Read Novel My Wife Is A Superstar Chapter 661

Chapter 661 I Hope So Too

"This is Ms. Rong Rong, and this is Nan Chen." Ning Ran still went ahead with the introduction.

"Nice to meet you, Mr. Nan. Actually, would you prefer if I call you Sir Chen? I heard you like it when others refer to you by that title." Rong Rong's brother smiled as he stretched his hand out.

"I'm fine with either." Nan Chen shook his hand. "Nice to meet you, Mr. Rong Yi. I've attended one of your recitals before overseas."

"Is that so? Thank you for your support, then."

Ning Ran had heard of the name Rong Yi before. I think I saw him on the television, too. No wonder he looks familiar. He's one of Asia's young and very talented pianists who won countless international awards. Additionally, he even attended a United Nations conference as a representative of China's distinguished youth. He's so well known that not even an average celebrity can be compared to him.

"So, you're the pianist, Mr. Rong. No wonder you look so refined," she commented.

"Thanks for your compliments. You're very pretty, Ms. Ning. I've watched your movies before." A pleasant smile returned to Rong Yi's face.

She liked seeing him smile because it felt very amicable to her. Crap, am I swooning over him? Why do I feel this way?

The restaurant wasn't big at all. It was also pretty quiet, likely because the whole building had been booked.

When they all sat at a table, Ning Ran stared at Rong Yi a couple more times. The more she did, the more she took a liking to him.

She didn't simply like him. It was something different, more profound. Perhaps it was more appropriate to describe it as admiration.

It was then Lu Jingyuan arrived. The restaurant became livelier after the three women reunited.

Since there was still time before the dishes were served, the three of them started chatting. As for Nan Chen and Rong Yi, since they weren't familiar with each other, they barely exchanged a word.

"How about we go out for a walk?" Nan Chen suggested on his own accord.

Glancing at Nan Chen's leg, Rong Yi asked, "Are you going to be okay?"

"I'm fine. It's just a temporary injury. I can still move."

After the two men left, the women exchanged glances with each other.

"I didn't know your brother's a famous pianist. Why did you never mention it before?" Ning Ran asked excitedly.

"You didn't ask. Besides, my brother doesn't like it when I mention his name. He said he's not a musician, just a guy whose one of his hobbies is playing the piano," Rong Rong answered.

"Your brother's a very likable person, Rong Rong. He's also very gentlemanly," Lu Jingyuan commented.

Whew! It seems like I'm not swooning over him after all. He's simply just that charismatic. Even Lu Jingyuan said so! Hearing that made Ning Ran feel at ease.

A smirk was set on Rong Rong's face. "My brother's the type of person who almost never scolds anyone. In fact, he never reprimanded me in any way, not even a little bit. I also think my brother's very likable, haha."

"His talent for playing the piano is astounding! I attended his recital in the capital during the Lunar New Year, and I have to say, he was so good," Lu Jingyuan added.

Wow, she went to Rong Yi's recital before, too. It seems like I'm the only one here who has never heard him play the piano before. I guess I have to admit I did belong in a lower class in the past, Ning Ran thought.

Abruptly, Rong Rong pleaded, "Oh yeah, can you two persuade my brother later to let me stay in this city? I still want to sing here until I have to return when school starts again."

Ning Ran and Lu Jingyuan exchanged a glance. This is going to be difficult. We may be friends, but we only just met not too long ago. I don't think we should interfere with her family matters.

"I know what you two are thinking, but my brother's an open-minded person! He'll be willing to listen to you two," Rong Rong assured anxiously.

In response, Ning Ran asked, "Then why not convince him yourself? Why us?"

"That's right." Lu Jingyuan nodded slightly. "Why do you need us to convince him when you can do it yourself? It's your family matter. I don't think it's okay for us to intervene."

"My brother's simply worried about my safety, but he'll agree to let me stay if you two appeal to him on my behalf," Rong Rong answered.

With a nod, Ning Ran replied, "Your brother's right to worry about you. It really isn't safe for a girl like you to sing in a bar alone. Besides, your brother's a pianist, and your family's not in any financial trouble. Why don't you want to go back with him?"

"Yeah. Only those who struggle to pay the bills will choose to sing at a bar. Why do you want to stay here?" Lu Jingyuan was of the same opinion as Ning Ran.

Rong Rong wailed, "It's not because I have financial issues. I just like singing! I also like a small city like this and the slow-paced life here. Yeah, there are thugs here, but what city doesn't have thugs? What bar doesn't have any unsavory people visiting it? What's so bad about staying at a place like that, anyway? I get to meet different people from all walks of life. If I hadn't come to Livingsfill, I wouldn't have been able to meet you two!"

She's not wrong. But... Ning Ran and Lu Jingyuan exchanged a glance again before saying to each other in near-unison, "You should do it!"

They didn't expect the other to be also unwilling to meddle with other people's affairs and wanted someone else to do it stand.

That was why they chuckled when they ended their sentences.

"Don't laugh! I'm being serious here. You two must help me out." Rong Rong stared at them with puppy eyes.

"You are really making it difficult for us, Rong. If I knew you wanted me to do this, I wouldn't have come at all. This is clearly a trap." A sigh escaped Ning Ran's mouth.

"Yeah, this is too cruel. We're here for a meal, not settling your business for you." Lu Jingyuan grinned.

A tinge of disappointment was heard in Rong Rong's voice. "I'm merely asking you two for help. It's not a threat or anything. If you two are unwilling to help out, then forget about it."

"We'll see how things go and give it a try later, I guess," Ning Ran promised.

While the women were having a great time conversing with each other, the men outside weren't.

They stood silently under a tree outside of the restaurant for two minutes.

The scene was very peculiar. No one wanted to be the first to speak.

In the end, Nan Chen, who usually disliked chatters, was the one to break the silence. "I hope our meeting here is just a coincidence."

"I hope the same, too," Rong Yi replied.

While their conversation sounded very odd and seemingly nonsensical, those two intelligent men knew their verbal exchange was pretty much over because all they needed to say had been said.

The seemingly ordinary sentences they uttered actually contained an immense amount of information that couldn't be comprehended fully without knowledge about their family backgrounds.

Many years ago, the Nan family wasn't the only one dominating Flower City. There was also the Rong family.

Despite the two powerful families occupying the same territory, peace was maintained for a very long time.

However, it didn't last. A violent, malignant competition broke out between the two families, turning them into sworn enemies.

In the end, Prosperity Holdings lost, and they had to relocate their headquarters away from Flower City. For many years, little was heard about them.

Back then, Nan Chen was still only a boy. He had no idea what had happened. He asked his grandfather about it, but the old man refused to give him a detailed answer, only saying that the two families were enemies.

Thus, he sincerely had no idea what went wrong between the two families.

The real meaning behind Nan Chen's words was, if laid out in plain terms, "I hope it's just a coincidence that I met you in Livingsfill and not because you're here to attack my loved ones."

Rong Yi's words meant more or less the same thing, which was he hoped Nan Chen wasn't there to target his sister.

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Chapter 662 His Reasons

After the dishes were served, Nan Chen and Rong Yi returned to the building. Nan Chen's expression remained darkened. It was hard to tell what he was feeling.

On the other hand, the look in Rong Yi's eyes remained gentle, as though nothing had happened at all. They were both handsome men, yet their styles were completely different.

They could just sit at the table motionlessly and still be pleasing to the eyes.

Furthermore, there were three beautiful ladies, Ning Ran, Lu Jingyuan, and Rong Rong, at the same table. Together, they formed a very attractive group of people. It was a visual feast for the waiters who served them food.

"Thank you all for taking care of my sister." Rong Yi lifted his wine glass. Aside from Nan Chen, the others did the same.

Rong Yi's toasting us right now. Why does Nan Chen refuse to move? I don't get why he's being so rude right now. He's a CEO who must've attended all sorts of events before, so there's no way he doesn't know about basic social etiquette. Even if he dislikes someone, he should still raise his glass when someone's toasting. Ning Ran glanced at Nan Chen, gesturing for him to lift his glass.

It was then Nan Chen slowly informed, "I can't drink alcohol right now due to my body's condition. Can you grab me a cup of water instead?" Then he nonverbally asked her to fetch a glass of water for him.

Really? He drank wine with me last night. Besides, his injury's an external one, and he's not taking any medicine anymore, so why can't he drink? Doesn't he know responding to a toast is a sign of politeness? It's not like he must drink. Still, I suppose he has his own reasons for refusing to. With no other choice, she poured him a glass of water before delivering it to him.

After they exchanged pleasantries, they started eating. Ning Ran ate the most. While others were thinking about different things, she was the only one who paid complete attention to the gourmet food.

It was then Rong Rong glanced at her and coughed lightly, as if she was saying, "Don't only just focus on the food. Remember to bring up the matter I asked you to help me with!"

If not for her reminder, Ning Ran wouldn't have recalled she needed to persuade Rong Yi together with Lu Jingyuan to let Rong Rong stay in the city.

Without delay, Ning Ran placed her cutlery down because it would be rude to speak while eating.

"Are you here solely to visit your sister, Mr. Rong?" she asked.

"Yes. I'm worried about her staying here by herself. So, I came to check up on her," Rong Yi answered.

"Does this mean you won't be leaving here with her that quickly?"

"She's not safe here. My father's the one who asked me to pick her up and send her back home." A kindly smile formed on his face.

"Can you not do it? We only befriended each other not too long ago. If you bring her home now, we won't be able to spend time together."

Nan Chen's expression suddenly turned cold as he glared at Ning Ran.

That confounded her. Did I say something wrong? Rong Rong was the one who asked me to persuade her brother, so I did. It's great if he agrees, but it's not like I'll get upset if he doesn't. Why does Nan Chen have to stare at me like this?

"I think so, too. Rong's happy here, so why not let her stay for a bit longer? What happened last time was an accident. I promise something like that won't happen again." Lu Jingyuan also voiced her support.

Hearing her say that eased Ning Ran's stress.

However, Nan Chen continued to stare at her, gesturing for her to keep her mouth shut.

It puzzled her greatly. Why shouldn't I say anything? What does he mean? Is he jealous because I'm talking to Rong Yi too much? That doesn't make sense because I've only spoken two sentences to Rong Yi.

With a cordial grin, Rong Yi replied, "It seems like you two really like my sister. However, the school's about to start soon, so it's time for her to return. She'll have plenty of opportunities to meet with you two again in the future."

"Considering school hasn't started yet, what's the harm of letting her stay? It's not like it'll be too late for her to leave when it does. She can make it in time," Ning Ran persuaded.

Unable to hold himself back any longer, Nan Chen questioned, "Why are you butting into other people's matters, Ning Ran?"

His abrupt remark embarrassed her.

Thus, she smiled awkwardly and responded, "We're friends, so I thought I could casually mention it."

"Well, you mustn't," he said coldly.

It made the atmosphere even more awkward as she cursed him in her mind. What the h*II is he doing? Why is he reprimanding me in front of so many people like I'm a child? Have I lost my freedom to speak? Why does he care?

Ning Ran wanted to retort Nan Chen, but doing it in front of others would undoubtedly render the atmosphere stiffer.

Hence, her only option was to stifle her dissatisfaction.

Rong Yi broke the silence as he smirked. "Thank you for showing so much care to my sister, Ms. Ning. I'll take your suggestion into consideration."

"There's no need to consider it. This is your family matter. You should make a choice yourself," Nan Chen spat frigidly.

That didn't bother Rong Yi. His smile remained, though he kept guiet.

"Fine, I overstepped my boundaries. I shouldn't have interfered with other people's matters. I'm sorry," Ning Ran apologized.

"Don't say that, Ran." Rong Rong couldn't bear to stay silent anymore.

Turning to her brother, she clarified, "I was the one who asked the two of them to persuade you on my behalf. It's rare for me to come across people like them, so I want to stay here for a little longer before I leave. I promise I'll return before school starts."

Nodding, Rong Yi assured, "I know what you mean. It's not like I vehemently oppose the idea. Later, I'll call Dad and discuss the matter with him."

Upon hearing that, Ning Ran shot a glance at Nan Chen. See! You were overthinking it. He doesn't mind at all!

The atmosphere didn't return to normal after that quarrel.

Everyone chatted for a longer while before leaving.

On the way back, Ning Ran couldn't help but ask, "I know you're the owner of my agency, but that doesn't mean you can control everything I do, Mr. Chen. I'm not a child. Why can't I talk to my friends?"

Saying that out loud after keeping it inside her heart for so long made her feel really good.

"You're the one at fault, to begin with," Nan Chen answered coldly.

She sneered, "Oh, so it's my fault just because you said so? Are you a judge? If you say I'm guilty, then I am?"

"Of course. If I say you're wrong, you're wrong."

"You're just going to be unreasonable, huh? Fine. So what if I'm wrong? I'm happy to be wrong. Why do you care?" Ning Ran also responded stubbornly.

"Haven't you already gotten into trouble once? Do you want it to happen again? Is that why you don't want me to care? Rong Yi was already suspecting your intention of approaching his sister. He was afraid you'd hurt her, yet you still asked her to stay! What if something does happen to his sister in Livingsfill, hmm? Can you bear the consequences? Do you realize how foolish you are?" His exclamation was brimming with fury.

"He isn't suspecting me! Don't judge others by your measures! Not everyone's as suspicious as you!"

"You're not him, so how do you know he's not suspecting you?"

"I can say the same about you! How do you know he's suspecting me when you're not him?"

"I'm done wasting my breath squabbling with you. This is a dumb argument!" Disdain was sandwiched between his words.

"That's fine with me! You're the one who wants to control and correct every single word that comes out of my mouth! I hate it when you do this!" Ning Ran's heart was burning with anger.

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Chapter 663 Stupid

"Do you know who Rong Yi is?" Nan Chen asked. Annoyed, Ning Ran replied, "He's Rong Rong's brother, a young pianist. Isn't that obvious?"

"Why did you butt into their family matters when you only have a surface-level understanding of him?"

"Then what else do I need to understand? Do I need to figure out his blood type and his horoscope?" Nan Chen was so infuriated that he couldn't utter a word. All he did was glare at Ning Ran coldly with slightly trembling lips.

Seeing him that angry made her feel a tad guilty. He's really livid. Is he going to hit me? He won't, right?

"What I mean is, I didn't think it was necessary for me to understand him that much." She hastily backtracked on her stance a little.

Then, she recalled something and asked, "What did you two talk about when you both went outside?"

"Only now you remember that?" "Yeah, you two seem to recognize each other. Not only that, but you were hostile toward him. What's going on?"

"I'm not familiar with him. I initially thought he was just a normal musician when I attended his recital. His music was something I enjoyed listening to." "But then you found out something abnormal about him?"

"A while ago, I shorted many shares of Ouyang Duo's overseas listed companies. Then, someone kept buying them. When I asked people to check who was doing it, the trail they discovered pointed them to an offshore company owned by Rong Yi."

That shocked Ning Ran. While she wasn't knowledgeable about the business industry, she still knew the basics. "So, you're saying he took advantage of the situation when you were trying to lower the stock price? Is he trying to buy low and sell high? Or is he holding onto it long-term? Maybe he's trying to be a major shareholder in Sunshine Corporation?"

"I don't know yet. Meanwhile, he even bought Century Plaza in Flower City and turned it into an office of the Rong family."

"Isn't that building really old by now? Why did he buy that one instead of the many other pristine buildings in the financial district?" Ning Ran was even more perplexed.

"I'm glad you found it odd because it means you're not stupid beyond saving. Anyway, this is the crux of the matter. I asked my grandfather about it, and he told me Century Plaza used to be the landmark building of Flower City. It was also initially where Prosperity Holdings' office was located. Right now, Prosperity Holdings is the third most powerful company in the province. However, it still can't be compared to Sunshine Corporation at all, which is in second place, much less Nanshi Corporation at the top. The Rong family had been keeping a low profile over the years. They rarely appeared in the news and have almost been forgotten by everyone in the business industry. However, they didn't disappear. They've been developing in secret. Otherwise, they wouldn't have had the funds to buy Sunshine Corporation's shares."

That sounds really complex. I'm having a bit of a hard time understanding everything, she thought.

"In the past, Prosperity Holdings' headquarters was located in Flower City. They left because they lost the fight against Nanshi Corporation. Now that they've bought back their old office building and renovated it, their intentions are clear."

"They're making a comeback, then?"

"Yes. I'm glad you aren't that stupid."

"Can't you be nicer with your words, Mr. Chen?"

"Back to Rong Yi, while he gives people the impression that he's a gentle and harmless musician, he was like a wolf when he bought those shares. His rhythm of control was excellent and very steady. He knew very well what he was doing. I'd say his skills put him in the top five in the country. Even though he pretends only to be a musician, he's actually building up his family's company in secret and buying a massive amount of Sunshine Corporation's shares. And now, he's helping his family to return to Flower City. Do you still think he's an innocent musician?"

"It sounds like he's a prince with a complicated backstory. Prosperity Holdings was kicked out of Flower City by the Nan family back then?"

"You can say that. Our families hold a very strong grudge against each other. That was what my grandfather said, at least. He also emphasized it wasn't just any ordinary grudge, but he wouldn't say what it was about."

"Ah, I see. I get it now." Ning Ran suddenly felt enlightened.

"What is it?"

"Your families are hostile toward each other, so you and Rong Yi are constantly on guard against one another. You're concerned he came to Livingsfill to hurt our children and me. On the other hand, he was worried we were targeting his sister when you arrived in Livingsfill and that I befriended her. He may even suspect what happened during that night at the bar was something we came up with, right?"

Nan Chen nodded. "Now, do you still think what you did was right? Asking him to keep his sister here when he's prepared to take her away? What you did earlier reinforced his assumption that you approached his sister for ulterior motives."

"How would I know there were so many things going on in the background? If he truly suspected me, then yes, I shouldn't have intervened, but you didn't tell me about any of this beforehand."

"I didn't know that girl was Rong Yi's younger sister before I came. If I did, I wouldn't have allowed you to approach her. The bad blood between the Rong family and the Nan family is so intense that anyone who has ties to one side will be at risk of danger if they get too close to the other side. If Rong Rong is injured in Livingsfill now, Rong Yi will suspect you because of your relationship with me."

Ning Ran nodded. "Then you're right. I was wrong. If anything happens to Rong Rong, I'll be blamed for it. I shouldn't have done that."

"It was foolish of you to continue even after I tried stopping you."

Being scolded by Nan Chen ticked her off, but she couldn't retort to that.

After all, he did try to stop her by giving her looks. She thought he was being unreasonable back then because she didn't know about the convoluted history between the two families.

"How do I salvage this?" Ning Ran inquired.

"There's no way to. If he believes you did it intentionally, then so be it. His thoughts belong to him alone. Neither the Nan family nor I am scared of him," Nan Chen uttered coldly.

"So I can't be friends with Rong anymore?" It saddened her to come to that conclusion.

"I think you can. After all, the bad blood is between the previous generation of the two families, and your family name isn't Nan. However, there's nothing you can do if the Rong family doubts you due to your relationship with me."

The fact that he didn't stop Ning Ran from remaining friends with Rong Rong made her quite happy.

"Okay, I'll deal with this properly."

Meanwhile, at the Ouyang villa in Pearl City, Ouyang Qi had just parked his car and entered the residence.

It had been a while since he returned from Flower City.

He built Orchid Club in Flower City because he wanted his family to replace the Nan family as the most powerful family in the city.

However, things ended up with Ouyang Qing getting thrown into prison while Ouyang Duo became a fugitive, with his whereabouts still unknown.

The Ouyang family, once doing well, was suddenly plunged into a crisis.

When Ouyang Qi entered the building, he saw it was a mess inside. Dozens of luggage were scattered across the floor.

A woman descended the stairs. She resembled Ouyang Qing, but not as pretty.

She was Ouyang Duo's eldest daughter and Ouyang Qi's older sister, Ouyang Li.

Even though she was the deputy CEO of Sunshine Corporation, she wasn't as famous as Ouyang Qing.

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Chapter 664 Unfamiliar And Frightening

Ouyang Qing attended a prestigious institution, whereas Ouyang Li was a student at a typical university of finance and economics. After graduating, she was an average employee at Sunshine Corporation, always keeping a low profile and avoiding public scrutiny.

"I'm back, Li. Why are you packing your bags? Are you leaving?" Ouyang Qi asked. "Where's Mom?" Ouyang Li asked. "Isn't she out?"

"Yes, she is, but she remained in Flower City. Dad is missing, and she wants to stay to find out if the Nan family has taken him," he explained. She didn't say a word and continued packing.

"Where are you going, Li? You can't leave. Our family is falling apart. What will happen to Mom and me if you leave?" Ouyang Qi said.

"Mom and Dad have always favored Ouyang Qing more. Am I only important now during a critical situation?" Ouyang Li sneered.

What she said was the truth. In the Ouyang family, Ouyang Qi was incompetent, while Ouyang Li lacked beauty and accomplishments. Thus, their parents preferred Ouyang Qing, who was both beautiful and intelligent.

Ouyang Duo was permanently in Flower City, scheming to bring down the Nan family, leaving Ouyang Li to manage the affairs in Pearl City. It became the norm for her to handle these matters as time passed.

She didn't utter a single complaint, and Ouyang Qing continued being the belle of the family. Everyone seemed to have forgotten that the Ouyang family had two daughters, only remembering Ouyang Qing.

"Li, I know you have made a lot of sacrifices for the family, and Mom and Dad are wrong to treat you that way, but you can't leave now," Ouyang Qi advised.

"Why can't I? The Nan family resides in Flower City. How should I seek revenge for our family if I stayed in Pearl City?" Ouyang Li retorted.

"You're going to Flower City? To retaliate against the Nan family?" He was surprised. Although Ouyang Li wasn't as inept as him, she was so lackluster that he didn't think she would wish to exact vengeance.

"Li, I do not wish to speak ill of Dad, but he has done awful things to the Nan family. They didn't even show mercy to their youngest child and brought this upon themselves. This revenge..."

"Whatever he did, he's dead now, and I have to avenge him," Ouyang Li said casually, which came as a shock to Ouyang Qi. "What did you say? Dad is dead?"

She pointed to a corner in the room. "His ashes are there."

He rushed over and saw a portrait of Ouyang Duo. There was an urn, incense, and candles in front of it. "What is going on? Didn't Dad run away? This can't be real. It can't be..." He almost lost it.

"It happened while he was fleeing to the border. His body was returned home by a friend. I had it cremated and brought his ashes home," she replied.

Ouyang Qi lost his mind and hugged the urn to himself, sobbing loudly. Ouyang Li maintained an even expression. "Do you still think revenge is unnecessary? Should we let him die in vain?"

His throat constricted with grief, and he passed out from weeping. When he regained consciousness, he noticed she was still packing her luggage.

"Shouldn't we have a funeral for Dad?" He couldn't wrap his head around her unemotional behavior. It wasn't even calm anymore, just pure indifference.

"Why should we, when we haven't gotten revenge for him? He failed to carry out his plot and paid with his life. It's embarrassing if others find out. Dad is a fugitive now. No one will sympathize with him or attend his funeral. I have selected a burial plot. We shall bury him after performing a few modest rites at his cemetery. He's gone and will never return, no matter how much you cry. The living is more important."

Ouyang Qi was unable to refute Ouyang Li's logic, but he still thought she was being too apathetic. "Why didn't you inform Mom and me about this? Would you have buried Dad without our knowledge if I hadn't returned?" He was a little disheartened.

"What good would telling you do besides causing more hurt? Would Dad come back to life if you and Mom had known?" Ouyang Li hurled back. "But we're his family..."

"So, why didn't you protect him in Flower City? Why did you allow the Nan family to vanguish him?" Ouyang Qi couldn't answer her.

"Dad's death is the result of his failure as much as your incompetence. Every single one of you is useless and smug. So quit crying. Why didn't you do something earlier? If crying could solve problems, then everyone should be hugging themselves and suffering. But does it solve anything?" Ouyang Li asked.

A desolate aura emanated from Ouyang Qi as he realized his sister suddenly seemed unfamiliar and frightening.

Has she always been this way, and no one noticed it, or did Dad's passing trigger the switch in her?

"I think we should tell Mom and postpone the burial until she arrives," he said. "Do as you wish. I'll leave this to you now that you're back. I have more pressing matters to attend to," Ouyang Li replied coldly. "What will you do?"

"I've said it—I will seek revenge for Dad." "How? By blowing up the Nan residence? Ouyang Qing tried it, and you still want to tear your way in?"

Ouyang Li eyed him, her tone icy. "Don't compare me with Ouyang Qing. I'm not as stupid as her."

The phone rang as soon as she finished speaking, and she walked away to answer it. After hanging up, she scribbled a phone number on a piece of paper and handed it to him.

"This is the cemetery's number, and they have also arranged for a priest. Contact them when you're ready for the burial. Leave the ashes if you don't want a burial. They're not going to rot anyway." Coldness seeped through his bones at her words, devoid of any warmth as if a stranger had passed rather than her biological father.

"I have something to do, so I'm heading out now." With that, she left, and the sound of the car ignition turning on could be heard from outside.

Ouyang Li strode into a clubhouse in Pearl City a few minutes later and saw a stylishly dressed young woman.

She was beautiful, with big eyes and an oval face. Her features were near perfect, but her expression was glacial.

"Are you Ouyang Li?" She raised her head and glanced at her.

"So you're Jin Fei, huh?" Ouyang Li returned.

"Watch your tone," Jin Fei warned arrogantly.

"I'd like to know how my dad died," Ouyang Li asked.

"Didn't I tell you that he got into a car accident while escaping to the border? My husband is a friend of your dad's, and we brought his remains home. Are you accusing us of having a hand in your dad's death with these questions?" Jin Fei came face to face with Ouyang Li and stared her down.

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Chapter 665 Extremely Excited

"Yes, I'm suspicious of that," Ouyang Li admitted. "If we were the ones who caused your dad's death, we would have just tossed his corpse into the wilderness. Why would we bother to send it all the way back and let you think that we are the culprits? There's no need for us to do that."

"It's precisely because it's suspicious that I'm seeking clarification. It's not that I don't believe you. I'm grateful that you brought his body back, but I have the right to get to the bottom of this."

"You have the right to ask, and I've already given you a clear answer. My husband was your dad's friend. He's helping you because he's loyal. Do you understand now?"

The woman called Jin Fei was very arrogant, and it was extremely annoying. Ouyang Li disliked her too. However, as Jin Fei mentioned she could help her get revenge, Ouyang Li had to tolerate her behavior.

"What do you need me to do now?" "Buy a film production company and invest in the filming of a movie. I want Huang Zichao to be the male lead, Zheng Lunlun to be the supporting male lead, and Ning Ran to be the supporting female lead."

"Invest in a movie? I've never done that, and Sunshine Corporation doesn't usually dabble in film."

"That doesn't mean you can't do it, right? I'll come up with the money while you are in charge of the operations. It doesn't really matter if the movie turns a profit or not. The money is mine, after all, so it's fine even if we make a loss," Jin Fei responded.

Upon hearing that, Ouyang Li was even more confused. Making a profit was the end goal of producing a movie. Why would she not care if it didn't?

"Why do you want to do this?"

"Don't ask so many questions, and just do as you're told. The movie's budget will be three hundred million and can be increased if needed. I want a lot of celebrities to star in the movie. You'll be responsible for coordinating the production. As for the rest, you may leave it to the professionals," Jin Fei said.

"You've mentioned who you want to play the supporting characters, but you didn't say who would be playing the female lead."

Jin Fei scoffed coldly. "Do you even have to ask? Of course, I'll be the lead. I wouldn't invest so much money or be unbothered about whether it will turn a profit otherwise."

So, she's spending this much money to make herself famous? But isn't the point of being famous getting rich? Why would she go through all this trouble if she's already loaded?

Ouyang Li could not understand her motives. However, she knew that even if she asked, Jin Fei would not give her an honest answer.

"Is this how you want me to repay you for bringing back my dad's body? If I do this for you, we'll be even?" Ouyang Li asked.

"Are you in that much of a hurry to not owe any favors? The Nan family didn't directly cause your father's death. But if it weren't for them, he would still be alive. I promised that I would help you get revenge on the condition that you follow my instructions. Now that your father is gone, many people will be trying to seize power over Sunshine Corporation. If I'm not here to help you, you definitely wouldn't be able to keep what your father left behind. Therefore, if you want to take revenge, you will need my support," Jin Fei replied.

"That won't be necessary. I don't need anyone's support." Ouyang Li surprisingly turned down her offer.

"Oh? You've got some guts. Why don't you give it a try, then?"

A week later, Nan Chen returned to Flower City from Livingsfill and resumed his endlessly busy life.

After the morning meeting ended, Nan Chen went back to his office and was greeted by Jiang Zhe, who had bought lunch for him.

As he had been insanely busy lately, he had been returning home in the wee hours of the morning and making do with whatever he could for lunch.

Ever since he came back from Livingsfill, he had not eaten a proper meal.

Nan Chen opened the lunch box, took a look at its contents, and frowned. "Take it away. I don't want to eat this."

"Is it not to your liking?" Jiang Zhe asked cautiously.

"No, I just don't want to eat this. Take it away."

Jiang Zhe could only do as he was told. "But you can't just have coffee. You must eat something, or it will damage your stomach."

After thinking about it, Nan Chen felt that what he said made sense. "Give it to me."

He took back the lunch box and had a few mouthfuls of food.

"Is it because you're used to eating Ms. Ding's food that you're unable to stomach someone else's?" Jiang Zhe asked.

Nan Chen glared at him, which instantly made him shut up.

"By the way, the manager from Star Entertainment visited earlier, but you were still in a meeting. The visit was about Ms. Ding. A company called Mountain Studios would like to invite her to star in a movie. They are offering a twenty-million contract. This is the most valuable contract that has been offered ever since Ms. Ding's debut. The manager from Star Entertainment would like to know if you plan on taking on this movie."

"Twenty million?"

Nan Chen was shocked when he heard the amount they were offering. It was not a huge amount to him, but it was to a newly debuted star like Ning Ran.

The film industry was currently suffering as many major studios did not have any filming material.

Ning Ran had only won one newcomer award, and someone was already willing to offer her that much money to star in a movie. It was amazing, indeed.

"What will the film be like? What's the genre? Have they sent over the contract?" asked Nan Chen.

"That is still in discussion, and the contract is not ready yet. But I heard that it's a fantasy film. As it concerns Ms. Ding, Mountain Studios would like to know if we will agree to sign with them."

"Why are you asking me when the details have not been sorted out yet? I won't be able to answer. She's currently filming a show. Will there be schedule clashes? What will the film be like? Who will be the sponsors? You haven't sorted out these details, yet you're asking me that question?"

"I will clarify with them and give you an update," Jiang Zhe said.

Then, he added, "Actually, I don't think it is necessary to work with them, which is why I am reporting this to you..."

Nan Chen gave him a look that said, "Explain yourself."

"I heard that they want Ms. Ding to play the second female lead. The payment is pretty high, but I feel that you won't agree to have Ms. Ding play the second female lead," Jiang Zhe expressed his opinion.

"So, why did you even ask me? Of course, we'll turn the offer down. Even if they offer a hundred million, I won't agree to let her be cast as the second female lead!" Nan Chen said coldly.

"Understood. I will call Star Entertainment right away and let them know," Jiang Zhe responded.

As expected of someone who had been Nan Chen's assistant for many years, he knew Nan Chen very well.

As soon as he heard that they were offering her the second female lead role, he knew that Nan Chen would refuse.

Not long after Jiang Zhe left the office, Nan Chen's phone rang. It was Ning Ran.

Nan Chen answered the call and heard some static from the other end of the line. He guessed that Ning Ran was probably at the filming site.

She did not usually call him while she was at work. For her to do that, something must have happened.

Nan Chen could roughly guess what had happened. "Aren't you working?" he asked casually.

"I heard someone invited me to star in a movie. Oh my goodness, the payment will be around twenty million. Is that true?" Ning Ran's voice was full of excitement.

"It's not," Nan Chen answered coldly.

"What? That's impossible. Ou herself called to inform me about it. How could it be untrue?" Ning Ran was confused.

"You're not a superstar. Do you think it's possible that they will offer that much for you to star in their movie?"

"But they already contacted me, and Star Entertainment said that they were seeking your approval on this. I thought you already were informed of this, but I guess you haven't."

"There is no such thing. Focus on your filming. How are the children?"

"The children are well. Erbao is also at the filming site today, and she did very well. I think she will win the Best Newcomer Award..."

"Pass the phone to her. I want to talk to her," Nan Chen interrupted.

"Okay. If anyone from Star Entertainment contacts you, you must agree to it. I don't care what the film is like or what role I'll be playing. I want to do it. Oh, my goodness. I'll be paid millions..." It seemed like Ning Ran was truly excited.

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Chapter 666 What A Joke

Meanwhile, the door of Orchid Club in Flower City, the high-end club where celebrities usually gathered, was closed. The closed sign had been hanging for several days.

An ordinary mid-range car drove up to the entrance of the club. An average-looking woman in a regular outfit with a few freckles on her face got out of the vehicle.

She was Ouyang Li, the eldest daughter of the Ouyang family and a young lady whose existence always got overlooked. Ouyang Li stood at the door and glanced at the plaque of Orchid Club with a complicated expression.

She had long known that the Ouyang family had such a base in Flower City, but she had never been here, nor had anyone had the idea of taking her here before.

And today, she was finally here. She wanted to reopen Orchid Club. She opened the door and was immediately dazzled by the interior's luxury in front of her eyes.

Her ordinary attire even seemed a little out of place here. Feng Jialing walked out at the sound and asked, "Why are you here?"

Ouyang Li replied, "Am I not welcomed?" "Of course not. What are you here for?" Feng Jialing asked.

"I told you when Dad was buried two days ago that I want to move the headquarters of Sunshine Corporation to Flower City, but I haven't got the approval of the board of directors yet. I'm here to discuss this matter with you." Ouyang Li said indifferently. "Moving the headquarters? Why?"

"That's because I'm going to stay in Flower City for a long time. I will live here so that I can have the opportunity to avenge Dad. Don't you also live here all the time?"

"I stay here only because Qing is serving her sentence here. I visit her from time to time and bring her stuff." Ouyang Li sneered, "You care so much for a prisoner. What an affectionate display of motherly love."

"Li, how can you say that about your sister? She is a prisoner now, but she is in this dilemma for the sake of the Ouyang family," Feng Jialing exclaimed angrily.

"Are you sure she did all that for the Ouyang family but not for her own good? Her dream all along was to marry Nan Chen. Unfortunately, Nan Chen didn't like her, so she went all down and dirty and finally doomed herself. Her stupidity not only led to the downfall of herself but also to Dad and the Ouyang family! I can't believe you feel sorry for such a b*tch who is no help at all. What a joke..."

Smack!

After Ouyang Li said that, Feng Jialing landed a slap on her cheek.

Ouyang Li burst out laughing. "You slapped me just because I said a few words about your precious daughter? Go on then, hit me more. You can vent your anger on me, but it won't change the fact that you guys have failed!"

"You..." Feng Jialing trembled with fury.

"Ever since I was young, you have only seen Ouyang Qing as your daughter. I don't mind it. But why are you still protecting her after she wrecked the Ouyang family? Are you nuts? Are you blind?" Ouyang Li roared.

"How dare you talk to me like this? I'm your mom!"

"Have you ever seen me as your daughter? Ouyang Qing went abroad to study while I joined the corporation as soon as I graduated. I started from the bottom and gradually climbed my way to the position of deputy CEO. Yet, you never praised me for my achievements. I have done so much in silence for the Ouyang family, but in your eyes, you can only see Ouyang Qing! I've told you guys before that Ouyang Qing can never achieve anything. You didn't believe me. Look at how things are now. My dad even lost his life. Ouyang Qing is now in prison, and Ouyang Qi is nothing but a useless man. You can only rely on me now. Don't you understand? How dare you hit me? Who do you think will look after you when you get old?" Ouyang Li flipped out and roared at Feng Jialing.

Feng Jialing was taken aback. Her eldest daughter was usually taciturn. She didn't expect her outburst.

"What do you want?" Feng Jialing asked.

"Let me ask you, do you want to revive Sunshine Corporation? Do you want to avenge Dad?" Ouyang Li pointed at Feng Jialing.

"What do you mean?"

"Now the stock price of Sunshine Corporation has plummeted to its lowest in five years. If it continues to fall like this, it will soon be deemed junk stock! Yet, you're here doing nothing but cleaning. What's the point?"

"What can I do? I don't know how to run the company. Over the years, your dad has not allowed me to interfere in the company's affairs. I can't do anything now!"

"I know how to run the company. I started from the bottom of the company and worked my way up step by step. Do you believe that I know more about the company's business than my dad? You can only rely on me now! You have to listen to me. Move the company's headquarters from Pearl City. We don't need to avoid the Nan family anymore. We will hang out under their noses and let them see that the Ouyang family's Sunshine Corporation is still thriving!"

Feng Jialing looked at her eldest daughter. The ever-so-inconspicuous Ouyang Li suddenly looked so unfamiliar to her.

"Are you sure it can work? Your dad had deliberately avoided going head-to-head with Nanshi Corporation for so many years, but he still lost in the end," Feng Jialing expressed her doubts.

"Dad failed miserably because of the fear in his heart. I'm different. I'm not afraid of the Nan family and will defeat them. Besides, things have become different." Ouyang Li scoffed.

"What's that?"

"In the past, Flower City was dominated by Nanshi Corporation, but now it's not. Prosperity Holdings has also returned to Flower City. Of course, they are aiming at Nanshi Corporation. If we also make our comeback, we can join forces with them and launch an attack on Nanshi Corporation. No matter how powerful Nanshi Corporation is, they are no match for us."

Feng Jialing pondered for a moment. "But your dad had contacted the Rong family before and wanted to join forces with them, but they turned him away. They ignored us when your dad was still alive. Now that your dad is gone and Sunshine Corporation is at its low ebb, are you sure they will agree to work with us?"

"Time is different now. The Rong family did not agree before because they knew they had no chance of winning. They didn't believe that Dad could defeat the Nan family. Most importantly, they were not ready at that time. They will not act rashly until they are ready. Now they have moved the headquarters back to Flower City. What does this tell us? They are ready now. Moreover, the Rong family had secretly acquired a large portion of Sunshine Corporation's shares. They have now become the major shareholder of Sunshine Corporation. We now have the same commonality of interest. Naturally, they will join forces with us to deal with Nanshi Corporation!"

Feng Jialing now looked at her eldest daughter in a new light. The latter was so astute about the whole situation. Does she have other plans and ideas all along?

"How do you know about this?" Feng Jialing was stunned.

"You don't have to worry about how it came to my knowledge. There is a problem now. If I want to do things according to my wishes, then I must be in control of Sunshine Corporation. Dad had always been the first major shareholder of the corporation. Now that he has passed away, you are the first in the order of succession to his shares. I hope that you can give me these shares so that I can carry on Dad's behest and destroy Nanshi Corporation!"

Feng Jialing's eyes widened. "You want your dad's inheritance? Are you here to oust me?"

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Chapter 667 For Real

"Mom, you're not being fair to me by saying that. What do you mean by I'm trying to oust you? So, you're saying you want to hold on to your shares? By all means, I will support you. But you'll have to take the helm and run the company. Are you up for it?" Ouyang Li was getting frustrated. "No, I'm not." Feng Jialing was well aware of her limitations and shortcomings.

"Aren't we doomed then? If you're not up for it, then who do you think is suitable? Ouyang Qing, who's currently in prison? Or Ouyang Qi—the good-for-nothing who only knows how to pick up girls? If nobody is suitable, are we just going to let the company be taken over by outsiders?" Ouyang Li rattled on.

Feng Jialing had no answers to all of Ouyang Li's questions. It seemed like Ouyang Li was making sense; other than her, there was no suitable person to take over Sunshine Corporation.

"If you don't want to transfer your shares to me, then you can just watch Sunshine Corporation be taken over by outsiders. I bet Dad won't be able to rest in peace." Ouyang Li continued to exert pressure on her mother.

"What if the relatives on the board of directors don't agree with the transfer?" Feng Jialing questioned. "That'll be my problem; I'll find a way to settle them. Let me ask you again, are you going to transfer your shares to me?" Ouyang Li asked.

"I need to consider." "Okay, take your time to consider." With that, Ouyang Li turned around and left. An hour later, Ouyang Li appeared in front of Ouyang Qing.

Ouyang Li had already reserved a visitation slot a few days ago. She also sought outside help to settle the authorities so that she could meet Ouyang Qing directly.

Ouyang Qing was not pleased to see her sister. Growing up, she had never thought highly of the latter. She felt that Ouyang Li was a plain Jane inside and out; from her looks to her personality and her sense of fashion, she was downright dull.

If she were part of an ordinary family, nobody would blame her for being average.

However, the Ouyang family was a prestigious family. Being average was equivalent to bringing shame to the family.

That was why Ouyang Li was practically non-existent in the family while Ouyang Qing was adored by everyone.

Thus, Ouyang Qing rarely made direct eye contact with her sister. In fact, she did not even tell people that she had a sister.

Even if she was in prison serving her sentence now, she continued to look down on this sister of hers.

"What are you doing here?" Ouyang Qing's tone was cold and distant.

"I'm here to see you, of course. Do you think I like coming to a place like this?" Ouyang Li retorted.

"Well, since you're here, help me with a matter."

"No, I'm not doing it," Ouyang Li refused flatly.

"You're outright rejecting me when I haven't said anything?"

"Your attitude is lacking. So no matter what you say, I won't agree to it." Ouyang Li raised her brows.

Ouyang Qing was startled for a moment. In her memory, Ouyang Li was not this aggressive.

Ouyang Li's retaliation hit hard on Ouyang Qing. She suddenly realized that she had a lower hand, given her current situation. Hence, she could not afford to act tough against Ouyang Li.

"What if I beg you?" Ouyang Qing softened her stance.

"No way," Ouyang Li persisted.

"There's no grudge between us; why are you treating me like this?" Ouyang Qing got fed up.

"When I first walked in, you won't even look me in the eye. Now that you need my help, do you expect me to agree right away just because you beg me? What a joke. Don't forget why you're here in the first place; you instigated someone to poison a child. Do you think the Nan family will let you walk out of here? At the present moment, who can you rely on except me? However, I'm not obliged to do you a favor unless there's a significant reason for me to do so."

"But you're my elder sister!" Ouyang Qing was getting exasperated.

"You never treated me as your elder sister. So why should I see you as my younger sister now?" Ouyang Li retorted.

"What is your true agenda for coming here then?" Ouyang Qing was enraged.

"Mom sent me here to ask you to sign a document."

"What document?"

"A document stating that you agree to relinquish the inheritance of Sunshine Corporation shares."

Ouyang Qing gasped in shock. "Why must I sign this?"

"That's because you're a criminal, and your reputation is tainted. The company will only get better if you sever all ties with Sunshine Corporation and the Ouyang family. Once you relinquish all inheritance rights, you will no longer pose a threat to me. And when you no longer pose a threat to anybody, you will be safe too. I mean, nobody will care about whether a good-for-nothing is alive or dead, right?" Ouyang Li said matter-of-factly.

"Are you saying that if I refuse to sign, I'll be dead?" Ouyang Qing uttered in shock.

"Maybe."

"You're threatening me?"

"Yes," Ouyang Li answered. "But this is also for your own good."

"What can you do to me? Don't tell me you're going to come in here and kill me?"

Ouyang Li shook her head calmly. "Of course, I'll not be doing that. But if the reward is high enough, I'm sure there'll be someone who is willing to take the risk and try to get

close to you. This is not totally unachievable. It's challenging but still possible if the reward is handsome."

Ouyang Li paused for a moment before continuing, "However, if you do as I say, I will engage the best attorney to fight your case and ask for a reduced sentence. Once you're out, Sunshine Corporation will be in good shape. Perhaps, I can consider offering you a position then. But in order to benefit from this arrangement, you'll have to listen to me. You said you have a favor to ask. I suppose it's about getting you the best attorney, right? So, other than engaging the best attorney for you, I'll use connections to make your stay here more comfortable."

Seeing Ouyang Qing was listening attentively, Ouyang Li was pleased. "This is also Mom's wish. You can start to think about it now. I will not come again, and I will not try to convince you. You have three minutes to decide. If you don't agree, I'll leave immediately, and you'll never see me again."

With that, Ouyang Li stopped talking and began to look at her watch.

"Is this really Mom's wish? Why is she doing this?" Ouyang Qing was doubtful that her mother would be so cruel to her.

"Didn't I explain it clearly earlier? You're a criminal now. It's for the good of our Ouyang family if we sever all ties with you. It's only right that you pay the price for your foolishness, but why drag our family in as well? I don't want to waste any more time on you. Decide quickly whether you want to sign the document or not."

Ouyang Qing trembled as she watched Ouyang Li making all these threats. This was not the Ouyang Li that she knew. Since when had she become so ruthless?

Ouyang Qing was not willing to sign the document, but she did not have a choice.

"Will I really be safe if I sign the document?"

"Of course. If you sign the document, you're as good as useless, a burden off everyone's shoulders. When this incident dies down, you can feign some illness, and I'll spend a bit of money to bail you out for treatment. This way, you won't even need to serve your jail term," Ouyang Li assured Ouyang Qing and threw more bait to convince her.

"Will you really do that?" Ouyang Qing was tempted.

Freedom was the most important thing to her right now. If this plan worked out, she was confident of making a comeback in the future.

Ouyang Li might have the upper hand currently, but once she was out of this place, she would find a way to claim her shares back.

"Okay, I'll sign if you promise that you can bail me out based on medical reasons." Ouyang Qing tried to negotiate in her favor.

"No, sign first. Then, I'll consider whether to bail you out based on medical reasons. There's only one minute left. You better decide now. Otherwise, I'll leave." Ouyang Liwas not going to let Ouyang Qing call the shots.

Ouyang Qing panicked; she could see that Ouyang Li was not joking around.

Further, she was not confident that Ouyang Li would find a way to get her out if she agreed to relinquish her share.

On the other hand, if she refused to sign the document, she was worried that Ouyang Li would hire a hitman to eliminate her.

Don't underestimate the power of money. I'm sure someone will take the job if the reward is attractive. I can't afford to take this risk. I'm still young; I can't die like this.

"All right, I'll sign." Ouyang Qing finally made up her mind.

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Chapter 668 Erbao The Little Glutton

Meanwhile, in Livingsfill, Erbao's performance was so exceptional at the photo shoot that one could be forgiven for mistaking her for a superstar.

During the break in between, the entire production team wanted to play with her. Some gave her chocolate, while others gave her candy and potato chips.

Erbao accepted all the snacks and thanked the adults with a big smile but ate none. Ever since the poisoning incident, the girl had learned not to eat anything given to her by strangers.

She did not even dare eat the food Qiao Zhan's subordinates offered her. That was quite difficult for Erbao since she loved to eat. All she could do when facing the snacks was secretly gulp back her desire.

At that moment, Cheng Xiangyun walked over and quietly handed Erbao a chocolate bar. "I bought this myself, so it's safe to eat."

Erbao then turned to look intently at Ning Ran and waited for her permission. "You can eat the one you got from Aunt Xiang, but put the rest away," instructed Ning Ran softly.

Erbao was over the moon when she got the approval to eat the snack, and after tearing open the packaging, she took a large bite.

"Is the contract signed yet?" Ning Ran was concerned about the show that offered twenty million, for she did not wish to miss such an opportunity. "The company refused," replied Cheng Xiangyun.

Ning Ran was taken aback when she heard that. "Why? Do they consider twenty million too little? That's how much a superstar is offered! A newcomer like me is more than happy to accept it."

"The payment isn't the problem. I think Sir Chen doesn't want you to take the role." Immediately, Ning Ran boiled with anger because that was what she was afraid of. The company will go to Nan Chen whenever they have a contract that concerns me and have him make the final decision.

That was why she called Nan Chen personally with the hope that he would not stop her from accepting the offer.

However, things turned out to be the exact opposite of what she wished for—Nan Chen still thwarted her plan.

"Look after Erbao for me. I'm going to call him!" Ning Ran then angrily dialed Nan Chen's phone number, but the man did not answer.

As much as she tried, it was still to no avail.

"I'm so mad right now! Does he think he's all that just because he's the boss and that he gets to decide my every move?" Ning Ran was so furious that a vein popped out on her forehead.

"There's nothing wrong with that, though. He's the boss, so of course, he gets to decide everything. I mean, who else has the right to do that if not him?" voiced Cheng Xiangyun while shaking her head.

She, too, thought it was a shame that the twenty million worth of contract got forfeited, but she was just an assistant who had no right to offer her opinion, much less decide for her employer.

"Why does he get to decide? Do I really have no say at all?" Ning Ran refused to accept what Cheng Xiangyun had just said.

"Artists are supposed to play by the company's rules. Otherwise, they'd be considered breaching their contracts and be forced to fork out a huge amount of money as compensation. This is just how it works."

"No, I'm not fine with that. I have to return to Flower City to reason with Nan Chen. That man has no right to dictate my future. If I don't accept the twenty million offer, people in

the industry will think I asked for more. Who will dare cast me in the future, and how will I develop my career then? My future is on the line here, so I can't just let it be!"

Erbao, who was still enjoying her snack, was thrilled when she heard that. "Are we going back? Then I'm going too!"

"This has nothing to do with you, so stay in Livingsfill with Aunt Xiang. I won't be long."

"You're not really considering returning to Flower City alone, are you? I wouldn't do that if I were you," uttered Cheng Xiangyun.

"I don't have a choice; Nan Chen obviously thinks I'm a pushover. How am I going to be an actress if I don't get to act? I want to be a professional performer, not just an eye candy!" exclaimed Ning Ran.

In response to that, Cheng Xiangyun sighed. "You should be more grateful for what you have. What I wouldn't give to be just an eye candy living off somebody. I don't think you should jump to conclusions because there must be a reason Sir Chen turned down the contract. If he wanted to ruin your career, why would he invest so much in you in the first place? Since he wants you to be a superstar, it's only natural that he's selective with the roles you take. Some well-known actresses took roles they shouldn't have, and those mistakes ended up killing their careers. Sir Chen is an expert, so I think you should trust him, not go against him. Besides, he's the boss. Do you think you have what it takes to twist his arm?"

After listening to Cheng Xiangyun, Ning Ran fell silent.

"So, are we still going back to Flower City?" inquired Erbao, who only cared about going home.

"Why do you want to go back so much, little glutton?" questioned Cheng Xiangyun.

"Aunt Xiang, you can't call me that. I'm very self-disciplined and not gluttonous at all. I want to return to Flower City because I'm sure Great-Grandpa and Great-Grandma miss me very much, and I want to let them know that I'm as lively as a cricket again. I also wish to see Daddy and Uncle Xing. Last but not least, I miss the desserts of Flower City." After all that Erbao had said, the last sentence sounded like the main reason.

"Sir Chen will decide whether you can go back. It'll have to be after everything has settled down in Flower City," informed Cheng Xiangyun.

"I'll call him again later to ask about the situation there. If he still doesn't answer my call, I'll go to him!" voiced Ning Ran.

On the other hand, Nan Chen looked at his phone and saw four missed calls from Ning Ran.

He purposely ignored them because he knew what the woman wanted to talk about.

"Mr. Chen, I think you should explain to Ms. Ding. Otherwise, she'll never let it go," advised Jiang Zhe beside Nan Chen.

However, he dared not say another word after Nan Chen glanced at him.

"Is the news you received reliable?" questioned Nan Chen after turning to his assistant.

"Absolutely. What we heard at first was a fantasy film, but it turned out to be science fiction. The script is almost the same as ours; it's about parallel worlds and centers around the theme of family. Moreover, many in the production team were offered high salaries."

Nan Chen furrowed his eyebrows when he heard that.

"I keep feeling there's something off here, Mr. Chen. Scripts are supposed to be kept secret before the actual films are released; no one besides the production team knows their contents. However, the team isn't allowed to share what they know because they signed a non-disclosure agreement, so how did those guys know what was in our script?" Jiang Zhe shared his thoughts.

"What are the odds that it's a coincidence?" responded Nan Chen with a question of his own.

"I think they're very low. Due to the relatively high production cost of making science fiction films, there aren't many such projects in the country. Even if they had planned to produce a sci-fi all along, it's unlikely that our scripts would end up the same."

"So what's your conclusion?" inquired Nan Chen, gesturing for his assistant to get to the point.

"You should know already, Mr. Chen. I believe they're intentionally targeting us. However, I can't figure out why they'd offer Ms. Ding a role in the movie if they really are against us," stated Jiang Zhe.

"That's because they know I won't allow Ning Ran to be their second female lead. I'd be playing into their hands if I signed the contract. What would people think of us if I let our female lead play second fiddle to theirs in a similar film?"

"If that's the case, that means they really are targeting our new film, but what's the point?" Jiang Zhe scratched his head in bafflement.

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"Did you get someone to look into Mountain Studios?" inquired Nan Chen. "Yes. It's an ordinary film and television production company that has released several major online movies. None of them were well-received, though.

The company didn't produce anything in the last two years and was rumored to be on the verge of bankruptcy and reorganization. I find it hard to believe that a company like that can afford to invest hundreds of millions in a blockbuster film," stated Jiang Zhe.

"Did you hit your head or something today? What's so hard to believe about that? What you just told me is precisely why it's completely believable," voiced Nan Chen coldly.

It did not take long before the clever assistant caught on. "You mean Mountain Studios have been acquired and that they can afford such an expensive project because they have a new boss now?"

Nan Chen said nothing in response, but that was exactly what he meant. "There are many decent film and television production companies in the industry, so why acquire a second-rate one like Mountain Studios?" muttered Jiang Zhe to himself. "The investor is an amateur looking to acquire a cheap company," replied Nan Chen briefly.

Immediately, Jiang Zhe understood what was going on. "I see. The investor, who knows nothing about the film and television industry, didn't want to start from scratch, so to them, buying an established company would be the fastest way to get his feet wet. Someone in a hurry would naturally overlook quality and go for the cheapest option, which just so happened to be Mountain Studios, the company facing imminent reorganization."

Nan Chen kept quiet again because he knew Jiang Zhe was smart and could understand what he was getting at without needing him to say much.

Sometimes, the assistant could even do that without Nan Chen uttering a word. However, Jiang Zhe was guileful enough to play dumb from time to time so his boss could have a sense of superiority when explaining things to him.

Most leaders would not appreciate being denied the opportunity to do so by subordinates who were quick on the uptake. Nothing good ever came out of those who tried to be smart alecks.

Hence, it was advisable for subordinates to play coy from time to time to avoid trouble. As someone who had been serving as the difficult Nan Chen's assistant without issues for so long, Jiang Zhe was more than familiar with that life principle.

"What should we do then?" inquired Jiang Zhe humbly. "Find out who acquired Mountain Studios," instructed Nan Chen. "Yes, Mr. Chen."

Just when Jiang Zhe was about to leave, Nan Chen added, "Call Qiao Zhan and ask him to ensure that Ning Ran doesn't return to Flower City." "Madam wants to return to Flower City?"

"Just call Qiao Zhan." "Yes, Mr. Chen." Meanwhile, at Orchid Club, Tang Jing had just reached the door when she heard loud noises coming from inside. It was as if the place was under construction.

Before Tang Jing could make a phone call, she heard a voice from behind. "Are you Tang Jing?"

The woman then turned around to see a lady in a regular outfit with a freckled face. "I am. Are you the one who asked me to come here?" questioned Tang Jing.

"Get in the car. There's something we should discuss," said the lady before walking toward an ordinary-looking sedan. However, Tang Jing remained standing. "Who are you, exactly? What do you want from me?"

"I'm the owner of this club, and since the building is under renovation, it's inconvenient for us to talk here. Let's do that elsewhere," suggested Ouyang Li.

Tang Jing was somewhat surprised because she had been to Orchid Club and seen how luxurious it was on the inside. Why would she want to renovate the place?

Dressed ordinarily, Ouyang Li did not even look like someone who could afford admission into Orchid Club, so it was natural that Tang Jing doubted her when she said she owned the club.

"Hurry up. I don't have time to lose," urged Ouyang Li.

"Who the heck are you? You said you had something important to talk to me about, so why not do it here?"

"I worry that others would overhear our conversation if we talk here. I know all about the things you and Ouyang Qing had planned and that you're her accomplice. I have proof," informed Ouyang Li.

At that point, Tang Jing was even more shocked because she thought she would be fine after Ouyang Qing got locked away.

She immediately got into Ouyang Li's car as told after realizing what the woman knew.

"Did Ouyang Qing ever tell you that she has a sister?" inquired Ouyang Li.

"No," answered Tang Jing honestly since she had never heard anyone mention that Ouyang Qing had a sister.

"That'd be me. I'm Ouyang Duo's eldest daughter and also the head of the Ouyang family now," revealed Ouyang Li briefly but clearly.

Of course, Tang Jing did not buy it because Ouyang Qing was beautiful and elegant, while the woman before her looked ordinary and lacked fashion sense. How could she possibly be an Ouyang? She can't just simply say that she is and expect me to believe her.

"You don't believe me?" asked Ouyang Li as she looked at Tang Jing.

"I've never seen you."

"It doesn't matter if you don't believe me. You and Ouyang Qing poisoned the Nans' children, but you still have your freedom even though Ouyang Qing got locked away. I just need to make a phone call, and the police will have you arrested in no time," uttered Ouyang Li.

"I'm innocent! Ouyang Qing tried to make me do it, but I didn't. She did it herself!" exclaimed Tang Jing.

"I have proof and Ouyang Qing as a witness. You and she worked together for a while. Otherwise, you wouldn't have a chance to appear in the film. Still, I heard you weren't given much screen time. Isn't that right? I mean, you're here while they're still shooting in Livingsfill."

Tang Jing was rendered utterly speechless, for she had no idea how much dirt Ouyang Li had on her.

Even though Tang Jing was not directly responsible for poisoning the two children, she did help Ouyang Qing with the scheme.

The Nans will probably come after me if Ouyang Qing insists that I had a hand in the plot. Tang Jing knew she would be doomed if the Nan family were to intervene.

"What do you want?" questioned Tang Jing directly because she was ready to do whatever it took to save herself, no matter what evidence Ouyang Li had.

"Tell me everything about Ouyang Qing." Ouyang Li's request was simple.

"Don't you know that already?" inquired Tang Jing curiously.

"There are still things I don't know about her, and you're going to tell me. Besides that, I want to know everything about the movie you worked on," replied Ouyang Li.

"Why would you want to know about all that? What are you planning?"

"That's none of your concern. All you have to do is cooperate with me as you did with Ouyang Qing. Whatever she promised you but failed to deliver, I'll make it happen."

After hearing that, Tang Jing knew she was in trouble once more. I got nothing in return for putting myself on the line by working with Ouyang Qing, and now I have to do it all over again with someone else? Besides, this woman looks nothing like who she claimed to be. Still, I can't risk rejecting her. What will I do if she does turn out to be Ouyang Qing's sister and actually has dirt on me? I can't take that big of a risk.

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Chapter 670 Heartwarming

Meanwhile, in Livingsfill, Ning Ran returned to the inn after she was done filming. After taking a shower and changing into a fresh pair of clothes, she began calling Nan Chen again.

If Nan Chen continued to ignore her, she would fly back to Flower City right after she was done with the filming session tomorrow morning. She wanted to question his decision and rationale for prohibiting her from accepting that job worth twenty million.

However, Nan Chen still didn't pick up her calls. In a fury, she started packing her luggage and prepared to go back to Flower City the next day and meet up with Nan Chen in person to confront him.

At that moment, she seemed to hear voices coming from Dabao's room. When she entered the room, Ning Ran saw Dabao talking to Nan Chen via a video call.

The finding sent her into a rage. Apparently, he's not busy. He's just avoiding my calls on purpose. She strode up to the camera at once. "Why didn't you answer my phone calls?"

Nan Chen replied disdainfully, "I'm in a conversation with Dabao. Where are your manners?" Dabao didn't know what happened between his mommy and daddy, so he had no choice but to let Ning Ran take over the video call.

"Are you intentionally dodging my calls because you're feeling guilty? Ning Ran was beside herself. "What do I have to feel guilty of?"

"Because you stopped me from taking up that job offer. This is an opportunity for me to secure a twenty-million contract. Am I supposed to follow your instruction blindly and reject that offer?"

"Is twenty million a significant amount?" he asked. "That money may be negligible to you, but it is a lot for an actress like me. Besides, this is not just about the pay. This is also a chance to prove my worth as an actress!"

"You can only prove your worth by participating in an outstanding film, not just focusing on the remuneration," he corrected her. Ning Ran was stumped because there wasn't any flaw in his logic.

"A high-paying job and a masterpiece are not conflicting possibilities. Instead, the combination is a win-win situation." She finally found the right words to counter his statement.

"A win-win situation? What is your basis for saying that?" "What is your reasoning for saying this can't be a win-win situation then?" she retorted.

"Fine. With your qualifications, do you think you're capable of securing a contract worth twenty million?" he asked. "I-I'm still a rookie. I haven't participated in a lot of films, and my most honorable award is the Best Newcomer Award—"

"It seems like you still have some self-awareness of your worth and realize you don't deserve the twenty million payment," he interjected her.

"What do you mean by that? How am I not deserving of the money if they're willing to pay me, and I'm willing to take the job?"

Nan Chen recognized his choices of words were too harsh, so he rectified himself. "I meant to say that with your experiences, it is very unlikely for you to be offered a role with such a high remuneration."

"That's why I'm happy, and all the more reason I should treasure this opportunity."

"No. You need to be more level-headed, especially when you're overjoyed. Why do you think you deserve the high earnings?" Nan Chen said.

Ning Ran couldn't produce an answer. That's right. Why do I deserve the high earnings? Is it because I'm pretty? Well, there are so many other gorgeous actresses in the entertainment industry. Is it because of my good acting skills, then? There are plenty of talented actresses too. Moreover, even recruiting those famous stars with established reputations won't require such lucrative pay. So, what is the reason? I've really never considered this question.

"Do you see it now? When you calm down and mull over this matter, you'll realize no one would offer such a high payment to an actress at your level. However, someone has put forward this proffer now, and there are three possibilities behind this. The first being the other party is simply a loaded fool. The second reason is that you're the chosen actress. They have excluded every other candidate and only want you to be featured in their film. Thirdly, the other party has an ulterior motive, and they are merely tempting you with extravagant remuneration to deceive you."

He paused briefly before continuing, "Of course, I am inclined to believe in the third possibility. This is why I rejected the offer in your stead."

It was rare for a taciturn person like Nan Chen to speak in such a lengthy and elaborate manner.

"Do you have evidence to support your claim, then?"

"I don't have evidence for the time being," he answered with alacrity.

"Who are you to turn down that contract then, since you don't have any proof?"

"Okay. Let's say we plan to go hiking one day. When we reach the foot of the mountain, one of the villagers tells us there may be wild tigers lurking in the forest, but no one can verify the tigers' presence. Will you still choose to hike that mountain in that case? If you choose to walk away, you may miss out on the chance to hike the mountain this time. However, you have the alternative of climbing other tiger-free hills. Let's assume you insist on conquering the mountain, and there are really tigers there. Will others consider you a valiant, adventurous hero when the tiger devours you? I don't think so. Conversely, you'll be nothing but a stubborn fool."

Then, he explained that matter from another perspective, "Similarly, in managing a business, many people assume making a profit is their utmost priority, but that's not the case. On the contrary, avoiding loss is the first concern. Therefore, I made this decision for you to circumvent risk before exploring other prospects. Do you have any more questions?"

Ning Ran was rendered speechless and dazed. He's so annoying! There's no way to win against untalkative people like him in an argument once they are determined to speak.

"A-Anyway, I'm unwilling to accept your decision."

"Your acceptance is of the least importance. I am the boss, so I'm authorized to have the final say. I already ordered Jiang Zhe to contact Qiao Zhan. Qiao Zhan will never allow you to leave Livingsfill, so you're forbidden to return here without my permission. Perhaps you're thinking about what control Qiao Zhan has over you and that there's no way he'll manhandle you, right? Well, you're right. However, if he fails to stop you, that means he's neglectful of his duties, so he'll be dismissed. Qiao Zhan has been safeguarding you and the kids. Can you bring yourself to see him get fired? If you can, then you are free to do as you wish. Having said that, I should remind you to think this matter through. Who will protect you and the kids if Qiao Zhan loses his job? Deliberate well before you make any decisions. That's all I have to say. I have other work to attend to, so I'm hanging up now."

With that, Nan Chen ended the video call without waiting for Ning Ran's response.

Dabao was amused, listening to the conversation between his father and mother.

Although he was still very young, he could understand everything his parents mentioned.

He even fell deep into his thought after listening to them.

"Mommy, are you planning to leave Erbao and me here while you secretly sneak back to Flower City?" Dabao touched on the delicate subject.

"No. Don't listen to his nonsense."

"Daddy never spouts nonsense," Dabao uttered solemnly.

"You're siding with him again. Do you know he's bullying me?" Ning Ran said.

"I think Daddy's right. A noble person should make their wealth in just and ethical means."

She laughed in exasperation. Dabao has, without a doubt, inherited Nan Chen's genes. His manner of speech is so similar to his, always pontificating these principles and sayings. It seems like he has even surpassed Nan Chen in this aspect!

"Don't laugh, Mommy. You're intelligent, so you should already fathom Daddy is right. You're just reluctant to admit it. Once you calm down and ponder on this matter, you'll understand Daddy has your best interest at heart," Dabao persuaded her.

In fact, Ning Ran didn't have to give that matter a second thought to know that Nan Chen was right. She was simply unwilling to admit her erroneous judgment.

"That's enough. I'll reconsider. It's getting late, so you should get some rest now," she said to her son.

"Mommy, you won't secretly run away, right?" he asked dubiously.

"Do I strike you as such an unreasonable person? Don't worry. I won't."

Dabao stepped forward and hugged his mother's neck. "Mommy, I love you."

His sudden heartwarming action touched Ning Ran, prompting the hint of anger lingering in her chest to dissipate entirely.