think that I’ll mind that? They’re talking about the truth; they’re not accusing me of anything. It’s true that I’ve gotten the main role with the Nan family’s help. Others wanted it but failed. Yet, I got it, so what’s wrong with letting them grumble a little?”

At that, Tang Jing was at a loss for words again.

She, like the others, was jealous of her as well.

At that very moment, she was unsure if Ning Ran’s words were meant for the extras or for her.

“Ding, you’re really a big-hearted woman. You’re right. There’s no point to hold them accountable for this,” Tang Jing agreed.

“I don’t mind, but I’m scared that Nan Chen would of this. I’m sure you’re aware as well. He doesn’t have the best of tempers. He’s too used to being a young master of a prestigious family, so his tolerance for most things is a little low. It’ll be troublesome if he takes certain action after hearing some people mumbling away about certain matters. Therefore, you have to keep this a secret from Nan Chen. Don’t make him mad, or things will get messy soon. If they get off light, they won’t be able to stay in the production team. If they don’t, I’m afraid they won’t be able to stay in this industry anymore,” Ning Ran said.

“Of course, of course. However, if some people are still adamant about stirring up troubles, I’m afraid I won’t be able to stop myself from telling Sir Chen about it,” Tang Jing responded.

Immediately, the ones who had been talking bad about Ning Ran were frightened out of their wits.

Nan Chen was the main investor of the movie, and they knew that.

Crossing Nan Chen would mean the end of their careers.

In seconds, the entire place had fallen silent.

Of course, Ning Ran was not going to insist on the topic. Upon noticing that things had turned out the way she wanted them to, she dropped the topic and headed toward the dressing room.

In the meantime, Tang Jing spared another glance at the extras before scoffing and leaving.

At that moment, Tang Jing felt the thrill of lording over someone to the point they were silent.

She enjoyed that feeling, but unfortunately, only Ning Ran could be that domineering; she could not.

Therefore, she had to keep climbing up the ranks. Tang Jing wanted to stand above the others and look down upon them all.

Ning Ran’s right. Those people are jealous that she has a child with Nan Chen because they didn’t get the chance to do the same.

Tang Jing desired a chance like that too. She wanted to bear a child for the Nan family as well.

However, it was impossible for her to go for Nan Chen anymore. The only chance for her now was to go after Nan Xing.

Hence, she was going to use Ouyang Qing to get to know Nan Xing and create an opportunity for herself.

Truthfully, Tang Jing was the one who had posted the comments about Ouyang Qing wanting to sue Nan Xing for harassment. She was the one who made everyone curse at Ouyang Qing.

What Tang Jing was going to do was to pretend to match-make Ouyang Qing and Nan Xing on the surface while sowing discord between the pair from the shadows to prevent them from actually getting together.

While she sowed discord between the two of them, she would get more chances to come into contact with Nan Xing and make the man interested in her.

Tang Jing was certain that, one day, she would become part of the Nan family and bear a child for the said family as Ning Ran did.

On the other side, right as Ning Ran was about to enter the dressing room, she heard a commotion outside.

Someone had arrived, and it was definitely someone important. Otherwise, the people would not have made such noise.

Then, Ning Ran saw the director walking over with an attractive man.

Although Ning Ran was in the entertainment industry, she had yet to reach the core of the industry. Hence, there were many big shots in there that she did not know.

However, she knew who that handsome man was.

He was Huang Zichao, the man of many women's dreams.

He had received the prestigious Mount Gold Awards, and he had later entered Hollywood. Moreover, he had gotten a major award for his first movie, and now, he was an international celebrity.

The difference between him and Zheng Lunlun was that Huang Zichao presented himself as a mature man. He did not possess the soft looks that Zheng Lunlun had, but he was a masculine and charming man.

In the past, most of his fans would be mature women. However, now that mature men were the trend, many girls liked his style as well.

Because of that, he became a popular and capable individual.

“Wow, he’s so handsome! He’s way hotter than he is on television!”

“He’s so manly, and he has such a strong presence. No wonder he’s a great actor!”

An actor like Huang Zichao would have fangirls—both young and old—everywhere.

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Chapter 535 Divine Beauty

As much as Ning Ran admired Huang Zichao’s good looks, she was anything but dazzled by him. How could she, when she had gotten used to being around handsome men every day?

With the likes of the Nan family brothers and Zheng Lunlun surrounding her, it’d take a lot more than just physical attractiveness to impress her.

Just as Ning Ran turned to get back to work, a deep male voice suddenly called out to her.

“Ms. Ding!”

To her surprise, Huang Zichao was hurriedly making his way toward her.

Since he had taken the initiative to strike up a conversation, Ning Ran had no choice but to stay and greet him.

Meanwhile, Huang Zichao never once took his gaze off Ning Ran.

She had the most delicate features, supple skin, and curves in all the right places. It was the kind of beauty that one wouldn’t usually find in the entertainment industry.

She was so effortlessly graceful and elegant, and there was just no hiding how gorgeous she was.

For a moment, Huang Zichao even found himself in a daze.

Despite having worked with plenty of sexy, beautiful actresses throughout his illustrious acting career, he realized that none of them could measure up to Ning Ran.

Is she a goddess? Has she come to earth to bless me with her divine beauty?

“I’ve watched The Sound of Thunder 2, and I must say, you’re even prettier in person!” Huang Zichao complimented.

Even though a compliment from a famous actor was always something to be proud of, Ning Ran couldn't help but feel a tinge of embarrassment.

"Thank you," she replied, albeit a little awkwardly.

"I'm Huang Zichao. It's a pleasure to be filming with you."

Ning Ran smiled and shook his hand politely. "I'm Ding Mi."

"Let's do our best for this film."

"Yes. I'll be in your care."

"Hey, I'll also be learning a lot from you. Your acting's brilliant. I'm a big fan!" Huang Zichao once again complimented.

"Oh, you're too kind. You're the one with the Best Actor award, so I should be learning from you."

"You'll get the award too, mark my words. I have faith in your talent."

Just then, the director walked up to them. "Wow, look how good the two of you are together! With your participation in this film, there's no doubt it'd become the highest-grossing film of the year!"

After exchanging the usual pleasantries, both actors left to get into their costumes and makeup.

Later, the director decided to start the camera rolling with a scene between Ning Ran and Huang Zichao so they could set an example for the rest of the cast.

Both had superb acting skills and played their roles to their heart's content.

Ning Ran, especially, was elated to be acting alongside someone so good at their craft.

The scene was about Ning Ran's character finding out that her child had an incurable disease. Subsequently, she decided to quit her job so she could go overseas to seek a cure.

Huang Zichao, who played her husband, was unfortunately against the idea. To him, there wasn't a point in going overseas since it was near impossible to find a successful treatment anywhere in the world.

Besides, life had to go on. Ditching her job and losing a stable income would only plunge their family into dire straits.

Just like that, the once loving couple got into a heated argument.

However, instead of having their characters scream at each other, Ning Ran and Huang Zichao delivered their lines calmly. Their eyes and expressions were so full of despair that a suffocating silence befell the set.

Everyone was at a loss for words, with some of the costars even finding themselves moved to tears.

Eventually, Huang Zichao admitted his mistake and hugged his wife tightly.

At that point, the director was supposed to end the scene, but he was so engrossed in Ning Ran and Huang Zichao's acting that it completely slipped his mind.

The two actors had no choice but to remain hugging, not daring to move a muscle.

Alas, Nan Chen, who had just arrived, saw it all.

From his point of view, the scene had long ended, yet Huang Zichao refused to let Ning Ran out of his embrace.

What infuriated him the most, though, was seeing Ning Ran unbothered by the interaction.

Ridiculous! How long do they intend to continue hugging? Is this even still acting?

"Cut!" Nan Chen shouted, unable to stand it any longer.

It was only then that the director got out of his daze and chimed in, "Cut! Oh, my goodness, that was amazing! Perfect!"

With that, Huang Zichao finally let go of Ning Ran.

Despite being somewhat annoyed at being hugged for so long, Ning Ran was thankful that Huang Zichao remained professional and didn't cross any boundaries.

"Scrape this scene."

The director turned around upon hearing that, only to meet the gaze of Nan Chen.

"Sir Chen! When did you get here? I didn't even realize."

"Why didn't you end the scene?" Nan Chen asked coldly.

"Their acting was so sublime that I forgot all about it. I'll be more mindful of that in the future!"

"I don't want this scene. It's not good."

"Huh?" the director mumbled as his eyes widened in shock.

Is this not good enough? Of all the shows I've directed, this is the first time I've seen two actors hit it off so well in their first scene. How much better can it get?

"Stop hemming and hawing. Haven't I made myself clear?" Nan Chen replied. "Anyway, why have you started filming when I haven't seen the new script?"

"I-I sent it to you. But your assistant said you were too busy to read it and told us to proceed with the filming—"

"Director, are we still filming?" Huang Zichao suddenly interrupted before realizing Nan Chen was there.

Even though the two men had never met in person before, Huang Zichao had seen enough of Nan Chen in the news to recognize him.

"Pause all the scenes with the female lead and film the rest first," Nan Chen answered.

"You must be Mr. Nan, the main investor funding this film. It's a pleasure to meet you!" Huang Zichao exclaimed as he extended his hand.

Alas, Nan Chen only nodded in response.

It wasn't that he looked down on actors, but the mere thought of seeing Huang Zichao hug Ning Ran made him want to punch the daylight out of the man.

As such, a polite nod was the best Nan Chen could do.

"This is Sir Chen," the director introduced. "And our famous actor here is Huang Zichao, who just came back from Hollywood."

Nan Chen completely ignored him and strode right up to Ning Ran. "You're done filming for the day."

Ning Ran frowned, annoyed at how unreasonable Nan Chen was. He's only one of the investors! What gives him the right to come on set and order the professionals around? At this rate, how are we going to continue filming?

Logically speaking, investors should only be in charge of the finances and not meddle in the other aspects of a film.

If any Tom, Dick, or Harry could step in to give orders to the director and actors, they'd be disrespecting the art and professionals. The quality of the film, without a doubt, would also be affected.

"Hold on, not even the director has agreed to it. Can you not be like this?" Ning Ran snapped.

"Oh, I have nothing to add," the director quickly replied, not wanting to offend Nan Chen. "You can leave first. It's all right."

"Does this mean filming has stopped? I want to know why, though. Was our acting not up to par?" Huang Zichao asked, bitterly upset at the turn of events.

Nan Chen, who was still annoyed, shot him a glare. "Yes. Your acting's terrible."

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Chapter 536 Nothing More Nothing Less

"Oh, my acting's bad? In that case, do you have any pointers for me, Mr. Nan?" Huang Zichao was a big shot and not a two-bit actor who would cower in the face of a film investor.

With his career currently on the crest of a wave, he had no lack of movie deals that he could pick and choose. In other words, he had the freedom to take on films that paid the highest and had the best scripts.

With that, Huang Zichao had no fear for Nan Chen.

Worse come to worst, I'll ditch this film. There are plenty of other big projects waiting for me, anyway. Why stay and be insulted when I can easily earn my money elsewhere?

Nan Chen glanced at Huang Zichao.

The rest of the world might find Huang Zichao devilishly handsome, but Nan Chen found him a complete eyesore.

"Everything about your acting is bad," Nan Chen said coldly.

This time, it was Huang Zichao's turn to be stunned silent. Huh? That's such a prejudiced opinion. My acting skills are widely recognized, so who is he to say otherwise? Besides, he's just bashing me instead of giving me specific pointers! That's just unreasonable!

"Mr. Nan, are you doubting my acting prowess?" Huang Zichao asked.

“Yes.”

Ning Ran started to panic. With the way things were playing out, it wouldn't take long before everything took a turn for the worse.

Nan Chen, as the key investor, had nothing to fear.

But the same couldn't be said for Ning Ran, who still had to continue working with the production team.

If an internal conflict arose again because of Nan Chen, there was no question that the team would label her as a walking disaster.

With that in mind, Ning Ran suddenly pulled Nan Chen away. “Let's talk outside!”

Given Ning Ran's physique, it was near impossible to budge someone as strong as Nan Chen.

However, if he didn't leave with her, they'd only end up arguing in public, which was something he absolutely hated.

Ning Ran knew that well and thus continued to keep an iron grip on his arm.

Left with no other choice, Nan Chen reluctantly followed Ning Ran out of the filming site.

“Let go of me. What do you want?” Nan Chen grumbled once they were out of earshot.

“Shouldn't you be at work? Why are you here?”

“I happened to pass by and decided to drop in for a look. Who knew things would turn out this way? Anyway, let's stop the film production for now.”

“Oh, for crying out loud, why?” Ning Ran protested. “We've only just started filming, and with over a hundred staff members, do you know how much it'd cost with an additional day of delay?”

“Of course I do.”

“In that case, why are you stopping it?”

“Because I want to vet the scripts.”

“Haven't you already vetted them?”

Nan Chen's face instantly darkened. "Ever since Huang Zichao joined the cast, he has been given a lot of additional scenes that I've yet to look through. Also, I want him replaced."

"Huh?"

"What's with the shock? Can't bear to see him go because there are sparks between you and him?" Nan Chen shouted as he burned with anger.

A confused frown quickly crept over Ning Ran's face. "Me and Huang Zichao? What are you talking about?"

"Then why do you want to stop me from changing the male lead?"

Ning Ran flinched at the acidity in Nan Chen's voice. She hadn't seen him so furious in a while, and it terrified her.

Why has he lost his temper? What the hell is going on?

As frustrated as she was, Ning Ran eventually decided not to argue with Nan Chen anymore.

After all, it wouldn't do her any good to fight with him when he was in one of his tempers.

If she were to push Nan Chen beyond his limits, he'd immediately get the production team to terminate Huang Zichao's contract. Besides, he wouldn't give a toss about paying the early termination fee as long as he could get the actor out of his sight.

To Nan Chen's surprise, Ning Ran suddenly softened her stance. "Fine. Where are you headed? I think I'll go with you. It's not like I'll be filming anymore today," she said gently.

"Are you sure about that? I'm going to the branch office for an inspection."

"Yes. Since you want me to stop filming, I'll keep you company instead. It'd also be a good opportunity for me to discuss the new script with you. Not only are you the boss, but you also have excellent taste, so your opinions are important to me."

Upon hearing that, Nan Chen calmed down a little.

He was the kind who would give in to persuasion and not coercion, so the more one gave in to him, the more he'd ease up on them.

"Hmph. I don't need you to tell me about the script. I can read it myself."

Once they got to the car, Jiang Zhe immediately hopped out and opened the door for Nan Chen.

When he saw Ning Ran still wearing her character's costume, he couldn't help but scratch his head in confusion.

He knew his boss wanted to visit the set, but he wasn't expecting Ning Ran to play hooky from work.

"Why didn't you remind me to read the script they sent over?" Nan Chen asked.

"I did, but you said there wasn't any hurry..." Jiang Zhe replied cautiously.

"I want to read it now."

"Understood."

The next second, Jiang Zhe took out the tablet, opened the file for the script, and handed it to Nan Chen.

Nan Chen had signaled for the chauffeur to drive off when Ning Ran piped up, "Oh no, I left my bag on set. Can I go back for it? I'll inform the director about taking a day off too. It's only right to show some basic courtesy, isn't it?"

Nan Chen shot her a look before turning to the chauffeur. "Send her back."

For a moment, Ning Ran was speechless. Oh, my goodness. I can't believe he actually agreed to it! Sometimes, I really don't understand him. He's so unpredictable.

After arriving at the filming site, Ning Ran promptly got out of the car and waved at Nan Chen. "Why don't you carry on with your work? I'll head back inside now."

Nan Chen said nothing as he motioned for his chauffeur to drive off.

When Ning Ran finally got back on set, the director was already preparing for another scene.

Unfortunately, that was no easy feat, especially since the whole set design and props had to be changed.

"Director, let's continue with the filming," Ning Ran announced.

"But what about Sir Chen?"

"Don't worry, I've spoken with him, and he's given us the green light. Come on, let's get on with it."

“Ah, maybe I should give him a call—”

“Do you still not believe me? Let’s carry on with the filming,” Ning Ran interjected.

“All right. Get back to your positions, everyone! We’ll take up where we left off!”

Just then, Huang Zichao walked up to Ning Ran with a smile. “I just found out that Mr. Nan’s your husband. So, was that him being jealous?”

“He’s not my husband. We aren’t married,” Ning Ran quickly said.

“Oh, I’m sorry. I haven’t been keeping up with the news since I went abroad two years ago, but I did think you looked too young to be married—”

“I have two children with him, though,” Ning Ran added coolly.

Huang Zichao instantly froze in his tracks with his mouth agape.

After a while, he managed to force a smile as he muttered, “Y-You must be joking, right?”

“No, I’m not. I know there are a lot of rumors about us circulating online, and yes, those are false. But us having kids is a hundred percent true.”

Huang Zichao became even more perplexed at that. “Okay... So what’s your relationship like?”

“He’s the boss, and I’m one of the actresses signed under his company. Nothing more, nothing less.”

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Chapter 537 What Is Happening

That day, Ning Ran managed to finish work early and got home by eight. Dabao and Erbao were both on vacation, and the helper looking after them left as soon as Ning Ran was home.

Dinner had been prepared and laid out, but both kids refused to start eating without their mother. “Have you called your father? Is he joining us for dinner?” Ning Ran asked Erbao.

“I have, but Daddy said he has an appointment and will be home later.”

Soon, the two kids had finished setting the table and urged Ning Ran to have dinner together.

Now that filming had started, Ning Ran had to be even more careful about what she ate so she wouldn't gain weight.

Rice and other carbohydrates were definitely out of the question, which meant she could only stick with vegetables and fruit.

Erbao scooped a spoonful of braised pork and jiggled it in front of Ning Ran. "Mommy, do you want some?"

As much as she wanted it, Ning Ran had to stop herself. "No."

Erbao immediately burst out laughing. "You're lying, Mommy! I can see you drooling!"

"Stop fooling around," Dabao scolded as he glared at his sister. "Mommy's tired. Let her have her dinner in peace."

"Fine," Erbao whispered and did as instructed.

Thankfully, Ning Ran knew her daughter well. Erbao was used to chattering away, so getting her to stay silent would only make her miserable.

Furthermore, Nan Chen and Ning Ran had been so busy with work that their kids hardly saw or talked to them.

Now that Ning Ran was home early for once, how could she bear to push her kids away?

"All right, let's chat while we eat. You can tell me anything you like," Ning Ran said with a big smile.

Erbao's eyes lit up at once. "Okay! Let's chat!"

"Well then, what would you like to talk about?"

"Gossip!"

Ning Ran blinked in surprise. Why is this kid always so fond of gossip? Has she inherited my nosiness? Is that it?

"Okay, what gossip? Is there anything new you want to share with me?"

"Yes! Big gossip!" Erbao shouted as she placed her cutlery down.

"Wow, what big gossip has made you that excited? The only other time I've seen you so thrilled is when you're talking about food," Ning Ran teased.

“Oh, this is even better. Our plan has worked!” Erbao replied.

This time, Ning Ran was befuddled. “Your plan? What plan is it? What are you talking about?”

“Dabao, are you going to say it, or do you want me to?” Erbao asked her brother.

For one who was never fond of talking, the decision for Dabao was easy. “You can say it.”

“Okay! Mommy, have you seen today’s news? Uncle Xing and Ouyang Qing are together now!”

“Oh, really?”

“Yes! And someone also said it was Ouyang Qing who forced Uncle Xing to be with her. Haha! Uncle Xing’s such a poor thing,” Erbao added while laughing.

“But what does that have to do with your plan? Are you guys responsible for getting them together?”

“No, even though that was our original intention. Dabao and I had always wanted to set Uncle Xing up with Ouyang Qing. That way, she wouldn’t have a chance to come between you and Daddy. Our plan didn’t quite succeed, though, so we were disappointed. But now, things have all worked out brilliantly, and they’re finally together! Are you happy, Mommy?” Erbao exclaimed gleefully.

The truth was, Ning Ran had long heard about the news from Cheng Xiangyun, except she never bothered to look up the details.

What was there to be happy about when she didn’t think the situation would benefit her in any way?

Furthermore, Ning Ran was still skeptical about the relationship because she never once thought that Nan Xing liked Ouyang Qing.

She had seen the scandalous video of them posted online, and Nan Xing’s attitude toward Ouyang Qing wasn’t one of love.

And even though Ouyang Qing had always been loathsome, Ning Ran still saw no reason to be happy about her scandal.

After all, Ning Ran wasn’t one to gloat over someone else’s misfortune. As long as the matter didn’t hurt her, she couldn’t be bothered about it.

When she realized Ning Ran wasn't as happy as she had hoped for, Erbao couldn't help but feel disappointed.

Dabao and Erbao had always seen Ouyang Qing as the troublemaker in their parents' relationship, so it stood to reason that everyone would want her out of the picture.

Now that Uncle Xing is with Ouyang Qing, shouldn't Mommy be a little happy? Why isn't she, though?

Perplexed, Erbao decided to ask, "Mommy, aren't you happy? You no longer have to worry about anyone coming between you and Daddy."

"Erbao, kids shouldn't get involved in matters between adults. Whether they're together or not is none of our business. Let's not care so much about it."

Dabao and Erbao merely glanced at each other. They thought that Ning Ran would be over the moon after hearing the news, but her calm demeanor managed to suck the fun out of everything.

Since there was no other gossip to share, the kids decided to finish their dinner in silence.

Just then, Ning Ran got a call from the production team, informing her to read the new script they had sent.

After dinner and washing up the dishes, Ning Ran got her tablet out and pored over the new script.

Studying the script had always been a habit of Ning Ran's. She'd read it over a few times to familiarize herself with the plot before immersing in her character and thinking about how best to portray it.

The plot hadn't changed much, except that the female lead's husband would now die with their child.

That, however, was a problem.

The original script had the female lead's child caught in a traffic accident.

Later, it was revised to have the child contract an incurable disease that changed the entire family dynamics, thus plunging a once happy family into utter despair.

Naturally, there'd be a lot of emotional scenes between Huang Zichao and Ning Ran as they would fight and cry throughout the show.

Most actors wouldn't have been able to take on such demanding roles, but Huang Zichao and Ning Ran were so talented that the writers decided to give them even more scenes together.

Alas, that was all for naught now. With the plot once again rewritten to kill off the husband, wouldn't Huang Zichao be made redundant?

Ning Ran sighed. After seeing the script revision, she was even more sure that Nan Chen was the mastermind behind it.

It was never a must for Ning Ran to act alongside Huang Zichao, but she felt that the film would benefit from having a male lead added to it.

Ugh. Nan Chen just had to ruin everything because of his own bias. What's happening with him? How can he hire one of the most famous actors just to let him play a small role? No, no, this won't do. I have to persuade Nan Chen to change his mind.

As luck would have it, Nan Chen returned home right at that moment.

Ning Ran got up to take his coat before asking if he had eaten.

To her surprise, Nan Chen said no.

"Didn't you say you had an appointment and wouldn't be home for dinner?"

"Yes, but we only had a few drinks."

"Would you like to eat, then?" Ning Ran asked.

"When I told you I haven't had dinner, shouldn't that be enough for you to prepare some food for me? Why are you still asking questions?" Nan Chen snapped as he fixed a steely gaze on Ning Ran. "Is this you showing me fake concern? Are you just being pretentious?"

Alas, Ning Ran was too shocked to reply.

"All right, I'll make you something to eat," she finally said. "There are still leftovers from our dinner."

"I don't eat leftovers."

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Chapter 538 In A Quandary

Ning Ran explained patiently, "These aren't leftovers that have been sitting in the fridge for a long time. It's just that we didn't manage to finish—"

"I don't eat leftovers," Nan Chen repeated. It was clear to Ning Ran that his intention was to look for trouble. "Then, shall I cook a fresh bowl of noodles for you?"

"I don't eat noodles, either." As expected, he's purposely trying to find faults.

"In that case, what would you like to have? I can make anything." Ning Ran suppressed her anger, trying her best not to offend the man.

After all, what happened at the filming site earlier had caused Nan Chen to be extremely irritated and annoyed. Hence, he was looking for a way to release his anger.

"I don't know."

A standard laconic reply from him was enough to make Ning Ran upset.

There's cooked food on the table, but he's complaining that they are leftovers. He is rejecting my offer to cook him some noodles, yet he doesn't know what to eat. Is he playing a fool with me? What gives?

"I shall make a couple of your favorite dishes." Ning Ran strode toward the kitchen with a plastered smile on her face.

Nan Chen was very surprised at her exceptional level of patience but said nothing about it. Why is she enduring all these? This isn't her style.

Meanwhile, Ning Ran was scratching her head in the kitchen, struggling to think of a menu.

What does he usually like to eat? He doesn't seem to have a favorite dish. He's a small eater and rarely gobbles down his food. It's so tough trying to guess what a person like him would like to eat. Moreover, he has never mentioned this before. I hate the quandary I'm in now. What if I make him something simple that he hasn't tasted before? Oh well, I'll just play by ear and let my cravings and tastebuds lead the way. After all, he didn't order anything specific.

Moments later, Ning Ran served him a plate of egg-fried rice in his study room.

Upon entering the room, she saw that Nan Chen was chatting happily with the two children. As soon as he saw her, his bright smile faded away.

"Wow! The egg-fried rice smells so good!" Erbao exclaimed.

“Don’t even think about it, you little foodie! You have already taken your meal. Go now and read a book outside,” Ning Ran said.

Dabao shot Erbao a look, indicating that their parents needed their alone time. Then, the duo quietly left the room.

A mouthwatering aroma saturated the air and invoked Nan Chen’s appetite. He subconsciously glanced at the dish.

While it was a typical staple food for others, it was a rare dish for a rich brat like Nan Chen.

“What’s this?” He frowned.

“It’s my yummy egg-fried rice. Quickly go wash your hands before digging in,” Ning Ran asserted proudly.

“No, I don’t want to eat that. Fried rice is very unhealthy,” Nan Chen grumbled.

Ning Ran was taken aback by his comment. “Why is fried rice unhealthy? It’s perfectly fine to eat it occasionally. In fact, it’s nothing like fast food. So, don’t be so pampered.”

“No, I won’t eat it,” Nan Chen refused coldly.

At this point, Ning Ran’s blood was already boiling in rage, for Nan Chen’s attitude made it hard for her to keep it in.

Suit yourself! You can starve for all I care.

However, she changed her mind within seconds. I can’t put up a fight with him yet. We haven’t discussed the important matter.

“Take a bite and try. If it’s not to your liking, you can leave it. I won’t make the same dish for you next time. Okay? I asked just now if you had something you wanted to eat, but you didn’t state anything specific.”

She paused for a while and continued, “You were born with a silver spoon and have tasted all the gourmet delicacies in the world. It’s not easy for me to come up with one dish that can satisfy your sophisticated palates. Therefore, I thought about giving you something you’ve never experienced before. Considering my earnest effort to cook for you, would you be so kind as to at least give it a taste?”

Her tone was utterly gentle and sincere, causing Nan Chen to reconsider his stance.

He took a glance at the golden egg-fried rice.

It actually smells amazing. Perhaps, I can give it a try.

After going to the bathroom to wash his hands, he returned to the plate of tempting fried rice and had his first try.

Oh, it's indeed delicious.

"How's it?" Ning Ran anticipated a positive response from him.

"Not bad. Just that it's bad to eat such high-calorie food at night," he replied indifferently.

Ning Ran heaved a sigh of relief, knowing that Nan Chen had approved of her dish because he seldom sang praises to others.

"No worries. You are lean and fit. I'm certain that you won't put on weight so easily," she coaxed him subtly.

Hearing so, Nan Chen felt good and took another bite.

The more he ate, the better it tasted. It had been a very long time since he had anything this flavorful.

I never knew she could whip up such an appetizing meal. Why didn't she cook this earlier? Why only now? Whatever, I can't make it any more obvious that the food is good. Otherwise, she's going to be so full of herself. Moreover, one shouldn't consume such calorie-rich food at night. I have to stop eating.

"Say it. What do you want from me?" Nan Chen put his spoon down.

Ning Ran was astonished. How can he tell?

"Nothing. I'm doing great. What is there to ask? I don't need anything in return for cooking you a plate of fried rice. So, don't overthink it." Ning Ran's grin was stiff.

"All right. Take this dish away. It's awful." He pointed at the plate with only a little bit of rice left on it.

Awful? Is that all he can say after eating almost two-thirds of it? That's so fake. If it's that bad, would he have eaten so much of it? What does he take me for?

"I'll take my leave now. Have a good one."

Ning Ran had to put up with him because she had not achieved her objective.

After a while, she came back to the room.

"I'm done with the dishes, so I was thinking of having a little chat with you," she said, standing in front of his desk.

Nan Chen answered with minimal effort, "I thought you said there was nothing?"

"Well, it's not anything important—"

Before she could finish her sentence, he interrupted, "If it's nothing urgent, drop it. I'm busy."

Ning Ran was struck speechless.

The anger she was trying her utmost best to suppress threatened to get the better of her.

No, I must be calm and take this easy. If an argument starts between us, all of my previous efforts will be for naught.

"It's not a big deal, but I still want to talk to you about it." She could not let it go.

"Are you going to say it or not? You're so fickle-minded. On the one hand, you initiated a conversation; on the other hand, you hesitated. If it holds any importance, say it now. Otherwise, hold your peace." Nan Chen was losing his patience.

Ning Ran was absolutely furious that she wanted to land a few powerful kicks at him.

How nasty and heartless can he be? To give me the cold shoulder after enjoying my food? I guess I can no longer be so gentle to him and make him think that I'm a pushover. He'd better watch out once I show him my temper. Otherwise, we can never bring this conversation further.

"The staff passed me the new script, and I heard that it's your instruction," Ning Ran cut to the chase.

Nan Chen scoffed. I knew it! So, this is what she's been wanting to discuss.

"Indeed," he admitted openly as he had nothing to hide.

"I feel that we can discuss this further. You know, there have been a lot of changes made to the script. I'm afraid that the box office will be severely impacted should we shoot the movie based on the revised version."

"You will surely be paid with the amount stated on your contract regardless of the box office. That has got nothing to do with you, the actress. So, don't worry about it."

Nan Chen instantly killed the conversation, but Ning Ran was not ready to give up.

"I understand. However, I'm also one of the key members of the production team. Having said that, there's an utter need for me to raise an opinion about it. Of course, I can only share my view. The decision is still the bosses to make."

Ning Ran took a deep breath and swallowed her anger.

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Chapter 539 Perfect Daddy

"Go ahead and speak your mind," Nan Chen said casually with his head still hanging low. "Okay, I shall get to the point and tell you what I think. However, it's solely up to you whether you want to listen."

"You don't have to state the obvious. Spill!" Ning Ran bit her lips and said, "According to the latest script, the conflict will subside. With that, Huang Zichao's scenes will be significantly reduced to almost nothing left."

Bang! Enraged, Nan Chen slammed the table. "So, you're unhappy that his parts are cut?"

"It doesn't affect me. Conversely, it will put you in an unfavorable position." Ning Ran knew that her words would upset him, but she did not expect him to hit the ceiling right away.

She had been putting up with him the entire time in order not to step on his toes. Alas, she still failed to avoid a terrible confrontation.

"Unfavorable to me? How so?"

"First, the storyline will be a bore, which in turn will cause the box office to plunge. Second, Huang Zichao is a renowned actor. This is his first movie made in his homeland after venturing into Hollywood. Tons and tons of people are looking forward to watching the show, and I'm sure this is why you guys have hired him in the first place. If you cut his parts now, you will lose the target audience!"

She continued, "Additionally, his worldwide fans will surely boycott this movie, thinking that he has been unfairly treated. You know how it works in the show biz. The fans will persuade their families and friends to do the same. As a result, you will suffer great losses."

"I already said that the box office is not your problem, so mind your own business," Nan Chen refuted.

Regardless, Ning Ran continued to push his buttons.

“Though you can’t be bothered if the investment had zero return, it’s still your project. You are the reason why so many investors dumped their money into this. They believe in you and your ability to generate lucrative profits for them. It’s such a golden opportunity. I am clueless as to why you want to ruin it like that. How will others see you? What’s the point of investing in this project when you’re adamant that you should revise the script and turn a worthy piece into worthless trash? Is it just for fun? Is this all a game to you?”

Bang!

Nan Chen was livid and slammed his fist on the table once more.

His seething resentment had finally reached boiling point.

Subsequently, he left his seat and walked toward Ning Ran, causing her to backpedal in fear.

Oh no, I spoke too fast and said many things that I shouldn’t have. She regretted not being able to control her tongue.

“Are you lashing out at me? Trying to tell me what to do?” came Nan Chen’s chilling voice.

He grabbed her chin while starring daggers at her.

Panicked, Ning Ran said, “No, I wasn’t. Let go of me...”

“You lectured me because of another man? Whose side are you on? Why are you standing up for him?”

“Dabao! Erbao!” Ning Ran yelled.

Seeing how Nan Chen was going to teach her a lesson, she figured she had better call upon her little saviors. I’m not so silly to stand here and let him torment me more.

The two children heard her cry and hurried over.

“Daddy, you bullied Mommy again!” Erbao grumbled with displeasure.

“Daddy, didn’t you teach me that guys cannot be mean to girls?” Dabao questioned coldly.

Nan Chen was embarrassed. He did not anticipate such a cunning move from Ning Ran.

“I didn’t do anything. I was just talking to Mommy,” he swiftly denied.

“How could you lie to us? You laid your fingers on her!” Erbao bellowed.

“I didn’t. Mommy said that her teeth were aching, so I checked it out for her.” Nan Chen was exasperated.

He would do anything not to risk his perfect reputation as a father to be labeled otherwise.

“Is that so, Mommy?” Erbao wanted to triangulate with Ning Ran.

“Haha, yeah, Daddy and I were only fooling around. Go on and play among yourselves.” A comforting smile settled upon her face.

“Really?” Dabao was dubious.

“Of course, we were only kidding. She wanted to set up a trial and see if you two would come in and save her in the nick of time. This experiment goes to show that you guys always have her back.”

Ning Ran could tell that the way he reacted was clearly a case of sour grapes.

After that, Dabao and Erbao exchanged a silent glance, and they exited the study, leaving Nan Chen and Ning Ran behind.

“How could you call the kids in?” Nan Chen reprimanded her.

“Well, there are only four of us here. If I can’t fight you, I have to ask for help. I’m the one on the losing end who should defend myself at all costs,” Ning Ran snapped back at him.

“You shouldn’t have involved the children in adult matters.”

“What’s wrong? The kids are one of us. In fact, they are my guardian angels. We’ve been living by ourselves for so many years, and we share a strong bond. In this world, they are the only ones who truly care about me and support me all the way. Who else can I call if not them? Are you still thinking of doing something bad to me? If you dare, I’ll scream again! It’s such a disgrace for the heir of Nanshi Corporation to hit a woman. How shameful!”

Ning Ran plucked up her courage and spoke assertively.

“I didn’t even hit you!” Nan Chen defended himself.

“Then, what were you doing just now? Stroking my face dotingly? That’s considered as taking advantage of me.”

“You...”

“Fine, let’s get back to our topic. Sit quietly and keep your hands to yourself. I only want to get it off my chest. You can decide if you want to heed my advice or not,” uttered Ning Ran.

Nan Chen walked back to his desk and took his seat.

Feeling a little exhausted, Ning Ran moved a chair and sat opposite him.

As they faced each other, Ning Ran felt intimidated by Nan Chen’s towering figure.

No, this doesn’t look good. I can’t let him be the only one looking imposing.

At that thought, she stood up, leaving Nan Chen completely puzzled.

“If you’re not planning to say anything, I shall leave now and continue my work.”

“No, I must continue this.”

She regulated her emotions and thought deeply for a while, picking out the right words to say. “Where did we stop just now?”

Nan Chen looked blank as he could not recall.

“Forget it if you don’t even know what you wanted to tell me.” He waved his hand.

“Oh, that’s right, it was about the adverse effects potentially brought upon by the revised storyline. A negative earning will lead to your personal reputation damage. Don’t you think so? Although it doesn’t matter to you whether the movie makes any money, I do care.”

She continued after a slight pause, “This is my first film. Thanks to you, I got a chance to work with such an A-list crew. I want us all to succeed and not to be a loser, or else people will comment that I’m a small fry who doesn’t deserve the big screen. I don’t want to jinx it. Needless to say, the audience will also criticize you for having such a lousy vision to invest in someone who eventually turns out to be a laughing stock. See, we all lose in this situation. Doesn’t this suck?”

Right then, Nan Chen wanted to say something, but Ning Ran gestured that she was not done.

“In addition, the netizens will analyze everything and make their own conclusions as to why the movie fails. Without a doubt, the story about you shutting Huang Zichao out will surely be brought up. They will say that Sir Chen is narrow-minded, lacks confidence, and has no respect for the actor—”

“Shut up!”

Nan Chen could not tolerate her anymore. She can needle me all she wants, but she can't say that I have low self-esteem! That's absurd. I'm most proud of how open-minded I am, and I have abundant self-confidence! If not, how could I have become the leader of Nanshi Corporation?

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Chapter 540 Basic Manners

Seeing that Nan Chen was going ballistic again, Ning Ran tried to appease the situation.

“I didn't mean to say that you are narrow-minded. If that's the case, you wouldn't be where you are today. How could you reach the pinnacle of your career by being conventional, right? I was saying that those who don't know you would misunderstand your actions and have the perception that you have a parochial attitude toward things and people.”

Luckily, she justified herself in time and managed to calm Nan Chen down.

“I'm not competing with Huang Zichao. How can I possibly do so when he's not even worth it?” Nan Chen denied it resolutely.

Clapping, Ning Ran assured him, “That's right! He's only an actor, whereas you're his boss. Both of you are clearly not from the same level. There's no need for you to compare yourself to him. If you do so, people will really think that you're narrow-minded and lack confidence.”

“Stop saying I lack confidence!” Nan Chen roared as he felt infuriated.

“You're confident! Relax, I'm just stating an example.” Ning Ran smiled while he remained silent.

Actually, he really took her words to heart, for she was very convincing.

Although Nan Chen was a domineering person who set his sights on big goals, he knew very well that an exceptional leader had to exemplify humility and be willing to listen to advice. To him, that was basic mannerism.

No one was perfect. No matter how brilliant a leader was, he might have moments where he failed to think things through or resolved a matter poorly.

Hence, it was important for the leader to accept other suggestions and alternatives in order to break through his own limitations.

Nan Chen knew that if he ignored the advice, he would bear negative consequences.

All in all, he was not the type who was unreasonable and as stubborn as a mule.

However, his high self-esteem did not allow him to change his mind immediately, even though he was already convinced.

In the end, he chose to be silent, like how he always acted.

Ning Ran knew him like the palm of her hand. She could sense that his stance had already been shaken.

“Please let the scriptwriter make amendments to it. You gave me this golden opportunity to star in a movie, so I really don’t want my first to be my last. How embarrassing can that be!” Ning Ran said with emotions.

Saying nothing, Nan Chen waved his hands to get her to leave the room.

Had it been someone else, they might continue to argue with him until he said yes.

However, Ning Ran was smart enough to know when to push the button and when to stop. She knew that he would make his own decision soon.

Whatever it is, I don’t want to keep bugging him and annoy him at my own expense. It’s best I just leave it like that.

Nan Xing accompanied Ouyang Qing to have fun at the Orchid Club without knowing that the club was the Ouyang family’s headquarters in Flower City.

The latter invited several of her friends from Flower City to the club in order to prove that the former was her boyfriend.

Tang Jing was not invited because Ouyang Qing treated her as a follower, not even an acquaintance.

All those who were present came from well-to-do families.

Nan Xing did not mind a gathering like that since he liked to have a jolly good time anyway, regardless of the place.

While they were having fun, Ouyang Qing approached him unexpectedly and dropped him a bombshell. “My dad wants to meet you.”

Taken aback, he asked, “You bring your dad along to parties? Are you looking for a mistress for him?”

“Shut up! Stop spewing nonsense. You are my boyfriend, so isn’t it natural for my dad to want to see you?” Ouyang Qing was mad.

“I’m not close to your dad. Also, he doesn’t seem to like me. I don’t think there’s a need for us to meet up, right?” Nan Xing asked.

“We’re going to be together for a long time, so meeting my family is part of the package. My dad came all the way to see you, and yet you’re unwilling to meet up with him?”

Nan Xing was tremendously surprised. “He’s already here?”

“Yes. In fact, he’s here at the club. There’s someone waiting for you outside. Once you head out, my dad’s subordinate will lead you to him.”

After mulling over, Nan Xing stood up and replied casually, “All right, please excuse me now, for I need to go meet Mr. Ouyang.”

“Wow, your father-in-law is here? Is it time for marriage talks?” One of Ouyang Qing’s friends posted a question that made her blush instantly.

“It’s nothing serious and only a casual meet-up. It’s too early, anyway.”

Nan Xing ignored Ouyang Qing’s coquettish reaction and stepped out of the room.

Just as he was told, a man-in-black was already waiting for him at the entrance. “Mr. Xing, this way, please.”

Upon going through the complicated passageway, they arrived at another door.

Two young men wearing the staff uniform gestured for him to enter the room behind them.

Nan Xing pushed the door open and stepped foot into a humongous lounge. The layout and interior design were simply magnificent, giving the impression that he was in a palace.

Nan Xing was no stranger to Orchid Club, the vintage club in Flower City. Though he had been there way too many times, he had never once come across such a spacious and luxurious lounge.

Ouyang Duo wore a white shirt and a black waistcoat, looking dapper on the black leather couch.

“Hi, Mr. Ouyang.” Nan Xing bowed and greeted his senior respectfully.

“Yes. Are you Nan Chen or Nan Xing?” Ouyang Duo queried.

Duh! Isn't that obvious? He's the one who wants to see me. I'm sure he knows if I'm Nan Chen or Nan Xing.

Nonetheless, he answered succinctly, "Nan Xing."

"I see. Please have a seat. What drink would you like?" Ouyang Duo asked.

"Red wine, please," Nan Xing blurted.

"Youngsters should drink hard liquor. The brandy is quite nice. Here, try some."

As he spoke, he poured a glass for Nan Xing.

According to social norms, Nan Xing should be the one serving his elder instead of the other way around. This made him feel uneasy.

Is he planning on poisoning me because I caused his daughter to be sad?

"Actually, Mr. Ouyang, I already have a lot to drink just now. Moreover, I don't drink white cognac," Nan Xing declined politely.

"Are you rejecting the liquor I serve you?" Ouyang Duo questioned him.

Must I drink what you prepare for me? What if you put poison in it? Must I bottoms up?

"That's not what I meant. It's just that I had downed a lot of glasses, and I can't have anymore. If I were to continue drinking, it'd be the end of me. I'd humiliate myself by puking in front of you." Nan Xing chuckled.

"That's fine. Just have a little bit as we chit-chat. Oh, you aren't worried about being poisoned, are you?" Ouyang Duo arched his brow.

"Absolutely not! Why would such a silly thing come across my mind." Nan Xing quickly waved his hands.

"Then, drink it." Ouyang Duo pointed at the wine glass.

"I really can't drink anymore. Plus, this is too much. Mr. Ouyang, could you help me with it?"

He took an empty glass and distributed the drink evenly into two glasses.

If you dare to drink it, I promise to do the same. If you don't, then why should I? Do you think that I was born yesterday?

Suddenly, Ouyang Duo broke out into laughter, which confused Nan Xing.

“Rumor has it that Nan Chen is the only outstanding man in the Nan family. I bet you’re not too bad if compared to him. After going in circles, you still hold your suspicions strongly. That’s fantastic! It’s not a bad thing to be alert and keep your guards up. Leave it if you don’t feel like drinking.” Ouyang Duo smirked.

“I wasn’t wary of you. Honestly speaking, I’ve reached my drinking limits for the day. The next time we meet, I’ll definitely treat you to a drink, Mr. Ouyang.” Nan Xing tried his best to cover up his embarrassment.

“Sure! Let’s get into the topic. What’s your plan for the future?”