

Chapter 1081: Starmoon

With her stern reply, Zhenxiu knew instantly that she was not joking.

“But why...” Zhenxiu’s bubbly eyes were filled with immense curiosity. “Could it be that you were hurt by a past relationship? A painful breakup?”

Vivian reacted instantly with a change in expression. Her body shivered ever so slightly, before she took a deep breath, her eyes filled with an array of complexity. She then brushed it off. “Xu Zhenxiu, you’re too young to understand this. Eat up, I don’t feel like talking anymore.”

Zhenxiu, on the other hand, was not keen on letting go as she pushed on. “What’s there to be shy about? No one else understands Chinese but us. C’mon Ms Vivian, love is painful, but that man must be blind to give up on a woman like you! This time around you find a better man and put that rascal to his place!”

Vivian noted her student’s blind fury as she awkwardly chuckled. “How are you so sure that I was the victim?”

“Are you not? So you dumped him? That doesn’t sound right. Why would you feel bad about it then?” Zhenxiu blinked with blurry eyes.

Vivian lightly sighed. “There are things even when other people forgive you for, you may never forgive yourself.”

Zhenxiu was quick to reply. “So you did something really bad, and now you just couldn’t bear to hurt someone else?”

Vivian startled at her question, staring soullessly at the girl.

Zhenxiu ruffled the ladle. Soup splattered all around the serving bowl, as she waved her hand in disagreement. “Huh, so what if you did wrong! People make mistakes all the time, if you scald your tongue on the first spoonful of soup, you don’t avoid the soup for the rest of your life, do you? Why’d you make yourself suffer over minor setbacks!”

She caught Vivian staring blankly at the abyss. She then took this moment to speak, “Well Miss, I’m sure this is something about me you weren’t told about me. Back when I was in junior high I was a rebellious messed up kid. I was expelled from school, and I spent most of my days picking fights, went on illegal road rallies, or went pickpocketing on the bus.”

Vivian was completely caught off guard as she stared at Zhenxiu with utter disbelief.

“Anyways eventually the law caught up to me and I was finally arrested. While I was detained, Big Sis, a police officer, told me that my past could be forgiven so long as I worked hard to fix my mistakes! I wasn’t confident if any of that were even true, not until I met my rusty Uncle...”

“Your Uncle?” Vivian was confused.

“Erm...” Zhenxiu continued regardless. “Anyways there’s this person back in China that’s really important to me. He might be sneaky and always up to no good, but he was always the best to me. He

never held it against me when I stole his wallet and phone, and even beat up the bad guys that came after me!

From that moment on I knew, that the mistakes I've made in the past stay in the past. As long as I put in the effort to change my ways and regain the trust of the people that genuinely care about me, everything will be fine! You don't have to beat yourself up over things you've done in the past!"

Vivian was at a loss for words for a long while, before she finally cracked a smile. "You have a great mindset, but I'm not as thoughtful and optimistic as you. Nevertheless, I will try."

"Ms Vivian, speaking of which, I'm sure you're still in love with the man." Zhenxiu brought herself closer. "Otherwise you wouldn't have reacted the way you did when we were talking about it."

Vivian lowered her head as she lightly chuckled.

'Pfft, you're hiding it again." Zhenxiu vented her frustration. "Fine, I'm just gonna eat my food then."

Watching Zhenxiu churning down the food on the table, Vivian could finally take a breath of relief despite having a thousand thoughts running through her head.

Right at that moment, a young and suave-looking man, tailed by two men in well-fitted suits came right through the door.

"Morning Chairman!"

Eunjung and the other servants quickly bowed upon his entry.

It was Park Jonghyun.

Vivian stood up and gave him a nod. Even she had to show her respect to him.

Zhenxiu was rather awkward at his presence, but she nonetheless still took to addressing her older cousin.

Park Jonghyun remarked with a warm smile. "Cousin, you're still on your breakfast I see, you gotta be quick or else you're making Ms Vivian wait again."

"Yeap, making progress." Zhenxiu at this moment looked way more serious than before. "Do you have to work today? Or just making rounds to check on Grandpa?"

Park Jonghyun chuckled. "I thought I'd stop by to visit him, but he seems much more energized now that you're here."

Zhenxiu nodded. "You don't have to worry about me."

Park Jonghyun, however, took his time as he respectfully turned towards Vivian. "Ms Vivian, I wasn't too sure if you'd feel accustomed to Korean cuisine, but if you would prefer Chinese food instead I can get someone to prepare right away."

"You're being too kind. I'm fine with anything really, I will eat whatever Zhenxiu is eating," Vivian politely replied.

"I see." Park Jonghyun hesitated, before he swiftly added, "I do have something else for you Ms Vivian, we're having a conference banquet with our American partners tonight, many renowned academics would be invited as well. I'll like to invite you to be my partner..."

"Mr Park," Vivian cut him off. "I'm grateful for the invitation, but I'm less of a party person."

"Oh..." Park Jonghyun's eyes were filled with slight dejection as he glanced towards the woman he adored. "Well isn't it a pity. I think I should go upstairs now."

Park Jonghyun was about to make his way up before he halted abruptly, and turned backward. "Cousin, Grandpa's been telling me that the holding of Starmoon Group shares will be officially transferred to your name in the near future. The moon ivory that Aunt has handed to you must be kept well. When the time comes both the moon ivory and the star constellation with grandpa will have to reunite with one another."

"The moon ivory? You mean the platinum moon ivory pendant?" Zhenxiu while listening was startled at its mention.

"Exactly. Is there a problem with it?"

"Oh erm..." Zhenxiu frustratedly bit on her lip. "You see, cousin, I...passed it to someone else..."

Park Jonghyun was confused before he cracked a halfhearted smile. "Who did you give it to?" Zhenxiu was a tad awkward before he scratched her head. "I gave it to..."

"Wait!"

Park Jonghyun cut her off before he hinted to everyone to leave. With a stern look, he questioned, "Keep it down, this is a serious matter. Don't let anyone know alright!"

Zhenxiu was nervous as she walked towards him, she then brought herself to his ear. "Back then, to offer my gratitude to Big Brother Yang, I handed it to him."

"Yang Chen?"

"Yeah." Zhenxiu nodded.

Park Jonghyun was slightly unamused but had quickly shielded it with a smile. "I see, nevermind I'll talk to Grandpa about it. Nonetheless, the Moon ivory is our family treasure, and we will eventually have to take it back. But we will do it properly and respectfully."

Zhenxiu unanimously agreed, hoping however that they could invite Yang Chen over from Zhonghai. Being away from him all this while left her longing to see him again. He was never home When she called.

In a housing estate at the Western Suburbs of Zhonghai.

Lin Ruoxi was sitting idly by herself in her bedroom, slowly putting her phone down after a conversation with Liu Mingyu.

Upon Liu Mingyu's return to Zhonghai, she deliberately recapped her experiences and the local condition in Australia just as they planned prior.

If things were as they were before, much of their conversation would consist of how Xue Zhiqing's plan was foiled. But from her subsequent revelations, it seemed as though it really went as Yang Chen explained it to be. It left Lin Ruoxi dispirited and in awe.

As Liu Mingyu narrated her bitter experience along the way, she mentioned the process in which sparked a change in opinion towards Xue Zhiqing. At this point, Lin Ruoxi was sure that, in Liu Mingyu's heart, she began treating her as one of their own.

As for what was mentioned in Yang Chen's narrative was but a tiny bit of truth, as Xue Zhiqing had undoubtedly done plenty that would leave her in complete admiration. Yang Chen had lost his cultivations. Liu Mingyu might have enough inner qi to sustain only herself. But Xue Zhiqing with her frail body and immense perseverance accompanied them out of no man's land without slowing the group. She risked her own life for the lives of both Yang Chen and Liu Mingyu.

Lin Ruoxi was at a loss with her emotions. She felt wronged but there wasn't much to feel wronged about. More than anything, she felt guilty but was more overwhelmed with resentment and bitterness.

If only she was there at that moment by her husband instead of Xue Zhiqing. Things would have definitely gone her way instead!

Just while she was in deep contemplation of the matter, a loud succession of knocks resonated from the door. It was Wang Ma. "Young Miss, come down quickly, there's something we need to talk about!"

Chapter 1082 Outlaw King

Lin Ruoxi heard her calls and reactively dried the tears on the verge of overflowing through the edges of her eyes. She then quickly replied, "I'm coming."

She steeled herself and quickly left her room and straight down the flight of stairs.

In the living room sat Guo Xuehua and Yang Chen in a stern discussion. Guo Xuehua quickly took to notice Lin Ruoxi approaching them from afar as she called, "Ruoxi, come on here, Zhenxiu's cousin from Korea ringed us up."

"Zhenxiu's cousin? Park Jonghyun?" A jolt of adrenaline went through her. "Is Zhenxiu okay?"

"She's fine, couldn't be better. She called back just two days ago, didn't she? Telling us about how hard she's been studying." Guo Xuehua chuckled. "Is about an important accessory that she had left in Zhonghai with Yang Chen. Now her cousin's personally inviting us to go on a trip to Korea. "

Yang Chen unwrapped his palm to present the Moon Ivory pendant he retrieved upstairs just moments ago. "This is the one Jonghyun was talking about. Apparently it was an heirloom to the Starmoon Group. she handed it to me without any clue of what it was.

This time around he's offering us to go visit as an appreciative gesture for taking care of Zhenxiu while staying over for a couple of days and to pass this over while we're there."

The pendant was hardly foreign to Lin Ruoxi as she asked, "Are we handing it back immediately? Is it urgent?"

“It is, which was why you were called down in such a rush,” Guo Xuehua took to reply. “Zhenxiu’s cousin said, by the eleventh November, the Park clan will have an important event. We will have to pass the pendant back by then.

Regardless, I don’t think it’s a great plan for us all to be there. It would be best if the both of you visited her as a couple. Besides, it’s almost the end of the year now, so both of you should take some time off to unwind and relax for once. Not to mention you both missed out on your honeymoon didn’t you?”

Lin Ruoxi turned her gaze to Yang Chen, only to notice his expression filled to the brim with anticipation.

Lin Ruoxi’s face instantly turned red as a tomato, she knew instantly what nasty thoughts Yang Chen had in mind.

Nevertheless, whether it was to meet Zhenxiu, or to visit, Korea, the thought of either fascinated her. After all the Korean dramas that she binge-watched, she was now finally offered an opportunity to visit for a leisure trip.

Furthermore, since the Xue Zhiqing ‘incident’, Lin Ruoxi was hardly comfortable letting Yang Chen off on his own for long periods of time. Who knew if he would bring back another lover?!

“Hmm...we’ll leave by the end of the month then. It’s enough time for me to make the appropriate arrangements, and also to finalize on Lanlan’s preschool preparations since we have about a month until then anyway.”

Yang Chen naturally was not keen to oppose. After all, he had plans to wait a day or two until Xue Zhiqing had fully recovered, and to investigate firsthand the cauldron that they had before he could start his pill refining ‘project’.

Even though it was certain that his cultivations had since gone up a notch, it was still not enough.

Park Cheon’s study in the Park family mansion, Seoul, Korea.

Sunlight seeped through the glass window, exhibiting the regal interior design in all its glory.

Park Cheon resided on a large, comfy couch, dressed in a thick fur-collared sleeping gown. His hair was silvery grey as his eyes gazed around emotionlessly.

Behind the old man were two other people. One dressed in a dapper suit, paired with golden framed glasses, with a light smile on his square-shaped face.

The other was a young man, with sharp, mesmerizing facial features. He was well built, and dressed in a tight white t-shirt, intentionally magnifying his athletic build. In his hands were three steel balls, each the size of an egg.

What was rather disheartening was that the young man had no vigor or spirit. He was completely devoid of any emotion.

Across Park Cheon’s study desk were two men and a woman.

The woman was in her forties, her facial features were slightly off gradient as a result of excessive plastic surgery. Before her voluptuous chest was a pearl necklace. Her eyes were complemented with thick mascara, barely hiding her feminine allure.

The middle-aged man was bold and steadfast, on the shorter side in terms of height. He was dressed in a suit with his head held low

And the remaining youth was none other than Zhenxiu's older cousin, Park Jonghyun.

"Dad you look so much better today, the American doctor surely lives up to his name!" the middle-aged lady broke the silence.

Park Cheon cracked into laughter. "It was all thanks to that sweet child Zhenxiu. She's a spitting image of her mother. The moment I saw her I thought I was dreaming!"

"Well gosh, I wonder who Dad's favorite child was all these years." The woman coyly remarked. "Even after all these years, Big Sis is still first place."

Park Cheon glared at her. "Jiyeon, your sister spent much of her life watching over the both of you. And with all the love she shared with the both of you I just felt obliged to give her some in return."

Park Jiyeon chuckled in response. "I get it Dad, I was just kidding. She's a shy kid though, that Zhenxiu. Made her blush just from calling me Auntie."

"Is that so, well then I would appreciate it if you take good care of her." Park Cheon nodded. "Alright, let's not beat around the bush. I gathered you here today because I have some announcements to make.

All three paid close attention to what he was set to announce.

Park Cheon turned towards Park Jonghyun, he then questioned. "Jonghyun, regarding my invitation for the Lin family in Zhonghai, were they informed?"

"Consider it done, Grandpa." Park Jonghyun reassured.

"Good work. I knew I could rest well whenever you're at the helm. Over the course of you in the position of chairman, your performance was clear to me. I have made up my mind, after the eleventh of November, I believe it's about time you're given a larger stage to perform." Park Cheon proclaimed.

Park Jonghyun was glimmering in excitement as he stared unwaveringly at Park Cheon with immense anticipation.

Park Cheon chuckled. "I have decided that you shall leave for Germany a month from now, and officially act as the regional CEO of Starmoon Group in Europe.

The moment his announcement was made, Park Jonghyun's smile instantly faded. It morphed into confusion before he regained his composure. His fists, however, were two signs of his discontentment he wasn't able to mask.

Park Jiyeon by the sidelines smirked at the announcement. It was well known to every insider that Europe offered much room for development and expansion. But given their headquarters, it was comparable to being an outlawed king.

What that also meant, was that he will be forever 'banished' to the outer circle that is the European region!

Park Cheon's decision might seem like a reward for Park Jonghyun, but it was obvious that it was nothing more than a testimony of where he stood within the clan.

"I see...thank you, Grandpa." Park Jonghyun took an earnest bow.

The old man couldn't care less about Park Jonghyun's reaction as he unwaveringly moved on to the middle-aged man, "Haoming, you've been at the position of Vice Chairman for a long time now haven't you. My thoughts are that once Jonghyun cozies up in his new position, you will replace him as chairman. I need you to be a mentor towards Zhenxiu once she steps up as CEO.

As Park Cheon's son-in-law, he was more than happy for the position. He was happy to receive any form of recognition at all.

Liu Haoming was so overwhelmed by emotions that he got on fours as he kowtowed. "I will not mistreat your goodwill, Father!"

Park Jiyeon watched disturbingly as her husband went down on his hands and knees, but was quickly taken over by her own anticipation.

"Jiyeon..." Park Cheon turned towards his youngest daughter. "You will continue to serve your post as CFO. That's not all. From here on out, I need you to assist Haoming as Vice Chairman, to share his burden."

Park Jiyeon respectfully nodded.

After he was done, Park Cheon lifted his hand. "Jonghyun and Haoming, you both can leave now. Jiyeon, you shall stay, I have some things to talk to you about."

Park Jonghyun and Liu Haoming wouldn't dare to stall any time as they quickly made their way out of Park Cheon's room, leaving Park Jiyeon staring at her father with high hopes.

"Dad, I knew you were wise enough to see through the little brat's schemes. It was the right idea to send him to Europe." Park Jiyeon confidently proclaimed.

Park Cheon sighed. "Jonghyun is a brilliant child. Since your brother's adoption of Jonghyun as his son, he had always been assigned to our US regional management, which was why I felt the need to reward him by offering him the European regional CEO position."

Park Jiyeon was riddled with jealousy but was not in opposition.

"I made you stay, mainly because I want to show you something," Park Cheon said while pointing at the document envelope on his desk.

Park Jiyeon carefully reached for the envelope, gulped as she opened it.

The moment the printed documents were exposed to where her eyes could see, her face was shocked pale as she hyperventilated, before ultimately collapsing on the ground!

Chapter 1083 What A Pity

“Dad it’s my fault! I’m sorry, please forgive me!”

Park Cheon frowned. “Get up. In your forties and still this reckless. If you had the confidence to do it, you must face the consequences!”

Park Jiyeon crossed her legs as she staggered up, her tears flowing down her face.

“You manipulated my trust over your appointment as CFO, embezzled billions in company funds, and splurged them all on gambling, plastic surgery, and a bunch of useless bootlickers. You were even brazen enough to bribe your way into all the awards and academic achievements that Yeonhee has!

All these things that you did behind my back, I chose not to confront you. But instead, I got Lawyer Kim to list it down case by case, record by record. The one that you’re holding is but a photocopy. The real evidence is secured under Lawyer Kim’s secret team.”

Park Jiyeon wept and wailed. “Dad! I am sorry! It’s all my fault please forgive me one last time. I would never do such treacherous things ever again! But Yeonhee...Yeonhee is also your grandchild. Why can’t you spare some love for her, the way you do to Zhenxiu?!”

“Enough!” Park Cheon roared, his eyes flamed with rage as he fumed. “Each and every single one of my descendants shall not be granted any shortcuts in life. Whatever they want they must earn every last bit of it!

I treasure Zhenxiu, not least her obedience and respect, but also to repay a debt that I owe her! Since it was Yeonhee’s decision to pursue the field of entertainment then she must work her way up to the award stage! Your irresponsible actions will bring our family name to the ruins!”

Park Jiyeon was in a loss of words as she begged and pleaded.

After several moments, Park Cheon demanded her silence, before he declared, “Rest assured, however, if you mend your ways and keep your path, you will be rewarded with what you deserve. After all you’re my flesh and blood, and I will not mistreat you. Am I making myself clear?”

Park Jiyeon was quick to react as she replied with a grin. “I understand, Dad, Haoming, and I will do our best to support Zhenxiu in the management of Starmoon Group!”

Park Cheon nodded, sighed deeply before he hinted for her to leave.

Park Jiyeon wiped the cold sweat off her forehead as she obediently made her way out of the study.

The moment she left the room, Park Jiyeon grunted and cursed under her breath.

Right as she made her way to the ground floor, Park Jonghyun was right at the door, ready to leave.

Park Jiyeon smirked as she brisk walked towards him. “Jonghyun, wait up.”

Park Jonghyun turned towards her, with a calm smile he initiated the conversation. "You got something to say to me, Auntie?"

"I've a question in my mind. You know CEO Lin's family, from Zhonghai...why exactly are they invited?" Park Jiyeon was straight to her point.

Park Jonghyun shrugged. "Grandpa was thinking of expressing his gratitude towards the Zhonghai Lin family for hosting and raising my little cousin through her adolescence in China. It's all good faith."

"Is that so?"

Park Jonghyun replied, "Sure it is."

"Great, keep your secrets but don't say I am not warning you. Dad might not have much time left on his hands, but his mind is still sharp. If you want to get your fair share of the meat, you better make it clean. Trust me, you don't want to step on his tail."

"My apologies, but I have no idea what you're talking about. Since the day my father adopted me, I have been receiving all the care and nurture from Grandpa himself. All these years I have nothing but gratitude for him." Park Jonghyun sternly replied to her remark.

"Enough, we know full well what we both are in the shadows." Park Jiyeon smirked before her heels started clattering as she made her way to the door.

Watching as she left the scene, Park Jonghyun's confusion was quickly replaced by cynicism as he mumbled, "Pfft, one month is all I need..."

Back in Zhonghai, Yang Chen had no interest in the Starmoon group's internal politics and the nauseating family feuds.

For Yang Chen, three days went by in a blink of an eye.

In the last three days, besides coaching his women, he spared some time to accompany An Xin to the prison that An Jaehyun was held in.

Prison personnel made the call to inform that An Jaehyun had been acting out of the usual after he woke up one morning.

And after a doctor's diagnosis, it appeared that it was due to constant internal conflict within himself, resulting in his deteriorating mental health.

Watching her own father stare blankly into the abyss, constantly mumbling to himself while completely ignoring his own daughter left An Xin in agony and pain. Despite all the blasphemous things he had done, he was still her biological father.

Yang Chen was nonetheless heartbroken to watch her break down into tears. He then suggested that they break An Jaehyun out of the prison when guards were away. After all, what An Jaehyun committed was treason and he was sentenced for life.

An Xin however decisively rejected his suggestion. “My father did way too many terrible things. If we were to set him free just because he’s ill, that wouldn’t be fair to all the innocent victims out there haunted by his wrongdoings.”

Ultimately, An Xin decided to move An Jaehyun to a prison cell with a relatively better living environment and bribed several guards to watch after him.

While the incident played out, Yang Chen realized that as time went by, the once sneaky and vibrant An Xin from their first meeting has now become more mature and determined.

Meanwhile, Lin Ruoxi was applying and organizing identity documentation papers for Lanlan before her admission into a nearby preschool that was rather renowned in the area.

Suffice to say that Lanlan was a brilliant child in her own right, but Lin Ruoxi believed it was time for her to mingle in a social circle with people her age.

Lanlan on the other hand clearly had little to be anxious about. It was the rules of society that had her grumbling. Even the idea of wrapping up as colder weather arrived haunted her as it was way too hot for her. But the thought of being with other children of her age for once does entice her.

Regardless, Lanlan would usually be in much frustration as the other children were comparatively feeble for her liking, and to keep herself from hurting them, she had to constantly retain her strength at its bare minimum.

As for lunch and teatime breaks, Lin Ruoxi had to make blissful reminders for her to avoid snatching other children’s food. If she was left hungry she could only wait until dinnertime for a meal of her own fitting portions. The preschool meals were just too pitiful!

Lin Ruoxi’s original plans were to send her over before work every morning on her own, but now that Minjuan was around, she had to leave some responsibilities to keep her busy.

Furthermore, Lin Ruoxi knew it was rather distasteful to drive her Bentley over to the preschool every day just to send her daughter to school. The reasoning left her with little choice but to leave the responsibility of Lanlan’s caretaking to Minjuan.

As for Minjuan, she was more than happy to accept the role. Taking care of Lanlan was the only purpose she had.

Not to mention her conversation with Wang Ma on her upbringing of Lin Ruoxi throughout two decades of service under this household, naturally became an inspiration for Minjuan. She aspired to nurture Lanlan into a model citizen!

Amongst millions living in the city, looking for a servant was hardly an easy task for the wealthy. But thanks to Lanlan and the old gentleman’s earnest gestures, they now have a trusting housekeeper of their own.

Another key highlight of the past days was Xue Zhiqing’s recovery in the UK.

Yang Chen arrived at St Maria Hospital on his own, with the intention to escort Xue Zhiqing back to China.

What he was not anticipating was that upon entry, Jane was right by her bedside, happily chatting.

Noticing the puzzled look on Yang Chen's face, Jane could instantly guess what was on his mind. "Look who's here to pick up his lover, but somehow still couldn't find the time to come over and say hi."

Xue Zijing blushed at Jane's description for her, slightly embarrassed but was rather content.

Yang Chen awkwardly chuckled as he replied, "It's not good to bother you with my business all the time."

"Well, I'll thank you instead of for saving me from my boredom, what's there to be sorry about? Honestly one might think you've been avoiding me all this while." Jane rolled her eyes on him.

Yang Chen quickly shifted the topic. "So what are you guys talking about? It's almost like you both were best friends."

Xue Zhiqing was rather enthusiastic as she replied, "We were talking about calculators and the lot. Turns out Jane is a master in that sense. Not only was her medical prowess top-notch, but her calculator knowledge was also beyond my imagination."

Yang Chen was rather pleased as he added, "Well of course she is. Jane is a genius! Medicine might be her major, but she has a foot in everything else!"

"Why does that sound more like you praising yourself than me?" Jane was not buying his sweet talk.

"Well, I'm thick-skinned and proud!"

"Took you no time to admit to that didn't it." Jane was fed up with his demeanor as she lifted her own beige-colored Burberry windbreaker. "Actually I stopped by today to observe Zhiqing's recovery. Her operation was done by me so that naturally makes her my patient. I will take ownership over my patient's wellbeing.

It looks like she's pretty much on the verge of recovery. Just one or two days of rest and she will be good as new, might have something to do with your Chinese martial arts though."

Yang Chen satisfactorily noted. "Well as long as she's fine. Right, are you leaving?"

Jane nodded. "I'm going outstation. There's a challenging surgery coming and my students over in the US are hoping I could finish it up. I was planning to be there earlier, to take a good look at the patient's condition before I start."

"I'm sure the pay for that wouldn't be too shabby ain't it? Not like your students could make you go if you weren't already interested." Yang Chen teased.

Jane did not object. "First off I applaud a challenge. Second, it pays really well, not gonna lie. And with that money, I could invest in more research. It's a win-win!"

And once her words dropped she flipped her coat over, bid them farewell along with a goodbye kiss, and left-right out the door.

Xue Zhiqing enviously watched as Jane left, before she mumbled, "Yang Chen, why didn't you accept Jane as your lover? Even as a woman myself I thought she was way too mesmerizing. She's smart, she's

witty, and she's just a pleasure to be with! Not to mention the fact that she's gorgeous. Why'd you stop yourself from that?"

Chapter 1084 Aren't You Embarrassed

Yang Chen snorted at her remark. "Yes yes. I know I'm more prone than most. Every time I see a beauty my eyes shine. I met Jane about eight to nine years ago, back when she was just a kid. One could say I watched her grow up through the years the way older siblings do. So naturally, like all other older siblings, I would wish for her to find the right person when he comes by. So why would I swoop in and take her for myself?"

Moving on, it's time for you to get up now. I have to take you to examine the cauldron, then over to our house for a decent meal, My mum and the others couldn't wait to express their gratitude for you saving my life."

"Chill a little, I need to bid a proper farewell with the nurses. Do you know Ms Jane's student, Grace? She took good care of me throughout my time here. Why don't you just sit and wait a while," Xue Zhiqing replied.

Yang Chen ruffled through his hair. "Honestly, couldn't you have done all this before I came?"

"Sheesh, why are you so frantic all the time? I didn't see you being all naggy and grumpy when Jane was around. I'm still a patient you know."

Yang Chen chuckled. "I wouldn't dare. But isn't it pretty obvious that it's a problem with your scheduling?"

"Oh so it's okay for you to be spurting nonsense but I can't stay a little longer? Men are pathetic." Xue Zhiqing grumbled as she got dressed in the clothes sent over by Jane. Women were indeed more detailed and meticulous when it comes to the little details.

Yang Chen awkwardly chuckled out loud. "Hehe, obviously I'm less formal when speaking to my loved ones. Jane is a friend. And it's not like I was actually nagging you. C'mon Baby Qing, don't get mad..."

Xue Zhiqing's cheeks instantly went red as a tomato as she glared at Yang Chen. "Eww...Baby Qing? Aren't you embarrassed...?"

Her emotions slowly took over as Xue Zhiqing quickly turned away from Yang Chen. Her heart was fluttering like butterflies in her belly when he mentioned 'loved ones'. While she found it affectionate, it gave her much anticipation of what lies ahead.

Throughout her rough and unforgiving life, never would she ever expect that one day she would feel such warmth within her.

Under Yang Chen's constant nagging, Xue Zhiqing bid her farewells with Grace and the other nurses in a relatively little time, and subsequently on her way alongside Yang Chen towards the forgotten nation located deep in the Mediterranean.

As they landed onto a region where the sunshine rallied deep into autumn, Xue Zhiqing quickly found herself mesmerized by the sparkling blue waters, but was instantly dragged into a massive castle by the cliff.

Along the way, Yang Chen intentionally slowed down, taking the time to explain his background and upbringing, as a form of recognition towards her.

Xue Zhiqing nonetheless was hardly astounded by his narration. After all, she herself was a member of the great ancient clans. She, however, was rather dumbfounded by the scale of Yang Chen's harem.

But the thought that she was one among them ultimately led to her acknowledgment.

On the path leading towards the basement, made in its entirety from carving out the mountain from within, huge slabs of rock boulders impeccably ran adjacent to each other creating a cool and dry environment.

The entire space was the size of half a football field. Excluding the exquisite sculptures placed by the corners of the space, there was a majestic bronze cauldron positioned right in the center.

"You were talking about this cauldron?" Xue Zhiqing noticed the huge commodity nearly the height of a regular person and was perplexed.

Yang Chen, however, was enthusiastic. "What do you think? The qi resonating from the cauldron can be felt remarkably easily. My guess is that this treasured piece would be at least a mid-tier item, possibly more!"

Xue Zhiqing shook her head dismissively. "This cauldron was nowhere to be seen in the ancient scriptures. Also, this cauldron's carvings are peculiar, to say the least. It resembled the ancient Taotie, but the Taotie had a goat's body and these sculptures don't quite resemble that of a goat. But if it's not a Taotie, then I have no idea what it is."

"Huh, doesn't matter what the carvings are, give it a touch, is this the divine rare metal that you've mentioned?"

Xue Zhiqing nodded. Thereafter she brought herself closer, below her mouth promptly cracked open from amazement. "That's...ethereal hyacinth gold?"

Even though the entire cauldron was unmistakably covered in rusty green, the woman still managed to notice the bits that were untarnished.

Yang Chen frowned. "Hyacinth gold? How's that rare? If I remember correctly, Russia exports it on a regular basis. I mean sure it's expensive, but hardly any special."

"That's where your understanding ends. It's called the ethereal hyacinth gold for a reason. Legend has it that when carnivorous beasts from the great ancient periods die, their corpses and bones transmute into these rare metals after tens of thousands of years. It's only been a myth for the longest time.

But one thing is for sure. These can be considered among the rarest and most precious metals there is on this planet right now. I have only once stumbled upon a ranked plate made from hyacinth gold once in my entire life. That's how rare it is. Now you have an entire cauldron made of ethereal hyacinth gold right before us. If Hongmeng members of the mythical realm, or the Great Ancient clans find out about this, they would literally go mad."

Yang Chen burst into laughter. "So from what you're saying, pill refining with this cauldron would be a breeze, right?"

“Of course. But I never heard any mention of a cauldron made from ethereal hyacinth gold, but this metal is resistant to Samadhi True Fire.”

Her reply sparked curiosity in his head as he added, “If this metal could withstand the heat of the Samadhi True Fire, then how was it forged in the first place?”

Xue Zhiqing shook her head. “First off, I have never seen anyone forge this. I think that this metal might not actually be completely resistant to heat, but selective in the way it could be forged. Metals like these would not instantly melt at the touch of fire. But through divine awareness, its molecules get broken down, and gradually change its shape.

Rare metals like these require extensive refining and disintegration before forgery can take place. Anyways, are you thinking of destroying this cauldron, otherwise why’d you care?”

Yang Chen eventually cut to the chase as he enthusiastically gathered the divine herbs and placed them by the cauldron rubbing his hands in glee he requested. “Since you’re here, do you mind arranging the useful remedies accordingly? We’ll leave after the herbs are sorted out and then I’ll come back tomorrow to attempt to wrap my head around the pill refining techniques.”

Xue Zhiqing was slightly nervous as she mumbled, “Are we really eating over at your place today?”

“Are you not interested?” Yang Chen replied, slightly dejected.

Xue Zhiqing bit on her lower lip. “I was wondering if we could postpone it for a few days. I’m not ready to meet them yet.”

Yang Chen was quick to realize that Xue Zhiqing was still rather new towards genuine relationships and a change in identity. “Never expected you to be a shy person. We can sort it out. All I need to do is have a little talk with everyone at home. I’ll tell them that you’ll stop two days from now. Regardless, just know my mom misses you a lot and you can’t run away from this.”

Xue Zhiqing let out a sigh of relief. “Well then I’ll deal with the allocation of ingredients, there are more than enough herbs here to make more than two dozen rounds.”

Since the Xue clan was renowned for its pill refining techniques, Xue Zhiqing naturally was well accustomed to low to mid-range pills. As for high levels up to divine tier remedies, according to Xue Zhiqing, without the specific elusive ingredients, the pills can never be made.

After approximately an hour, Yang Chen dialed home. Xue Zhiqing by then already had two dozen herbs arranged accordingly to Spiritual pills, Red dewdrop pills alongside the Bodhi pills in Yang Chen’s possession, as well as mid-level pills such as the Dragon cloud and Eight extremities pills respectively.

Staying true to Xue Zhiqing’s methodology, it is most resource-effective to start with the refinery of the Spiritual pill, which provides them both with an opportunity to practice without consuming too much of their resources.

The spiritual pill, also known as the ‘Energy retention pill’, whose role was to assist Xiantian cultivators with solidifying and utilizing the surrounding qi, while the Red dewdrop pill increases the viscosity of the divine energy.

The mid-tier Dragon cloud pill was far superior as it gathers divine energy while simultaneously heightening the flow of true yuan from within the veins of the cultivators, supplementing Transformed God's cultivators with decent assistance.

As for the 'Eight extremities pill', it was by no means used for cultivation. Instead, it expanded all pulses and veins within the body, instantly hyper-charging the cultivator's true yuan energy and massively increasing their ability during battle. Naturally, if the user's cultivation is not up to par, there wasn't enough true yuan to be channeled which meant they would die!

After a point to point explanation by Xue Zhiqing, Yang Chen finally understood that divine pills could be utilized for more than just cultivation which left him with anticipation for what he could create along the way.

Unfortunately, the refined pills were only useful for the cultivations of his women. They did not help him at all

Since he was not in a hurry to return to Zhonghai, Yang Chen kept Xue Zhiqing close by his side for his first attempt in pill refining. He needed her to assist him in order to perfect the technique.

Chapter 1085 Ultimate Divine Champion Overlord

Aligned closely to Yan Sanniang's methodologies, alongside Xue Zhiqing's recognition, this was indeed a Great Ancient clan pill refining technique. He channelled the Heaven and Earth Restoration Energy and infused it with the true yuan of his surroundings, gradually engulfing the bronze coloured ethereal hyacinth gold.

As mentioned the technique was just a theory. The success of the refining process lies mostly on the divine sense of the holder and their ability to wield the Samadhi True Fire as it dissolves the herbs within the cauldron.

Throughout the process, the most crucial of steps was to utilise the Samadhi True Fire to draw impurities from within the herbs, retaining true purity of the divine qi. The greater the extraction, the more potent and higher grade the resulting pills were.

As for how the impurities were extracted, was where the technique came into play. It was key to differentiate between effective methods or otherwise.

Next, only a cultivator of the Tribulation Passing stage and above could proceed with pill refining, notably due to the sheer intensity of the Samadhi True Fire. It wasn't something anyone could handle.

However, that point to note meant nothing to Yang Chen, given that the Samadhi True Fire resonated from within him. Not only did the weaving divine sense not undermine his body, but it also strengthened his qi like fuel to a flame.

And this sole difference meant Yang Chen pill refining process would be of huge difference to that of cultivators throughout time.

While other cultivators would be wary while wielding their divine sense to navigate the Samadhi True Fire, Yang Chen's divine sense blended into the Samadhi True Fire and became one with it.

Others mustered all their strength just to control the Samadhi True Fire, while precariously directing it to their favour when Yang Chen effortlessly charged through it.

And with that, after Yang Chen researched Yan Sanniang's technique, with hardly any concern in mind, he was confident.

Xue Zhiqing meanwhile patiently supported him on the sidelines, as she observed the cauldron closely.

Gradually, the ethereal hyacinth gold cauldron started levitating in the air under complete manipulation by Yang Chen's restoration energy of Heaven and earth.

Yang Chen popped his eyes open. They were burning with the golden flames while simultaneously blazing Samadhi True Fire engulfed the cauldron on all sides.

Upon the emergence of the Samadhi True Fire, the cauldron gleamed in blinding white light!

And what was more puzzling was that the peculiar beast carving that was seen on its exterior, seemingly came to life as it started spiralling through rings of pitch black.

Theoretically, black should not be seen as rings of light, but it was visibly present as the rings orbited the cauldron.

"Huh? That's..." Yang Chen broke the silence, seemingly picking on something.

But before he could wrap his head around it, he was washed over by the wrath of a typhoon as it came over him with a symphony of black and white, eventually evolving into a grey, impotent energy, formulating in his head.

And within the gush of this ominous energy, Yang Chen could feel the wrath and exasperation of a certain ferocity, keen on consuming everything in its path.

What followed was the silhouette of a humongous beast materializing within thin air.

This enormous beast was blurry at best, with its face shrouded in darkness. It occasionally revealed the outline of his powerful wings and his gargantuan body complete with three pairs of sturdy feet and covered with raging flames.

Before Yang Chen could comprehend the situation he was in, the massive beast amassed into an intimidating shadow. Eclipsing the sky, it appeared to be ready to completely consume Yang Chen's divine awareness.

The abrupt presence of immense danger made Yang Chen involuntarily attempt to break the divine awareness link but to no avail.

And just when the ferocious silhouette beast was about to swallow him whole, an instant gush of the limitless Heaven and earth energy rushed into his defence!

Within Yang Chen's veins were filled with countless impenetrable barriers courtesy of the Heaven and Earth Restoration Energy leaving the translucent beast with no chance of attack.

The beast, on the other hand, was seen to be in extreme apprehension of the energy flow, which led to it promptly scouring into the abyss.

After a long while, Yang Chen forced his eyes open. He was in a daze while he sat drenched in a cold sweat.

Still positioned within the underground chamber of the aged castle, what left him terrified, was that the Ethereal hyacinth gold cauldron has vanished!

“Zhiqing...”

Yang Chen was subsequently reminded that he was accompanied, as he quickly turned to his back, only to notice Xue Zhiqing completely zoned out. Her pupils constricted and her face pale, like she just witnessed an exorcism!

“Phew...thank god you’re okay.” Yang Chen breathed a sigh of relief. He then frowned. “What did you see? Where’s the cauldron?”

Xue Zhiqing gulped then took a couple of long deep breaths. She tried to keep her cool but her lips were trembling, noticeably horrified.

“That cauldron...I’m afraid, isn’t an Ethereal hyacinth gold cauldron.”

“Huh? What do you mean?”

“The cauldron, after being exposed to the Samadhi True Fire, revealed it’s true identity. I guess I was misguided because it wasn’t Ethereal hyacinth gold!”

“As to what the cauldron was actually made of, I have absolutely no idea. But from my knowledge, there isn’t a rare metal that could be completely devoid of colour. I got a feeling this is much rarer than Ethereal hyacinth gold. If my estimate is correct, this should be a great ancient immortal item that was unknown to the world...”

“Immortal..?” Yang Chen stuttered at the presumption that it might just be the highest grade of all treasures! He quickly added. “How’d you know?”

Xue Zhiqing’s voice was still trembling as she replied, “Do you know what the greatest difference between an immortal item and everything else is?”

“How am I supposed to know that?”

Xue Zhiqing nodded, before she explained, “The immortal items are special only because of the beasts sealed within them or the ones from the great ancient era that could be refined into treasures. The greater the beast, the harder it is for it to undergo refining. Henceforth, once it succeeds, the kickback would be explosive.

The legend has it that even within beasts they were differentiated into carnivorous and mythical beasts, but that’s too far off. After all, it is understood that these ancient beasts might have gone extinct when the Gods descended upon this planet tens of thousands of years ago. It could very well have been a myth passed down by the early immortals.

Yang Chen went deep into his mind frame as he recalled the divine awareness of the ancient monstrosity and subsequently clicked as he was visibly boosted with confidence.

Xue Zhiqing then added, "There's one more thing though. The immortal weapon can choose to merge with its owner, obviously subject to its chosen allegiance over the beholder. And once the owner is chosen, it would be fiercely loyal to the holder. As long as the owner is still alive, the item shall only obey its owner and no one else will be able to wield it.

Once the owner is chosen and deemed worthy, the item fuses into the cerebrum of the owner and cultivates as one. As the owner improves, so does the immortal item. Should the owner remain dormant, so would the item."

Yang Chen's eyes glowed in revelation as he instantly searched within his sea of qi.

"No surprise here."

Yang Chen was amazed to find a miniature version of the cauldron within the sea of qi, glimmering in the everchanging radiance of grey light, seemingly encapsulated in a layer of mist.

Yang Chen tweaked his thoughts and the cauldron instantly revealed itself by his side, back to its original size.

"Turns out this immortal item sure is something. A while ago when you seemed like you were possessed, surrounded by an ambience of beast-like ferocity. I knew the cauldron had something sealed within.

And after when the cauldron subsequently disappeared, my two cents were that you managed to tame the beast and that the immortal item has chosen its owner.

This is a huge compliment to you. The fact that existing immortal items in the entire Hongmeng is less than these five fingers on my hand, and the fact that I have not witnessed anyone wield them, I would imagine that the Great Ancient clans would only have one or two wielders at most. Since divine treasures have rarity levels, I'm pretty sure the cauldron you have has sealed the soul of a powerful beast, the underlying possibilities are literally endless." Xue Zhiqing pleasingly clarified.

Yang Chen meanwhile was rather snarky as he felt like it was handed to him on a plate. He cheekily scratched his head while he chuckled, "So this is the calm after storm I suppose. Next time if I meet that masked man, I wonder if I could toss that guy into the cauldron and melt him down to his bones."

Xue Zhiqing was dumbfounded by his remark but was less concerned about his torturous ways. Death was inevitable.

The bloodlust and absolute absence of mercy among cultivators were far more treacherous than the usual generosity and warmth amongst mortals. Her own father used her as a lab rat for pill advancement which left Xue Zhiqing with little faith in humanity at a disappointingly young age.

Now that she finally has a support system, Yang Chen, she was worried about his soft nature in this unforgiving world.

"Uh, Baby Qing, so what should I name this cauldron? I don't know this little fellow, and his face is all blurred," Yan Chen deliberately asked, while caressing it.

Xue Zhiqing rolled her eyes on him. "Whatever you'd like, these beasts aren't humans. They don't possess enough intelligence to care."

Yang Chen duly contemplated. "What about...Ultimate divine champion overlord psychic cauldron, conqueror of the Hongmeng? Oh wait... it doesn't rhyme does it?"

Xue Zhiqing nearly fainted at his remark. "Stop blabbering nonsense. Pay attention to your refining, besides, even with divine weaponry, the wielder must still have adept cultivations too. Otherwise, it's no different from handing over your bride to your worst enemy."

Yang Chen chuckled at her description. "You really do sound like a mentor to my cultivations, don't you? Alright, stay slightly further away for now, in case you get terrified again"

Alas, Yang Chen still had no idea on how to address the 'Beast' within him, so he just went ahead to proceed with the pill refining batch.

Chapter 1086 Stay-At-Home Wife

Ever since the divine cauldron accepted Yang Chen as its owner, it had been smooth sailing for both of them as the Samadhi True Fire disintegrated dirt and impurities with ease!

What was first assumed to be an arduous task for a first-timer had gone on without complications. What he did manage to grasp upon was his manipulation of the intensity of the Samadhi True Fire.

After a simple adjustment, not only did he manage to better refine the pill, he was able to increase efficiency up to three times!

Naturally, it was a technique specially customized for himself and was not fit for everyone.

Watching from afar was Xue Zhiqing, as she once again was left in awe by his ordeal.

She first expected Yang Chen to adequately complete a batch in four hours. But she did not expect Yang Chen to complete his first batch in just shy of forty minutes!

Two dozen shimmering jade green spiritual pills propelled itself out of the cauldron! With their refined exterior, Xue Zhiqing could already guarantee their excellence amongst Spiritual pills!

Promptly after, Yang Chen was seemingly addicted to pill refining. He quickly inserted the second batch of herbs once again to create red dewdrop pills.

This time around, his speed went up a notch, manipulating the Samadhi True Fire with little effort. With slight tweaks in his mind, every step went as if they were pre-planned. Within half an hour, the bright colors of two dozen Red dewdrop pills were now in the pill sack ready to be used.

After the second batch ended, Yang Chen checked up on Xue Zhiqing. "Hey Qing, baby, if you're hungry we can always give Ron a call and ask for some food! I'll work on two more batches of Dragon cloud pill."

He had already started with mid-tier pills?!

Xue Zhiqing's mind was in a daze from his progress and was now immune to his random surprises. Nonetheless, all was well. It was the man she fell in love with anyway.

Just like that, it had been a little more than two hours and Yang Chen had already filled his mustard pill sack with over a couple of dozens of low to mid-tier pills. If all the ingredients were used as scheduled, there might just be close to two hundred of these magical pills!

Yang Chen had no intention to refine them all in one sitting. Like Xue Zhiqing explained, there are many recipes to create magical pills. If they were to use it all to create the same pills, there might be none left for an emergency if it was ever presented.

Meanwhile, Yang Chen was committed to fully utilizing his time with Xue Zhiqing to venture into different uninhabited regions across the planet, in hopes of finding rare top tier ingredients for elusive magical pills.

This time around, with his cultivations rapidly improving, Yang Chen was now looking forward to a rematch with the masked assassin. Even if he could not come out on top, at least it would not be as one-sided as it was.

As to why he had to hasten his plans. It was because Yang Chen had in mind to complete this project before his visit to Korea in November. As such, he would appreciate it if his plans weren't bogged down by his couple's visit to Korea.

Xue Zhiqing did not object to it. Even though Yang Chen was in assistance, it was nonetheless a journey for them both, in search of the finest medicinal herbs.

At the end of the day, Xue Zhiqing was left in slight regret that she entered Yang Chen's life much later than others, which was why she valued this opportunity of alone time with him.

At that moment as they stepped out of the castle, overlooking from the cliffside, the sun had already been replaced by a starry night.

Breathing in the fresh air, Yang Chen retrieved some of the Spiritual and Red dewdrop pills and handed it to Xue Zhiqing. "I know you're cursed by the Nine Yin Meridian within you, and cannot proceed with cultivation. But these divine pills must have beautifying and health benefits, plus the fact that you just recently survived a fatal injury. Have some."

Xue Zhiqing was dumbfounded by his offer, but she gradually cracked a half-smile before quickly holding it back. "Nah it'll go to waste. Keep them for the others. It takes a lot of refined pills to go from Houtian to Xiantian, and from Xiantian to Soul Forming stage as quickly as possible.

I'm still young and full of vigor. When I'm forty years old, and in need of those pills, I know who to go to."

Yang Chen chuckled. "Until then, you wouldn't need the pills to retain your beauty. I'm sure I will find a way to cure your Nine Yin Meridian! And then you can continue cultivating again. If I can repress this toxin, I am certain there's a way to make you cultivate again."

"Alright, I'll take your word for it!" Xue Zhiqing retained her bright smile despite having no hope for a cure. "If by then I get all old and scruffy you better not toss me aside!"

Yang Chen reached out and affectionately pinched her supple cheeks. "I wouldn't mind growing old with you. Let the rest of them stay young!"

“Pfft hah!” Xue Zhiqing could not repress her emotions anymore as tears of pure joy formed in her eyes.

Since the decision had been made, Yang Chen had decided to delay his return to China once again. He then made a call back home to inform Guo Xuehua and Lin Ruoxi that he had to stay on the road in search of more valuable ingredients.

Guo Xuehua, while worried about his quest, did manage to remind him to return before the Chongyang Festival.

There was still around five days until the Chongyang Festival after all.

Yang Chen and Xue Zhiqing were planning to search through the Amazon rainforest in South America, and the ancient jungles of Vietnam. Despite being extensively threatened by human endeavors in recent years, much of it was still left unspoiled. Yang Chen had high hopes for the search.

Days quickly went by, and it has been four days since Yang Chen went over to London to pick Xue Zhiqing, before instantly revising his plans to continue with herb searching.

It was noon, over at the Board meeting room, Yu Lei International Tower.

Across the huge table were the heads of each operational department, paying close attention, and taking notes of the Quality Assurance department’s report.

“...after our verification last month, the estimated costs and profits for the BMW history museum construction is as projected. That’s all I have.”

The Head of Department of Quality Assurance took his seat, and the focus of attention promptly went towards Lin Ruoxi at the far corner.

The stoic and distant CEO was her usual cold and unexpressive self.

If it was in their usual standard protocol, after announcing Lin Ruoxi would express her thoughts and they would proceed to vote.

According to most corporations, these decisions would fall into the hands of the Board of Directors. But due to the fact that Yu Lei was practically a one-woman empire of Lin Ruoxi’s, there were no major shareholders. The responsibility of decision making fell upon the departmental managers, leaving them with relatively more power than others of their position.

Even though fair amounts of the company shares went to these people, Lin Ruoxi was never stingy in terms of bonuses and stipends whenever required. Because of this, the higher-ups favored a high fixed salary.

Not to mention Lin Ruoxi as a person was hard to approach due to her cold appearance, but was known by all as a fair and open-minded boss.

Nonetheless, Lin Ruoxi today had not been her usual work persona.

After the report was presented, Lin Ruoxi was just seen scribbling on the papers before her, seemingly uninterested with the presentation.

Yet everyone present remained dead silent, unsure if the young CEO was actually in contemplation or really just daydreaming.

Mo Qianni sat by her side. As someone who had known her for more than a decade, she was quickly aware that Lin Ruoxi was absolutely not in the present.

Mo Qianni sighed, cleared her throat before she murmured. "CEO Lin, is there anything you're dissatisfied about?"

The words were phrased in such a way that it played as a proclamation that Lin Ruoxi was in contemplation.

Lin Ruoxi looked up with a tinge of awkwardness but hid it well enough that her underlings could not definitively pinpoint her actions. "Nothing much, I am aware that the profits of this project are viable, but it involves venturing into uncharted territory.

Since our core focus at the moment is within the fashion industry, this project which involves a major holder of the automobile industry in the building of this museum might be a huge leap without assurance. In my opinion, I believe we need time to observe the situation.

This is just my point of view. Since the profit-loss margin is nominal, I would leave it out to the table to decide.

I hereby announce, to those in favor of our collaboration with the Li enterprise and BMW Group for this project, please raise your hands."

The crowd was hesitant, staring at one another during the voting session, knowing full well that Lin Ruoxi might suggest gathering everyone's opinions on the front, but she was not actually interested in this collaboration with the two enterprises.

Regardless, they could not comprehend why Lin Ruoxi would oppose such a deal. In terms of budgeting and earnings, the profits were more than satisfactory. But Lin Ruoxi had a record of avoiding unnecessary slip-ups during significant decision making, which was why the voting round ended with no hands raised.

Mo Qianni seemed to have understood a certain something as she and Liu Mingyu shared a glance. They came to the conclusion that it might just be Lin Ruoxi's personal factors at play this time.

Even though they weren't too sure, Li Jianhe was notably not one that Yang Chen was remotely fond of.

Lin Ruoxi's decision was largely to avoid a misunderstanding with Yang Chen. After all, once this multi-million investment deal is done, she would be in a partnership with Li Jianhe, and regular contact was unavoidable.

Which was why, despite knowing it would be profitable, Lin Ruoxi chose to defend her family and abandon the collaboration project.

What they were unaware of was the nerving feud the couple had in Lin Ruoxi's office over Li Jianhe, which led to Lin Ruoxi's decision to avoid this picky subject at all costs.

After the meeting ended, the board members gradually made their way out of the meeting room, but Mo Qianni chose to stay back. Holding onto her laptop, she bent down towards Lin Ruoxi. "Ruoxi, I saw you blanking out a while ago, I'm guessing it's not about the partnership right?"

Lin Ruoxi knew there was nothing she could hide from her close friend, as she soullessly replied, "You know what it is about."

"You're missing him?" Mo Qianni chuckled. "It's not like it's his first time away. I wouldn't expect it to affect your work though. Hmm, you're less and less like the Lin Ruoxi I know."

Back in the day, no matter how serious your family matters were, you would never be affected when at work. Remember back then when the old CEO passed away? The office was in shambles but you pulled through. Now it's just Yang Chen going overseas with Xue Zhiqing. Are you really that affected?"

Lin Ruoxi smiled in reply, seemingly having her thoughts exposed.

She wouldn't have expected herself to be the person that she is now, for she was always business-oriented.

If it was her just a few years ago, a huge collaboration like this one was never going to be put down for any reason under the sun. Even if it was Li Jianhe, it was just solely business.

Mo Qianni grinned as she added, "It seems that the ruthless businesswoman Lin Ruoxi, has finally become a true stay home wife!"

"Qianni! Stop it!" Lin Ruoxi was still rather taken aback, but regardless still felt adamant towards the newest addition.

Chapter 1087 Life

Mo Qianni wasn't expecting such an expression from Lin Ruoxi. "Alright, I'll stop talking. I know you have other thoughts but let's go down and grab a cup of coffee and sweet treats. I know you probably aren't looking forward to dinner like I do."

The women had zero resistance when it came to desserts. Lin Ruoxi might have a personal favourite in glutinous rice balls, but she still preferred cakes and other delights over rice. She was usually too shy to go alone but now that Mo Qianni was here to keep her company, it was a rare opportunity she had to take.

Lin Ruoxi took a quick look at the time, confirming that her afternoon meeting doesn't start for two hours. "Alright, give me a minute. Let me pack up and I'll go with you."

Ever since Yang Chen was stuck in between, their relationship had been awkward at best. But it might just be because Yang Chen was always out and about recently that their relationship seemed to have taken a rebound.

Meanwhile, over at the backyard in their Western district mansion home.

Guo Xuehua flipped through the calendar, locking onto the fact that it was indeed Chongyang Festival tomorrow. If she was back in Beijing, she would spend her morning paying her respects at the Yang clan

ancestral hall. But in anticipation of Yang Chen's return, she would be preparing the traditional festival cuisine for ancestral prayers.

Even though the youth were starting to lose touch with these traditional rituals, Guo Xuehua still held much faith in the importance of filial piety, alongside her belief that family traditions should be upheld.

Notably, with Lanlan now in their household, she had high hopes that her grandchild could receive nurture from the best.

It occurred to her that Lin Ruoxi's grandmother and mother were both laid to rest in Zhonghai, but not once did she manage to pay her respects. She took this opportunity to invite Lin Ruoxi along as an opportunity to strengthen their bond.

Guo Xuehua made up her mind, as she turned towards Wang Ma who was having a chat with Minjuan. "Oh Yulan, I'm thinking of arranging a time with Lin Ruoxi to pay respect at her mother's grave. I'll stop by the market to get our groceries for tomorrow's Chongyang Festival too. Even if Yang Chen isn't coming home tonight, he should be back by tomorrow. We got to make sure we are well prepared!"

Wang Ma took notice of Guo Xuehua's deep appreciation for small details, notably by taking the initiative to pay a visit to the burial grounds on the Chongyang Festival.

"Why don't we give Miss a call, make sure we got her dates down." Wang Ma offered a reminder.

Guo Xuehua rejected her with a smile. "She might be busy right now. Let's not bother her."

"Wow you really are thoughtful, aren't you." Wang Ma chuckled as she nodded in agreement.

Yu Lei International tower had a cafe located on the ground floor, usually catered by a western cuisine provider to offer a cozy gathering spot for the employees during the day.

Over by the windowpane was a quiet spot for two. Lin Ruoxi and Mo Qianni each picked an exquisite cheesecake, paired with a cup of freshly brewed coffee, and enjoyed what little time they had in between their packed schedules.

Not long after, Mo Qianni was already closing in on her last few bites, but Lin Ruoxi was still barely halfway through a single slice of cake.

Watching Lin Ruoxi eloquently nibbling, Mo Qianni couldn't help but laugh. "I mean the Queen herself sure are leagues apart from us concubines right, even from trivial things like eating cake."

Lin Ruoxi held her fingers over her mouth in shock, taken aback by her remark. She finished up with whatever food was left in her mouth before she spoke up. "Qianni, don't you think saying things like that...is a little inappropriate?"

"Inappropriate, why?" Mo Qianni politely asked.

Lin Ruoxi turned her gaze towards the hustling city across the windowpane, into the crowded pedestrian walkway.

"You know, I've always been curious. For a girl like Rose with her perception of life and her upbringing, I could still find comprehensible for her to follow a man without any actual titles or official recognition.

But women like you, Yanyan, or the others? You could have chosen better lives, so why would you settle for a relationship as cumbersome as this?

"I know it sounds like a cruel world but I've got to be honest. I really don't assume you guys could get much out of this. So honestly, make it clear to me, how could you just casually laugh at something like this..." Lin Ruoxi halfheartedly remarked.

Mo Qianni's smile faded as Lin Ruoxi was making her point. She then took a sip of coffee and steadily placed it back down on the table.

"Are you sympathizing with me, pitying me, or really just looking down on me?"

Lin Ruoxi shook her head in response. "I never once pitied you or sneered at your decision. I'm not trying to pick a fight as well. I just thought...we've known each other for so long and this was a question I always had in mind, that's all."

"Deep down, you resent us and you loathe Yang Chen, don't you?"

"Then what about you? Wouldn't you think that? I really hate saying this but, you love the same man I do yet these thoughts never once occurred to you?"

Mo Qianni blinked. "I think I figured out why you were so distracted from work these past two days. You're worried about Xue Zhiqing. You are worried that Yang Chen might bring a new lover back every time he's out and about."

"No, I'm not." Lin Ruoxi turned away. "He can do whatever he likes. I can't make him do anything anyways."

"You're lying, you are obviously annoyed." Mo Qianni pressed on.

Lin Ruoxi snapped. Clearing her throat, she justified. "So what if I am? Or are you not worried about how many lovers he has with him, because you aren't married to him? You really think this is love?"

The women met eye to eye, but Mo Qianni's gaze gradually invited a tinge of pity.

"Lin Ruoxi, you've changed. I never thought you'd be so pathetic." Mo Qianni sighed.

Lin Ruoxi, visibly intimidated by her unpolished remark, fought an uphill battle to calm herself down. "I'd expect you to give me an adequate explanation for that remark..."

Mo Qianni took a long breath, her eyes red from tears as she forced a smile. "I used to envy you. You're prettier than me, had better grades, was born from a rich family. You're intelligent, capable, and also a great leader. But most of all, you were always a rock amongst a storm. Unwavering.

Even when the world was against you, it did not affect your duties. You were unbreakable. Even when your own husband had countless lovers outside, you never once lost your composure, because you were absolutely sure everything was in your grasp.

And you know what? That Lin Ruoxi was like a bright ray of light to me. I mean, just the thought of her made me loathe my life. I knew I would always place second and it wasn't just me, whether it was Rose or Anxin, we all knew we couldn't stand where you stood.

Did you think I became your right-hand woman for this company because I felt like I owed the old CEO? To repay her kindness for the rest of my life? No, I know what I'm worth. I could've gone to other companies, or even started my own.

I stayed in Yu Lei because of you. Not anyone else. You made me absolutely sure that this was where I wanted to be. Even if it gets awkward when Yang Chen stops by, I knew I wanted to be here with you."

Mo Qianni did not raise her voice, but every word struck like a needle.

Lin Ruoxi pupils dilated on the verge of tears.

Mo Qianni's exquisite face started trembling from a surge of emotions. Her face blushed as she had to take a long pause to gather her thoughts. She then continued. "The Lin Ruoxi I'm looking at right now feels pretty foreign to me. The intimidating, strong-willed, determined Lin Ruoxi doesn't seem to be here. What I see is just a paranoid, self-loathing young wife."

After her words dropped, she stood up, reached out for the white autumn coat, and flung it over herself.

"Lin Ruoxi, I just realized how silly of a person you are. You have no clue where you're heading and you don't seem to have a grasp of the meaning of life. You didn't really live or appreciated the joys of life because you didn't understand the meaning of life.

Please stop framing your dissatisfaction, your insecurities to anyone because the culprit for all of this isn't us. It's not Yang Chen either. It's you.

Relationships aren't like textbooks. You can't just figure it out on your own. You have to feel it with your heart.

In my opinion, to have a man that loves me, that'd meet me often enough, that'd put his life at risk to gather medicinal herbs to refine pills to make sure I stay young forever is everything I could ever ask for.

My only repayment for him is to offer him my trust. I want to let him know that when he's with me, I am happy and that's all I ever need.

Lin Ruoxi, listen to me closely. At certain points in my life, I actually cared about the title of husband and wife. But now, it doesn't matter. I know what makes me happy and I am satisfied.

If you need someone to constantly fill your insecurities, to replenish your pride, then all I can say to you is this. Sooner or later, Yang Chen might realize that you being his only wife was a mistake."

With the end of her words, Mo Qianni grabbed her bag and went straight towards the door and out of the cafe.

Lin Ruoxi stared blankly as she gradually left her vision.

Eventually, her eyes soullessly focused upon the tray with her strawberry cheesecake, but at that moment Lin Ruoxi couldn't even bear the strength to lift her spoon. Her appetite corroded away and replacing it was indescribable fear and insecurity.

Right at that moment, a dark silhouette emerged at the edge of her vision, idly by the dinner table.

Chapter 1088 Let Go

Lin Ruoxi identified the uninvited guest. With an unamused tone, she remarked, "Senior Li, what's the matter?"

The guest was none other than Li Jianhe in his work suit. He stared blankly at Lin Ruoxi for moments, presumably working on his opening line, before he forced a smile. "Mind if I sit?"

"Suit yourself." Lin Ruoxi brushed him off as she stood up. "I've got to go."

Lin Ruoxi, who was in a visibly bad mood was hardly eager to listen to what he had to say.

"Wait."

Li Jianhe held onto Lin Ruoxi. "I think we need to talk."

"About what?"

"Why did you reject a perfectly good proposal for a collaboration with BMW on their heritage museum? It was clearly a solid plan benefiting all parties. It could significantly boost Yu Lei's profits and global influence!"

Lin Ruoxi scoffed as she disinterestedly glanced over at the man. "Well, the decision has already been made. It's my company. I don't need you to tell me how to run it."

Li Jianhe was irked at her reply but was once again actively obstructing her from leaving. "Ruoxi, listen to me. Give the proposal more thought. There shouldn't be any reason for you to reject it!"

Lin Ruoxi observed Li Jianhe vent in desperation with slight pity. After all, he was an old acquaintance, and even if they were nowhere as close as they once were, she still valued their friendship.

"Okay, I'll give you five minutes to lay it out for me. If you can't convince me by then the project will stay the way it is." Lin Ruoxi was not keen on negotiation.

Just moments ago, she would have come into decision mostly from her affection for Yang Chen, but right now, her gut feeling tells her that something was off.

The two people once again sat down at their spots. Li Jianhe rearranged his thoughts before he started visualizing his grand scheme to her with complete sincerity.

Unbeknownst to them, at that moment, a ubiquitous white sedan gradually stopped by the road across the cafe.

By the driver's seat was exactly the one who decided earlier that she would stop by in search of Lin Ruoxi, but was notified by Zhao Hongyan that she was out. It was none other than Guo Xuehua.

Guo Xuehua was rather dejected that Lin Ruoxi was away, but understood that she sure had her reasons. After being notified, she left the parking space and turned into a junction and was held up by the traffic light. She then carelessly turned towards her surroundings, only to instantly catch the notice of a familiar figure.

Adding up the coincidences, the crowd around the cafe was few and far between, placing Lin Ruoxi front and center like a sore thumb.

Guo Xuehua was still in a pleasant mood as she had recent cravings for a cup of coffee, ready to get out of the car to meet her.

What subsequently caught her off guard was that across Lin Ruoxi sat a suave, fine-looking young man.

Guo Xuehua urgently pulled herself over to the sidewalk, intrigued to witness Lin Ruoxi alone with an unfamiliar man at a cafe. "Is that cake?"

A rough estimate could put a timestamp of her visit to the cafe, at a little more than half an hour.

Upon Guo Xuehua's understanding of Lin Ruoxi, she was certain that she would never meet with a man on her own for coffee and desserts.

Implementing her own personal experience, she evaluated the possibility of platonic friendship between them.

Naturally, Guo Xuehua was rapidly spiraling down a circle of negativity, and she just could not justify Lin Ruoxi's decision to talk business in a cafe downstairs.

Taking a closer look, she perceived the suave young man to easily be one born with a silver spoon, given his lavish appearance and conduct. She was convinced that a man like this could easily be more attractive than her own son.

Guo Xuehua was visibly uneasy at that point, hesitating if she should leave the car to confront Lin Ruoxi with regards to her male company.

As a mother herself, she was understandably concerned about her son's marriage, even when he had multiple extramarital lovers of his own. But mothers were mostly biased and selfish, and that included Guo Xuehua. Even when her own son was neither loyal or faithful, she might have seemed frustrated on the front but was still nonetheless just an act to comfort Lin Ruoxi. Deep down, she was proud. Her own son was desired by so many women. That said something about his character.

Not to mention Guo Xuehua herself was born to a well off family, which would explain her particularly stern expectations for her daughter-in-law.

If Lin Ruoxi was even to attempt an affair, Guo Xuehua was ready for a confrontation.

Since it was against the law to stop by the road, Guo Xuehua was considering finding a parking spot. But what came after left her terrified, her eyes unable to steer away!

That man was holding Lin Ruoxi's hand!

Back in the cafe, Li Jianhe's words, however elaborate and enticing, were ultimately unconvincing to Lin Ruoxi.

Li Jianhe was fully aware that the core reason for her rejection of his proposal. It was not the proposal itself, but her personal factors weighed in, or potentially even Yang Chen's.

Clenching his teeth, Li Jianhe in utter desperation reached out and held onto Lin Ruoxi's silky smooth hands across the table!

Lin Ruoxi would never expect Li Jianhe to do such a thing. Even during her college years, when she had feelings for him, they had never once had such physical contact!

But at this moment, Li Jianhe had his hands clamped onto hers!

‘Ruoxi I know you might place Yang Chen’s interests into consideration, but I assure you, as long as you agree with the proposal, I will leave all standard procedures to my employees and will never appear before your sight again.’

“Let go.” Lin Ruoxi shook with much effort in an attempt to free her hands, to no avail due to his sheer strength. Her face was pale as a sheet as her hands started trembling.

“We’ve known each other for so many years and this is honestly the first time I ever pleaded with you for anything.”

“I said, let go!”

“Give me a reason to.” Li Jianhe was furious.

“Li Jianhe, for the last time.” Lin Ruoxi’s fury was at her limits.

Li Jianhe ultimately released her hands. “Why won’t you accept?”

“There might be limited options amongst financial collaborators in Zhonghai, but we’re undoubtedly not the only one. The choices widen when you pan out to the whole country. Hence, if you were eyeing on the Yang clan’s influence then you can count yourself out. I will not bring the Yang clan into play when it comes to my business decisions.” Lin Ruoxi was done explaining and once again was ready to leave.

Li Jianhe instead was first to stand, rounded over to her side of the table, and grasped both of Lin Ruoxi’s hands!

“Ruoxi are you plotting against me? I would never dare challenge the Yang clan!”

“Let go!”

Without hesitation, she channelled her concealed True qi and forced herself out of his grip.

Due to her lack of hands-on experience and her personal preference to avoid physical confrontation, she never thought of channelling it until then.

Yet this time around, she concentrated her true qi into her hands and nearly tossed the desperate man off his feet!

Li Jianhe was stupefied. As a judo practitioner himself, his strength was already greater than most. But right now he was thrown in the air against his will by Lin Ruoxi?!

Lin Ruoxi delayed no longer as she glared at the wretched man with a soul-piercing gaze, reached for her handbag and went straight out of the cafe!

All that was left was Li Jianhe dumbfounded by the corner, left only with his own contemplations.

Over at the T junction not too far off from the cafe, there was a conflicted look on Guo Xuehua’s face.

In her hands, was a photo she took with her smartphone of the exact moment Li Jianhe held onto Lin Ruoxi's hands.

When she witnessed the event as it happened, her mind blanked out. It was subsequently replaced by anxiety, in fear that the presumptions in her head might turn out to be real.

Her first reaction then was to whip out the phone and capture the moment as it happened even though it was inappropriate to be spying on her daughter in law. But she was certain then, that if she had to bring this up in the near future, it was best that she had proof to convince Yang Chen.

Yet she had no idea what she could do next? To confront Lin Ruoxi when they next meet face to face? And ask about the man that was frantically holding onto her hands?

Amidst deep contemplation, Guo Xuehua ultimately decided against confronting Lin Ruoxi, at least until Yang Chen returned. It was an issue for the young couple after all.

“Beep beep!”

A series of honking echoed from infuriated drivers behind her.

Guo Xuehua instantly snapped out of her spiralling thoughts and noticed the lights had already turned green, which led her to hastily steer her car towards the market.

Chapter 1089 Stones Taste Bad

Dusk quickly sneaked on them. Guo Xuehua had just arrived home after a run to the market. Minjuan was escorting Lanlan back from her kindergarten.

Dressed in a blue denim jacket, black stockings and a short skirt, the child resembled an angel.

Lanlan was already familiarising herself with Guo Xuehua, as she adorably called out ‘Grandma’ and dashed lovingly towards her, offering to help with her bags of groceries.

If it was other children her age, they wouldn't have been able to lift that weight. But Lanlan was a ‘special’ kid, so Guo Xuehua accepted her offer to help.

Minjuan noticed the strange expression on Guo Xuehua's face, as she curiously asked, “Are you okay? You don't look so good.”

Guo Xuehua replied with a smile, “I'm fine, I guess my age is catching up on me.”

“Oh, that's gonna take a while!”

Minjuan was clearly just comforting her, which led to Guo Xuehua's halfhearted nod in response.

As the trio entered the house, Wang Ma brought the groceries into the kitchen and instantly started to work on dinner, alongside tomorrow's festive ritual preparations.

As agreed, Yang Chen was supposed to invite Xue Zhiqing over for a meal for the Chongyang festival, but now that they both have yet to appear, Guo Xuehua was again starting to worry.

She contemplated on whether to make the call, uncertain if he would even pick up.

Right at that moment, the front gate swung open. A familiar loud and scruffy voice resonated throughout the house.

“Haha...Mum, Wang Ma, Wifey, I’m back! Huh, where’s everyone? Chubs?”

Lanlan, who was lazing on the couch, was the first to react as she furiously stomped her little feet, hopping off the couch and shooting towards Yang Chen at lightning speed!

Yang Chen was in open arms awaiting her, but was instead greeted with successive punches from two petite fists pounding on his chest!

With the strength of Lanlan’s punches that went, it would have laid waste on most others.

“Bad uncle bad uncle! I said, never, call me Chubs!”

Yang Chen burst into laughter. Absence seemingly did make his heart grow fonder as his absence the past days made him miss Lanlan more than most, even his own mother.

He found her irresistibly adorable, he couldn’t help but gave her a huge smooch on the cheek!

“If you punch me like that again, Chubs, I’m gonna eat you!” Yang Chen playfully threatened.

Lanlan felt the damp feeling on her cheeks but was nonetheless still terrified as she struggled and wriggled from Yang Chen’s embrace and ran as far as she could.

Guo Xuehua came out from the kitchen to check on the ruckus. “Stop scaring the child like that, must I remind you that you eat like a pig too? Besides, I was starting to think you forgot what day it is tomorrow.”

Yang Chen ruffled his hair. “I was actually considering only coming home tomorrow, but I found everything I needed so there wasn’t a reason to stay. Oh, I sent Zhiqing back home to rest for the night. She’ll come over tomorrow.”

Guo Xuehua nodded before she made up her mind. She then whispered. “Son, come upstairs with me. I have some things I need to talk to you about.”

Yang Chen was confused but quickly realized that Guo Xuehua was being serious, which led him to obediently do as he was told.

After Yang Chen tailed her into the room, Guo Xuehua shut the door. “Yang Chen, do you think there’s something off about Lin Ruoxi recently?”

Yang Chen was confused. “Off? In what way? I haven’t been here for the past few days, how should I know?”

“As in...are you aware that Ruoxi is meeting some strange people?”

Yang Chen chuckled. “And how exactly would I know that? She goes to work Mom, there are many big customers, do those count?”

Guo Xuehua sighed. “Why can’t you just pay closer attention to her. You have to be more attentive with the people around her...”

Yang Chen seemed to have grasped the situation, as he frowned. "Mum, if there's something you want to tell me then just get straight to the point already, stop beating around the bush."

Guo Xuehua uncomfortably retrieved her handphone, searched her gallery for a particular photo she took this afternoon and handed it to her son.

"This man, do you know him?"

Yang Chen carelessly took the phone over, gave a quick glance, but his gaze quickly stuck on one person.

"Li...Jian...He?"

Guo Xuehua heard his remark and quickly added. "His name is Li Jianhe? So you do know him. What does he do? Why..."

"Mom" Yang Chen interrupted. With a dull expression, he then added, "How did you get this photo?"

Guo Xuehua quickly narrated her encounter with Lin Ruoxi at the office, and how she witnessed the scene while she was about to leave.

"After I took it I didn't even have the courage to see it again. I really wanted to go in and asked her directly about it, but I didn't know how to bring it up. I would be furious with myself if I misunderstood her. I wouldn't want to further burden her with this, but I just can't let it go without clarifications," Guo Xuehua explained.

Yang Chen handed the smartphone back to Guo Xuehua. Rearranging his thoughts, he then took a long sigh, before his frown disappeared and went back to his usual, jovial self. "I am sure the issue is with that Li Jianhe fellow. He was her senior back in her university days and they used to be pretty close.

I did misunderstand her once but she opened up to me about her personal conflicts and I chose to believe her. You can ask her about who she met the past afternoon when she comes back later. She has no reason to hide it because there really isn't much to think about anyway."

Guo Xuehua halfheartedly accepted. "So it's a senior from her college years. If you know him, that's still fine, I was just afraid that there might be someone out of the blue."

"Mom! Look, when did you start having so little faith in me? I would never have allowed a character like this crawling into my territory! Besides, Lin Ruoxi isn't the kind of person that would just casually fall for someone. She's an innocent girl. He must have forced it upon her to hold her hands." Yang Chen comforted.

Guo Xuehua rolled her eyes on his reasoning. "Alright, maybe I did overthink this. You best be right about it. I would also wish for Lin Ruoxi to be the innocent one in this.

I know you little brat might be a sin for all your women to bear, but you're still my son. I will not allow your woman to be disloyal to you."

Yang Chen was guilty from her remark, but felt reassured that his mother's stubborn love for him exceeded his obscene disregard of societal rules.

After escorting her downstairs, Yang Chen returned to his room for a warm shower and a fresh pair of clothes. The past days of venturing into rainforests and secluded caverns left him soiled and grimy.

As night fell, Lin Ruoxi was finally done with her lengthy meeting and had returned home. Guo Xuehua, heeding Yang Chen's advice did not mention the incident, and was all smiles as usual.

Noticing Yang Chen's presence, Lin Ruoxi's gaze was shimmered with slight complexity but ultimately culminated into a little smile as she engaged. "Let's have dinner together, must be tough on you the past days."

Yang Chen instantly noticed the split second of uneasiness in her eyes and was quickly reminded of the photo. His heart skipped a beat.

"Wifey, I got a little present for you." Yang Chen forced down his anxiety. With a smile, he searched through his mustard-colored Sumeru sack and retrieved a violet-colored item slightly larger than his palm.

"Oh my, how pretty!"

It was Minjuan from the kitchen that first exclaimed.

Lin Ruoxi was fond of it as well. It was a pure, clear cut Amethyst rock, in the center were three glittering crystal stalagmites. Under the radiance of light, it illuminates the impeccable beauty of mother nature's gifts.

"I found this in an underground mining cave by the Brazilian border. It's not much, but its the real deal. I thought about you being in front of the computer all day and if you place this by your side, it might absorb some of that UV." Yang Chen chuckled as he handed the crystal to Lin Ruoxi.

Leaning forward, Yang Chen sneakily whispered into her ear. "When I found it I quickly hid it from Zhiqing. I made sure I brought you a gift when I come home as compensation for leaving the house so long."

Lin Ruoxi was filled with glee inside but felt like she shouldn't let him off the hook so easily. After all, he was away on excursions with other women the whole time!

"Oh, that's great, thanks. Loved it." Just the thought of that kept her emotions at bay. Soullessly retrieving the gift, she placed it over by the coffee table, and went in to help with setting up the table for dinner.

Guo Xuehua frowned at her response, but still bit her tongue, whereas Wang Ma and Minjuan, on the other hand, were mesmerized by the amethyst crystal.

The only one left unamused was Lanlan, fumbling. "Bad uncle brought back a stone. What's so good about a stone? A stone doesn't taste good."

Yang Chen chuckled albeit slightly bitterly, instantly catching the resemblance to Lin Ruoxi when they first met a year ago. The cold response and the impromptu reaction was as if she was a carbon copy.

Regardless, Yang Chen, known for being thick faced effortlessly brushed it off, and in a carefree manner grabbed onto a chicken thigh and started munching away.

Guo Xuehua noticed her own son unsympathetically started munching on food and was deep down rather disgruntled, but she knew full well there was nothing she could do instead. She then turned towards Lin Ruoxi who was serving dishes from the kitchen. She was visibly shaken.

Chapter 1090: Are You Challenging Me?

Yang Chen's return marked the first reunion the family had in awhile. It quickly turned into an eating competition between Yang Chen and Lanlan with the younger even glancing over to Yang Chen every now and then before she continued inhaling her food.

Guo Xuehua was originally worried the child would suffer from indigestion but had quickly realized that her worries were in vain. The child had a digestive system tougher than iron, even munching on steel wouldn't hurt her.

Halfway through, Wang Ma thought of Guo Xuehua's intention for a visit to the cemetery, which she then took to reconfirm. "Xuehua, I nearly forgot, did you visit the cemetery today?"

Guo Xuehua was caught off-guard as she awkwardly turned towards Lin Ruoxi.

Lin Ruoxi was confused. "Mother, what cemetery visit?"

"Oh...this past noon I came by the office to look for you. I wanted to see if you had the time since it was Chongyang tomorrow after all. I was thinking of paying your mother and grandmother a visit."

Lin Ruoxi felt a tinge of comfort. "You could've told me earlier. I was at the cafe around noon. I did have some time in between."

Guo Xuehua was quickly overwhelmed by a slew of thoughts as she confronted her. "Cafe? Alone at noon? Why didn't you have a proper meal?"

At the mention of the question, Yang Chen, who was in a playful chopsticks battle with Lanlan abruptly halted.

Guo Xuehua's remark might seem harmless, but Yang Chen knew full well that it was a test to see if Lin Ruoxi was hiding something.

Yang Chen internally sighed at her distrust for his wife. But since it was already out there, he was curious about her response.

Lin Ruoxi was reminded of Li Jianhe's desperate plea but quickly snapped out of her thoughts as she shook her head. "Nope, was with Qianni, she wanted to have desserts."

"Just Qianni? No one else familiar?" Guo Xuehua was seemingly eager to dig deep.

Yang Chen at this point felt like she was getting slightly overboard as if she was interrogating a suspect.

"Mom, stop pushing her. She went with Qianni didn't she? Right, Ruoxi?"

Lin Ruoxi halfheartedly smiled at her husband, yet her hands began to sweat. Back when Li Jianhe stopped by her office, Yang Chen's overblown reaction still left her shaken.

“Mother, why are you suddenly interested in this though. Like I said, I was with Qianni, just the two of us, no one else...” Lin Ruoxi made a solid attempt to stay as clear-headed as possible.

Upon her response, however, Yang Chen’s expression that was previously relaxed had turned noticeably stiff.

Guo Xuehua was too seemingly taken aback as she disgruntledly stared at Lin Ruoxi, her face turned bitter and unpleasant.

It did not take long before Lin Ruoxi noticed that something was off just from their responses. “Mother, what’s going on? Did I say something wrong?”

“I can’t say for sure if you were with Qianni, but I sure did see a different person.”

Guo Xuehua whilst talking retrieved her smartphone, swiped to the photo gallery and thrust it to Lin Ruoxi’s face.

Lin Ruoxi was taken aback, but after a quick glance, she realized what Guo Xuehua was hinting at.

Everyone else by the table was left dumbfounded with the drastic change in mood at the dinner table.

Yang Chen placed his chopsticks on the table, with an aggrieved expression he remarked. “What is this then?”

Lin Ruoxi paid careful attention to the photo. It was herself a few hours ago when Li Jianhe was exaggeratingly holding her hand. It seemed as if their hands were holding onto one another.

It was at this moment, Lin Ruoxi’s face turned pale.

But her own nonetheless were rapidly replaced by subsequent panic, but mostly dejection and disappointment!

“Mother...you..you stalked me?!” Lin Ruoxi slammed the phone on the table.

That moment, even Lanlan was terrified, the young child was seemingly caught off guard by her mother’s anger. She stared in confusion at the adults of the table.

“Young Miss, what...what’s the matter? Calm down alright, we can always discuss this.” Wang Ma instinctively comforted, while simultaneously reached out for the smartphone to take a good look.

The photo was not much, but Wang Ma knew who Li Jianhe was. “This...isn’t this Li Jianhe from your college, Young Miss? I did see him once when the old CEO was still around, how did you meet? Isn’t he married abroad now?”

Wang Ma’s harmless remark came out as a completely different remark to Guo Xuehua’s ears.

“What? A married man?!” Guo Xuehua exploded. “Ruoxi, all I did was coincidentally take this photo by accident by the road!

But the real issue is you lying! Is there something you couldn’t tell us about?!”

Lin Ruoxi was flushed by a mixture of anger, despair, and desolation from being wronged. Tears started flowing down against her will. She then slammed the table and stood up!

“Mother, are you doubting me?”

“I always thought you were an honest child. If you were innocent then why wouldn't you tell the truth?”

“I have my reasons! And if it was what you think it is, then why can't I have one too?” Lin Ruoxi ranted.

“Do you think it's right?!” Guo Xuehua too started yelling.

Lin Ruoxi shook her head in dismay. “I never once considered the fact that you might actually think of me this way...”

“And how instead did you treat my son?!” Guo Xuehua unleashed her heedless dismay. “Did you know when I showed Yang Chen that photo, he was defending you because he believed you'd tell the truth! He even convinced me to trust you! He didn't even let me confront you!

But you dare lie to us?! After all the nice things he said behind your back while you slither around!”

Lin Ruoxi was furious before she sneered at Yang Chen. “Oh, so you defended me behind my back I see. You saw the photo and felt I was a sly woman but you keep it all to yourself I see? So you wanted Mother to come to interrogate me from the side? Or are you too scared to ask for yourself, like the coward you are?”

Yang Chen at that moment was fuzzy in the head. Partially disappointed and downcast, but mostly frustrated.

Lin Ruoxi's cynicism was like fuel to the fire.

“Lin Ruoxi, you thought I was using Mom as a front to interrogate you?”

“Aren't you?”

“I dare you to say it one more time...”

“Why not, you vile man!”

Yang Chen shot upright, his face red as a tomato as he yelled, “I trusted you with all my heart but you think I'm vile?”

Guo Xuehua at this point was boiling with rage, while Wang Ma had finally realized that she had unintentionally sparked a forest fire as she hurriedly urged Minjuan to take Lanlan upstairs in an attempt to remove the child from future trauma.

“Must be fun to play me like an idiot, isn't it?”

Lin Ruoxi glared at Yang Chen. Without another word, she turned around to retrieve her coat on the shelf along with her handbag and darted towards the door!

Yang Chen's face spiraled with fury red and pale from distraught as he clenched his fists so tight it started crackling!

Guo Xuehua whilst wiping her tears cried out. “Yang Chen, catch up to her! You have to get to the bottom of this!”

Yang Chen took a long, depressing sigh. Frustrated, he went after her.

In the backyard, before Lin Ruoxi could start the car engine, Yang Chen went ahead and grasped onto her hand.

“Where do you think you’re going?!”

“Let go of me!” Lin Ruoxi’s puffy eyes were devoid of emotion.

“Are you running away?”

“Run? Where to?” Lin Ruoxi sarcastically rebuked. “Doesn’t matter where I go, you’re gonna stalk me anyway, aren’t you?!”

“What the hell are you rambling about? Mom saw you by accident. I never spied on you!” Yang Chen furiously remarked.

“Oh, you’d know.”

Yang Chen cursed under his breath as he stared helplessly at her. “Lin Ruoxi, what’s with you today?! If it’s a misunderstanding then make it clear to everyone! If you never met Li Jianhe, and never held his hand, all of this wouldn’t happen!

Even if Mom went out of her mind to take that photo, that doesn’t make this her fault! If you were honest we wouldn’t have wronged you!”