

Chapter 361: Really a Joke

As guests of the party committee and chamber of commerce, Yang Chen and Lin Ruoxi had their breakfasts at a hotel owned by the government, specially built for hosting people. However, Mo Qianni left early as she still had to get some work done.

The three meeting this time round wasn't as awkward as Yang Chen expected it to be. It might have been the relationship of familiarity between the two ladies. As long as Lin Ruoxi didn't point out the obvious issue, Mo Qianni would act ignorant. Both of them were mentally prepared. No one dared to talk about it and spoil the mood.

Yang Chen got slightly relieved. He could relieve himself from headaches temporarily, but it was hard to say if they'd show up in the future.

Wu Yue sent a car over, before Yang Chen took the initiative to drive Lin Ruoxi home. When they arrived outside their house, Yang Chen's sharp vision instantly noticed a familiar white Infiniti car parked in front of the gate.

Why is the woman here? Yang Chen thought. He guessed that she came in search for Lin Ruoxi, thus dismissing his concerns.

On the other hand, Lin Ruoxi hadn't yet realized that there were visitors. She walked to the door and wanted to open it, but it was pushed open from the outside.

Two familiar-looking, young, lady bodyguards Little Wen and Little Li walked out, before Guo Xuehua whose eyes were red and swollen walked out as well.

Guo Xuehua had come over early in the morning waiting for them to come home. When she heard some noise getting closer, she immediately ran out.

Hui Lin and Wang Ma came to the door as well. Wang Ma seemed rather shocked, while Hui Lin frowned her brows tightly as her eyes were filled with guilt.

"You're... Yang Chen?" Guo Xuehua was stunned for a short moment upon seeing Yang Chen. It wasn't too long ago when they met at the orphanage after all. Moreover, Yang Chen's appearance and aura gave her an uneasy feeling, which made her think of what to make of him occasionally. As a result, she immediately recognized Yang Chen the moment she saw him.

Lin Ruoxi glanced at Yang Chen strangely. When she saw Guo Xuehua, she thought the founder of New Hope Orphanage specially came over to inform her of something. Although they'd only met once in a while and barely talked, no matter how she thought about it, she didn't understand why Guo Xuehua came to look for Yang Chen, whom she thought had no relation to this woman.

"Yes I am." Yang Chen nodded.

Guo Xuehua suddenly walked forward to grab Yang Chen's arm. Ignoring formal etiquette, she hurriedly said, "I'm Yang Lie's mother, Guo Xuehua. We've met once at the orphanage before! I heard that you could save my child. I beg you, please save him"

Guo Xuehua's pleading brought about a whirlpool of emotions in Yang Chen's mind. With his eyes widened, he stood for a long while absentmindedly as he failed to recover awareness...

Yang Lie's... mother?!

Yang Chen suddenly noticed something. No wonder he felt extremely familiar when he saw her portrait at the orphanage back then. No wonder he felt strange and emotional when they met outside the orphanage...

The corners of Yang Chen's lips faintly revealed bitterness. He found it hard to look straight at Guo Xuehua's face. In a deep voice, he said, "Do you know why I injured him?"

Guo Xuehua's face immediately turned mournful. Smiling bitterly, she said, "I know. I talked to Hui'er earlier this morning to understand the situation. Lie'er had always had an affection for this kid, but he actually isn't evil at heart. He was just a bit impatient, so he acted rather recklessly. He had received his punishment. Save him, can you? If he stays the way he is, it'll soon be impossible for him to stand up again!"

Hui Lin looked rather sorrowful. She naturally recognized who Guo Xuehua was. Although she had mostly stayed in Mount Emei to practise cultivation, she was aware of the core people from the few major clans in Beijing. Although she didn't like Yang Lie very much, she still felt empathetic to see this woman, who had always been in the upper class of people in life, come pleading in this manner.

Lin Ruoxi finally understood the cause of this matter. She didn't expect Yang Lie to be Guo Xuehua's son. Since Guo Xuehua had been silently starting and contributing to so many orphanages without asking for anything in return, it was evident that she had a kind heart. She couldn't understand why her son Yang Lie had such a bad temper.

However, although Lin Ruoxi felt empathetic towards Guo Xuehua's case as well, she didn't try to persuade Yang Chen into saving Yang Lie from his pain. After all, there were things that had to be decided by the man himself.

"Reckless?" Yang Chen snorted coldly. "He came in broad daylight, and abused his fighting ability to force a girl to leave with him no matter how much she fought back. At the same time, he treated the others who had nothing to do with him with disdain, completely without respect. He's this pretentious and arrogant just because he's skilled to a small degree. Instead of allowing him to recover and cause eventual suffering to others, it's better he stays on the sickbed for the rest of his life. Even if the Yang clan can't get him to fully recover, I'm sure that he can stay alive as a patient in bed."

Guo Xuehua was astonished. Her face, which had vague lines of crow's feet, looked like it grew a few years older, while her exhausted eyes stared at Yang Chen.

Yang Chen felt moved. But honestly speaking, although he was young, he had met countless people, allowing him to be full of rich experiences. Based on Yang Lie's temper, he knew that it was almost guaranteed that he would only seek revenge once he recovered, instead of changing his ways.

As a result, Yang Chen ruthlessly denied Guo Xuehua's request.

Deep down his heart, Yang Chen felt a wavering, sour emotion. Seeing that this woman cried to this extent as she begged him to save the worthless fellow, anguish surged in his heart. If it wasn't for the ninth level of Endless Resolve Restoration Scripture which had strengthened his endurance, he might've failed to hold himself back from walking away.

“What’s wrong with you? Do you think you’re very impressive just because you know how to fight? Madam came over to beg you this sincerely. Is it still not enough?!” The bodyguard Little Wen couldn’t stand it anymore. She took a dislike towards Yang Chen ever since they met at the orphanage. Currently, she didn’t think that Yang Chen was stronger than her anymore when she witnessed her madam in this much torment.

Yang Chen gazed upon Little Wen coldly as he exerted a slight pressure of his aura, instantly causing her to shut her mouth as her face reddened.

“You should go. I won’t save Yang Lie. Not every mistake deserves a second chance. Consider it fortunate that he has not died by my hands, while it’s the fortune of others that he can’t practise martial arts anymore,” Yang Chen said before walking to the direction of the door.

“Wait!”

Guo Xuehua suddenly turned around and shouted at Yang Chen. Staring at Yang Chen’s desolate and cold back, resolution could be seen on her face.

Thump!

Under the attention of the few ladies, Guo Xuehua suddenly knelt down!

Without looking back, Yang Chen knew what happened behind him. However, it was so sudden that he couldn’t react on time to stop her!

She... knelt before me?!

Yang Chen stood in disbelief, stunned, as if his feet were nailed to the ground!

Behind him, Guo Xuehua wasn’t crying anymore, but let out a pathetic smile instead.

“I came here today to beg you to save my son, not with my identity as the mistress from the Yang clan, not as an important figure, but solely as a mother... I’m not forcing you, nor am I giving you an order. I’m merely asking for your help from the bottom of my heart...”

“Although I know that my son had made a mistake that he shouldn’t have, and he shouldn’t be so arrogant, but please allow me to say something selfish... Aren’t children supposed to make mistakes? Will they still be children if they don’t make any mistakes? When a child makes a mistake, their parents are the ones to be blamed. In the future, if Lie’er really does something wrong or immoral again, it’ll still be our fault for not properly educating him for the past twenty years.

“I’m not a good mother by any means, but I hope that at the very least, I can try my best to save my son when his life is hanging by a thread...”

Guo Xuehua raised her head to look at Yang Chen’s figure which still rooted in place. “Today, I’m begging you as I kneel. No matter what you ask of me, as long as it’s something in my power, I’ll do anything. But please don’t allow the life of my only son left be ruined... can you?”

Only son left...

“My life really is a joke...” Yang Chen started laughing, shaking his shoulders. His laugh made him sound like a freak.

He laughed so hard that even tears flowed out from the corners of his eyes.

The other people around, the two bodyguards, Wang Ma and Hui Lin all confused and shocked. None of them knew what happened to Yang Chen.

As Lin Ruoxi listened to Yang Chen’s insane laughter, her heart ached faintly. It was unknown as to why Lin Ruoxi felt incredibly sorrowful when Yang Chen was in fact laughing. The back of this man turned from sorrow to despair, loneliness, and desolation, was hard to be dismissed.

Although Lin Ruoxi knew that Yang Chen had an unusual past, at this moment, she understood a lot of things...

Everything must seem so mundane, to a man who held a laughter like this...

After a long time, before Guo Xuehua felt completely hopeless, Yang Chen slowly turned around and emotionlessly looked at the woman who was kneeling on the ground. Seeing her wan and pallid face, he said, “If you want me to help save your son, you have to promise me one thing.”

Elation swept across Guo Xuehua’s eyes. “Let alone one thing, anything, as long as it’s something I can do, I can promise you a hundred, a thousand, or even ten thousand things!”

Yang Chen shook his head. “I don’t need much from you, but there’s one thing that I want you to remember firmly in your mind...”

Taking a deep breath, being stared at the nervous gazes of the rest, he said, “Madam Guo Xuehua, starting from today, never again are you going to say the word ‘beg’ in front of me, never again are you going to say to me ‘I beg you’... Never again... never again are you going to kneel before me!

“No matter what happens, I don’t want to witness your kneeling towards me, or anyone else! I don’t care who it’s for, or what it’s for!!!

“Don’t ask why. I’m only going to ask you this. Can you promise me?”

Chapter 362: Military Secrets

Not only was Guo Xuehua confused, no one else understood what had just happened. Why did he sound so sonorous and agitated? Is that all he wants? Just a request like that?

Guo Xuehua was shocked, while as she stared at his depthless eyes holding various complex emotions. After a while, she silently nodded her head.

“I promise,” Guo Xuehua said solemnly before slowly standing up, without asking any questions.

Yang Chen didn’t intend to speak more. Walking past Guo Xuehua, he said to Lin Ruoxi, “Wife, I’ll come back for dinner after dealing with this. You may get inside first.”

Lin Ruoxi nodded. “Understood.”

Ignoring everyone, Yang Chen headed to Guo Xuehua’s infinity.

Lin Ruoxi looked back to gaze upon Yang Chen's fleeting image. In the cold wind, he appeared incredibly desolate, even the slightest bit of his usual indolence couldn't be seen anymore.

Guo Xuehua stood by the entrance for a very long time as she held numerous disorganized and complicated thoughts. However, seeing that Yang Chen boarded her car, she immediately bade farewell to Lin Ruoxi and the others before leading Little Wen and Little Li back to her car.

During the journey to the military region where the Cai's clan was located, Yang Chen sat silently beside Guo Xuehua with his eyes shut, as if he was in deep thought.

Guo Xuehua looked bewildered. Knowing that her son could finally be saved, she'd glance at Yang Chen's cheek occasionally. She felt that his look felt familiar, but she couldn't place how it felt specifically, no matter how hard she thought.

When they came to the Cai clan's residence, the security guards outside had increased a few more layers. Evidently, there were many VIP's who came to gather here because of Yang Lie.

Being guided by the Cai clan's men, Yang Chen and Guo Xuehua walked towards the quiet courtyard where Yang Lie was at. Quite a number of armed soldiers stood at each corner in a dignified manner. The atmosphere was so tense that ordinary people wouldn't dare to breathe too loudly inside.

Yang Chen walked through the long pathway like how he normally would. He hadn't spoken a single word with Guo Xuehua on the way, and wasn't bothered to ask about the current situation either.

When Yang Chen arrived at the entrance of Yang Lie's door, the people inside took immediate notice to Yang Chen.

In the room, except Cai Yuncheng, Cai Ning, Yang Lie's master Yu Jizi, even Yang Jieyu stood by Yang Lie's sickbed.

Upon knowing that her nephew was injured by Yang Chen, Yang Jieyu felt anguished and yet angry. She was aware of Yang Chen's personality, thus she was sure that Yang Lie must've done something so wrong to cause so much trouble. But she was still very distressed at the fact that it was two relatives who fought each other.

However, she wasn't in a position to straight-up disobey her elder brother Yang Pojun's intention. All she could do was to stand quietly as she witnessed everything.

Yang Jieyu felt relieved when she saw that Guo Xuehua had managed to invite Yang Chen over. She just thought that Yang Chen was being forgiving as he was willing to come over to save Yang Lie. However, she didn't know that Guo Xuehua had kneeled down to beg him.

"I really want to thank you for coming. I know that you have reasons for why you do what you do, but he's still young after all. I hope that you won't keep a grudge," Yang Jieyu said earnestly.

"Since I'm here already, your words are not necessary," Yang Chen replied.

Yang Jieyu sighed. "Then I'll pass him to you now... To be honest, Hwei and I like you very much. You're a very dependable young man. We're proud of you."

Cai Yuncheng was rather shocked. He asked Cai Ning, "This guy is Yang Chen? Even your Aunt Yang knows him?"

Cai Ning nodded. "I don't know why as well. But they indeed know each other."

Cai Yuncheng's eyes were filled with thoughts. Yang Jieyu, Yang Chen, Yang Lie... Yang clan, do these people have some form of relationship between them?

Guo Xuehua was surprised as well that Yang Jieyu knew Yang Chen. However, she didn't voice her questions too quickly. She merely looked at Yang Jieyu with curious eyes. She knew that her sister-in-law wasn't someone easy to deal with. Yang Jieyu is involved in numerous things regarding the Yang clan. Why's she treating Yang Chen this intimately, as if she's talking to her own son? This certainly isn't something I would have foreseen happening, Guo Xuehua thought.

Vaguely, Guo Xuehua felt that there was something that these people were not telling her.

Yu Jizi finally opened his mouth. "Are you confident that you can do it?" he asked. He was deeply concerned about his disciple.

Yang Chen darted a glance at him. "If I said I wasn't confident, can I leave him as he is?"

The friendly look on Yu Jizi's face immediately vanished, but he didn't dare to express his anger. Upon knowing Yang Chen's real identity, he fully understood that Yang Chen was on a whole other level from him.

Yang Chen said to the people behind him, "Everyone, leave this room now. For the next half an hour, no one is allowed to get near this place."

Guo Xuehua was rather worried. When she wanted to ask what Yang Chen was planning, she was stopped by Yang Jieyu.

"Sister-In-Law, let's go out. Yang Chen knows his limits. He just doesn't want to get distracted."

Helplessly, Guo Xuehua followed Cai Yuncheng, Daoist Yu Jizi and the others out the room.

Outside the room in the courtyard, Guo Xuehua asked Yang Jieyu after the doors had been closed, "Jieyu, be honest with me. Is there something you're hiding from me?"

Yang Jieyu got stunned. She knew that Guo Xuehua was a clever woman, who must've realized something when she spoke with such familiarity to Yang Chen earlier. Although she wanted to tell this sorry excuse of a woman that her lost child whom she had been looking for, for the past twenty years or so, was this close in front of her eyes, Yang Jieyu knew that if she had really done that, Guo Xuehua would definitely try to bring Yang Chen back into the Yang clan no matter what.

If that happened, the political opponents competing for factions of the Yang clan would seize this opportunity to strike Yang Pojun with the scandal, thus causing an irreversible damage to Yang Pojun's election.

Although the Yang clan wouldn't necessarily collapse as a result, it would still be negatively impacted. Its future developments will definitely be severely restrained.

Despite being courageous, Yang Jieyu wouldn't dare to toy with the fate of the clan, especially without permission. Therefore, she merely let out a polite smile and said, "Sister-In-Law, what are you thinking about? What is there for me to hide from you?"

Evidently, Guo Xuehua wasn't this easily deceived. She asked, "Then how did you and Yang Chen come to know each other? Can you talk about it?"

Yang Jieyu instantly thought of a reason. Smiling, she said, "Oh, his wife Lin Ruoxi, the CEO of Yu Lei International, has relations with our Yuan clan on the business side of things. So we have met at a banquet and chatted before."

"Lin Ruoxi..." Previously at the villa, Guo Xuehua was so focused on Yang Chen that she hadn't paid much attention to Lin Ruoxi. As she thought about it, she recalled that Yang Chen called the woman 'Wife' before he left.

When she thought about it more carefully, Guo Xuehua seemed to have met the lady a few times before at the orphanage in Zhonghai, but she didn't have any interactions with her prior to that.

"So she's the CEO of Yu Lei International... Yu Lei International... Lin Ruoxi..." Guo Xuehua mumbled. "She looks rather similar to that woman."

"What? What woman?" Yang Jieyu couldn't help but ask after listening to Guo Xuehua mumbling to herself.

Guo Xuehua shook her head and said, "It's nothing. I was just reminiscing the past."

Although Yang Jieyu felt that there must be more to it than just that, she didn't ask about it. She was already feeling extremely guilty when she faced Guo Xuehua. So she decided not to voice anything out for now.

While Yang Chen was treating Yang Lie, outside Cai clan's courtyard, two men met coincidentally.

Yang Pojun was dressed in his military uniform as usual. A hint of strictness could be seen on his sharp face. He held a strange look when he noticed a man dressed in a black coat coming down from another Jeep, looking energetic.

"General Lin, why are you free to come here today?" The person Yang Pojun was speaking to was Lin Zhiguo.

Lin Zhiguo wasn't surprised when he saw Yang Pojun. Smiling faintly, he said, "A tragedy happened to Commander Yang's son. I rushed over instantly upon hearing the news. The mission this time round is unusually difficult to accomplish. Yang Lie, being one of the core combatants, suddenly got injured. As the general commander, I still have to be concerned about him even privately."

"I'll thank General Lin on my son's behalf then," Yang Pojun said. Damn this cunning old fox. He's no different from me. After getting informed that Yang Chen is here to treat Yang Lie, he couldn't be at ease and decided to come here, Yang Pojun thought.

He still remembered that this man was the one who brought the DNA report to his father Yang Gongming, who had given him a scolding as a result. Thus, Yang Pojun wasn't too happy when faced with Lin Zhiguo.

Evidently, to Yang Pojun, Lin Zhiguo's intentions certainly weren't that simple. He must have further plans which have yet to be revealed. It was best to distance himself from him.

Although the Lin clan in Beijing wasn't considered a truly powerful clan like the Yang clan, they were still rather influential and shouldn't be looked down on. Yang Gongming even specially warned him not to underestimate Lin Zhiguo, which meant he must have hidden powers.

At the very least, the mission which Yang Lie and Yu Jizi came down from the mountains to participate in was led by Lin Zhiguo.

Yang Pojun suddenly remembered the night when he checked on Yang Chen's background for the past twenty years.

Using merely his influence in the military, Yang Pojun found out that a lot of the data regarding Yang Chen was encrypted, which could only be accessed by top-level members of the security department. Regarding the information he did manage to look into, he had no clue as to the legitimacy, which had only proven to be useless at last.

Although Yang Pojun was only in charge of the military's side of things, he knew that China had a secret organization called the Yellow Flame Iron Brigade. However, since it wasn't too impressive, it wasn't being highly regarded, which allowed them to stay away from power disputes.

No matter how Yang Pojun thought about it, the data regarding Yang Chen could only be kept secured by the department Yellow Flame Iron Brigade. Only such an organization would want to encrypt the data so much so that even he couldn't access it, as the commander of the military district.

Being able to notice the relationship between the Yang clan and Yang Chen, is Lin Zhiguo the true person in-charge of the Yellow Flame Iron Brigade? I can think of only this as the reason why Father would warn me of him, Yang Pojun thought as he glanced at Lin Zhiguo occasionally. As he walked, he asked, "General Lin, do you know Yang Chen?"

Lin Zhiguo seemed to be expecting the question. "Yep. We've cooperated twice before."

"There seems to be various unique aspects about his past." Yang Pojun looked at Lin Zhiguo from the corners of his eyes.

Lin Zhiguo's eyebrows slightly moved. "Commander Yang, I believe you're more aware of what military secrets mean than me."

Yang Pojun's heart sank. It looks like what I predicted was correct. Yang Chen certainly has an incredibly frightening past. That's right. How could he be an ordinary person if even Yu Jizi was afraid of him?

Although he didn't know what the 'military secrets' mentioned by Lin Zhiguo were, Yang Pojun had to reassess the situation to consider just what position he should put the young man who suddenly popped up in...

Chapter 363: Too Alike

When Yang Pojun and Lin Zhiguo came to the courtyard together, Abbess Yun Miao was already there standing. Yun Miao curtly nodded her head at Yang Pojun, but completely ignored Lin Zhiguo, turning her head away as if she hadn't noticed him.

Lin Zhiguo sighed and walked towards Yun Miao. "Why must you do this? You make me feel bad every time we meet. We're supposed to be devoted to each other ever since the day we got married. There's is nothing you will benefit from, for treating me like this anyway."

Yun Miao snorted disdainfully. "Mind your own business. I don't need you to step into my life."

"Can I really stay out? If it wasn't you who insisted Hui'er to get together with Yang Chen back then, this incident would not have even taken place. Are you satisfied now that the young master of the Yang clan is injured?"

Yun Miao stared at Lin Zhiguo angrily and said, "This decision is still leaps and bounds better than you sending my son and daughter-in-law to their deaths!"

"You..." Lin Zhiguo was infuriated, but couldn't speak a word to defend himself. After all, it certainly was his decision that made his children die in a war at a place outside their hometown.

Seeing that Yun Miao and Lin Zhiguo started arguing upon meeting each other, the people around acted like they heard and saw nothing.

The fact that Lin Zhiguo and Yun Miao were married wasn't a secret to the people in this circle. However, they still didn't understand what specifically took place between them, but knew that they have had this conflict for the past twenty years or so. Thus, they weren't very surprised.

Yang Pojun made eye contact with his younger sister Yang Jieyu before walking towards Guo Xuehua. With a complex gaze, he looked at the door between them and the patient room. "Is that young man treating Lie'er?"

Guo Xuehua had always been a gentle woman. Although she had a fight with Yang Pojun earlier, she wouldn't follow in the footsteps of Yun Miao, to argue for more than twenty years with him. Slightly nodding, she said softly, "He told us to not distract him for half an hour. He should be done really soon."

Yang Pojun involuntarily asked, "Did he say anything out of the ordinary to you?"

"Anything out of the ordinary? What are you trying to ask?" Guo Xuehua looked at her husband with a weird gaze.

Yang Pojun immediately changed the subject. "He agreed to come right after you asked him to? Didn't he voice out any requests?"

Guo Xuehua naturally wouldn't tell him that she kneeled down before Yang Chen. It wasn't because she felt ashamed. She knew that Yang Pojun would definitely be angry at her if she did. When that happened, everyone would end up awkward and unhappy.

As a result, Guo Xuehua merely said, "He asked me to not beg him anymore in the future. This is the only request he made."

"Beg?" Yang Pojun frowned tightly. However, when he heard that Yang Chen didn't allow Guo Xuehua to beg him, his heart stopped beating for a split second...

Yang Pojun quickly noticed that although Guo Xuehua didn't recognize Yang Chen, Yang Chen might've found out about his relations with the Yang clan.

Yang Pojun could think of many reasons why Yang Chen didn't expose this affair. But no matter which one it was, he'd be fine as long as Yang Chen didn't announce it.

"Indeed you shouldn't be begging him. He's from the younger generation and not an important character. He doesn't deserve to be begged by you," Yang Pojun said proudly.

Guo Xuehua wrinkled her brows, but didn't say anything to fight back. After all, she had gotten used to Yang Pojun's arrogance.

At this moment, Guo Xuehua gazed upon Yang Pojun's cheek. Suddenly, something clicked in her mind... She soon got lost in thought. Why does he...

Silence continued in the courtyard for another five or six minutes. The door finally got opened. Looking indifferent, Yang Chen silently walked out of the room, with his forehead covered in sweat.

Everyone turned their attention to Yang Chen as they waited for an answer.

Yang Pojun and Guo Xuehua held different gazes. Yang Pojun examined Yang Chen in contemplation, while Guo Xuehua was stunned, as if she suddenly realized something.

Yang Chen said to Yu Jizi and the others, "Give him a month and he will recover. His ability will be slightly dampened than before, but he can return to his previous level if he practices extra hard."

Yang Chen's voice sounded rather weak. The amount of internal energy spent on treating all the meridians and organs of a person was far beyond one could imagine. Furthermore, Yang Lie wasn't injured on the outside, which caused Yang Chen to be unable to use his blood to speed up his recovery.

"Such a severe injury can be treated in a mere half hour. Senior Brother Song used to tell me about how magical Endless Resolve Restoration Scripture is, but I didn't expect level nine to hold such a horrifying speed of recovery," Yun Miao mumbled.

The people around got slightly relieved. If Yang Lie was paralyzed for the rest of his life, the people from the Yang clan wouldn't let this matter slip just like that.

Although most of the people present knew that Yang Chen wasn't afraid of the Yang clan, they'd still be worried, as this would negatively impact China. Needless to say, Yang Jieyu was all the more worried as she was always concerned about her clan.

After Yang Chen finished speaking, he wasn't willing to stay there any longer. He wanted to leave, but he noticed Yang Pojun standing right in front of him upon raising his head.

This was the first time that they have met each other in a formal setting. At the exact moment their gazes met, both Yang Chen and Yang Pojun instantly understood a lot of things clearly.

Guo Xuehua also finally realized what the strange feeling she felt upon seeing Yang Chen earlier was. They're so alike!

My own husband and this young man called Yang Chen look so similar!

Although Yang Pojun appeared very aged, his look when he was young was incredibly similar to how Yang Chen looked now. However, Guo Xuehua had never thought in that direction before, so she had failed to notice anything unusual earlier.

Being outsiders, Yang Jieyu and Yuan Hwei managed to observe the situation more clearly. Through various secret investigations in addition to Yang Chen's attitude, Yang Jieyu made a conclusion.

Yang Chen and Yang Pojun stared at each other in silence for a short while, as if they were no more than strangers to each other. Yang Chen then turned to look at Cai Ning and said, "Get a car ready for me."

Before Cai Ning answered, Cai Yuncheng replied, "No problem. Thank you very much for saving Yang Lie."

Seeing that Yang Chen planned to leave just like that, Lin Zhiguo walked forward and said, "Young Man, don't leave so quickly. I still have to discuss something with you."

Yang Chen had known that nothing good would happen when he noticed Lin Zhiguo earlier. Expectedly, he was here to look for Yang Chen.

"Say what you must, but make it quick." Yang Chen appeared rather impatient.

Lin Zhiguo was well aware of Yang Chen's attitude. Moreover, he was the one most aware that there were many people present that Yang Chen wasn't willing to interact with. Thus, without getting mad, he smiled and said, "Perhaps here isn't the best place to discuss this."

Yang Chen headed outside the courtyard, while Lin Zhiguo followed him out after looking at everyone.

The others wouldn't be so insensible as to follow them. Yang Jieyu, Yu Jizi, Yun Miao, Cai Yuncheng and his daughter Cai Ning all headed to another courtyard, leaving only Yang Pojun and Guo Xuehua there.

Yang Pojun noticed that Guo Xuehua had been looking at him doubtfully. He knew that his wife must've found something out. He was nervous but his face had proven otherwise. "Let's go inside to look at Lie'er."

Guo Xuehua remained quiet and followed Yang Pojun into the room.

Currently, Yang Lie was lying on the bed, looking much less pale than before. When observed closely, it looked like he was merely asleep.

Guo Xuehua felt slightly relieved. She tidied Yang Lie's blanket while thinking of something else. With her back facing Yang Pojun, she asked, "Pojun, is there something you're hiding from me?"

"No," Yang Pojun answered without hesitation.

Guo Xuehua seemed to have confirmed her guess. Smiling, she said, "Since you said no, there must be something then. If there's really nothing you're hiding, you'd definitely ask me why I asked so. We've been married for so many years. I know you more than you do."

Yang Pojun frowned. "Since you know me this much, you shouldn't have asked me that."

"Can I not ask about it?!" Guo Xuehua violently turned around and stared right into Yang Pojun's eyes. "Tell me. Yang Chen—is he our lost child?!"

Chapter 364: Its Them

Outside the courtyard of the Cai residence, Yang Chen had a cigarette in his mouth while he leaned against a huge locust tree. Raising his head to look at Lin Zhiguo, he said, "I'm not in a good mood right now. Summarize what you want to say."

Lin Zhiguo nodded in agreement. "Do you know why Yang Lie went down the mountains with his master Daoist Yu Jizi from the Kunlun Sect and came to Zhonghai?"

"This isn't my concern," Yang Chen replied.

"But it's my concern. It's something concerning the Yellow Flame Iron Brigade," Lin Zhiguo said solemnly. "This time, they came mainly to support us. Last month, we received a threatening challenge for a battle. The strength of the opponent forced us to invite experts outside the Yellow Flame Iron Brigade for assistance. Although Yang Lie hadn't officially joined the team yet, his power can rival that of Sky Dragon. In addition to his master Daoist Yu Jizi, they'd be a huge help to us."

"So?"

"So, since you injured Yang Lie, you have to compensate us in some way. Otherwise this may negatively affect everyone should we lose the battle," Lin Zhiguo said with a smile. It could be seen from his face that he was rather pleased.

Yang Chen laughed in contempt. "I attacked him for your granddaughter's sake. Aren't you supposed to thank me?"

"Even if Hui'er was brought away by Yang Lie, she wouldn't have been harmed and Yang Lie could still participate in the battle. However, you almost ended his life this time, which made him unable to recover fully before a month, but our battle can take place at anytime. Don't you think you are being very unfair to us?"

"Why should I care if it's fair to you or not, and why must I make up for it?" Yang Chen said before flicking his cigarette.

With his hands clasped behind his back, Lin Zhiguo looked towards the direction of Zhonghai City. "We tolerated you for bringing a team of Sea Eagles into China. This is already your biggest privilege. This time, you injured our main combatant but we're not going to hold you accountable for it, though I admit part of the reason is because of the awe we have for you. However, don't you think that even after all that has happened, you should provide us something in return?"

Yang Chen pondered for a while before asking, "Tell me who the opponent is first, and their aim this time."

Lin Zhiguo squinted while strictness appeared in his eyes. "You certainly know more about our enemy than us. They're the Sandstorm Mercenary Corps, while their target is the nuclear aircraft carrier we're secretly constructing at a hidden bay in Zhonghai."

Upon hearing this name, Yang Chen instantly frowned.

The news that China is building a nuclear aircraft carrier has been a spreading rumor internationally, but I didn't know that it was true. Evidently, this is something detrimental to a lot of strong countries, so it's highly possible for them to hire mercenaries to come and cause damage.

After all, comparing the power of China's mercenaries to those abroad, the power levels of their mercenaries are much higher.

"I thought Sandstorm Mercenary Corps never leaves the Middle East?" Yang Chen said.

"That's right. Since it was founded, no one knew how this organization was built. They've only been active for the past two years. If we consider that the Sea Eagles who listens to your command dominates the Mediterranean Sea and Northern Europe, then similarly, Sandstorm would be the ones that dominate the Middle East. To be honest, our special forces Water Dragon are no match for them," Lin Zhiguo said in a serious manner.

Yang Chen inhaled a mouthful of smoke. The stimulation derived from the poor-quality tobacco cleared his mind. After throwing the cigarette butt away, he started to think carefully...

Although Yang Chen hadn't had many interactions with Sandstorm, his men had suffered significant losses because of them.

According to the reports given by Sauron, major contracts from the Middle East were almost all snatched away by Sandstorm since they were founded. It wasn't because the Sea Eagles were inferior to their them. Most members from Sea Eagles were from the Mediterranean Sea and Northern Europe, and had lived almost all of their lives on snowy and icy lands in addition to the ocean, so they weren't very good at battles on the desert.

As a result, for the past two years, a line had been drawn between the two major mercenary corps from the Middle East and Europe. Sandstorm would earn their wealth from extracting oil, while the Sea Eagles would earn the money from European royal families. None of them would interfere each other, but they had been vaguely competing for awhile now.

The most famous battle Sandstorm took place in, was when they overthrew a country's government after being hired by some revolutionary army in the Middle East. In this process, America had tried to use advanced technologies to pressure them while controlling the regime, but got intruded by the armies from Sandstorm, causing one of their generals to be seized which was the main reason they lost the war.

Sandstorm's reputation has peaked since then. No one dared to look down on this group of mercenaries. Since they only operated in the Middle East, they didn't cause too much trouble to many of the countries.

Sandstorm also had a weird 'hobby'. Every time before they initiated a war, they'd send an 'invitation letter' for war, stating that 'We're coming to fight you. Get ready!'

They were indeed a group of arrogant and incredibly confident mercenaries. However, if their fighting records are what they say it is, they are a formidable bunch.

Two years ago, Yang Chen slowly distanced himself from the bloody circle, and passed the powers under his name to Sauron, Makedon and others, so he had never truly interacted with the people from Sandstorm.

The founder of Sandstorm was a mysterious fellow. There were no records regarding his past. The only information available about him was he was a relatively young guy.

Yang Chen finally understood why Lin Zhiguo acted this thick-skinned and swallowed his pride to ask for his help. If Sandstorm really came to China, Yellow Flame Iron Brigade definitely couldn't hold them down.

The power level of the Group of Eight was extraordinary, but the members of the Dragon Group were at most on par with Sandstorm. However, they were much less brutal and brave than Sandstorm.

Inviting Yu Jizi and Yang Lie down from the mountains was the only thing he could do.

"Sandstorm will be coming over from the Persian Gulf. They wouldn't bring a large number of troops for an ocean combat. They'd most likely send over two platoons of elites. Can't you guys stop them on the ocean?" Yang Chen asked.

Lin Zhiguo smiled bitterly. "We want to. But do you know who hired Sandstorm this time?"

Yang Chen shook his head. There were people all over the world who wanted to stop China from having a nuclear aircraft carrier.

"Brahma," Lin Zhiguo said before sighing.

Yang Chen finally got astonished this time. It's them!

"I bet you didn't expect them too, did you? Brahma from India, can be considered the most inactive hidden organization under a country in the world. They hired Sandstorm all the way from the Middle East to cause damage to our base in Zhonghai which has a nuclear aircraft carrier in construction," Lin Zhiguo said.

Yang Chen got excited. In this world, the organizations which he felt had no point in existing included Brahma from India.

After the nonviolent civil disobedience in India ended when their founding father Gandhi was assassinated, Brahma was founded secretly to protect the core people running the country.

According to ancient Indian myths, Brahma was the strongest 'creator god'. In their legends, Indra the guardian deity, Agni the fire god, Varuna the water god, could all only be considered as second-class gods.

Brahma, Asura, Vishnu and the other principal gods were the true, top Indian gods.

Every leader of Brahma would be titled 'King of Brahma'. It was said that this group of people could use various types of witchcraft since they practised ancient Indian yoga, while every King of Brahma could use it extraordinarily well.

Although many people refused to believe how magical yoga was when practised to its peak, Yang Chen was well aware that once mental strength reached its peak, it was possible for some 'witchcraft', so to speak, to be used.

For example, the dead Noriko Okawa's killing aura had reached a certain level which allowed him to unleash the horrifying power of the demon's blade. Even a jinnin like Hannya couldn't utilize the slightest bit of strength from the blade.

If the people from Brahma really had the high mental strengths that they claimed they had, it was quite possible that they are able to utilize the aforementioned techniques. After all, China had the art of internal energy, and India being one of a similar nature having an ancient history, naturally had something of that sort.

However, Brahma had always operated in India alone, to protect their core members. There were almost no records of them battling outside their country.

Yang Chen didn't expect that China's construction of a nuclear aircraft carrier would bring such a huge impact to India. Although it wasn't necessarily planned by India alone, they must've only made such a decision when they were left with no other options.

The aircraft carriers used by India were all purchased old models. If China could successfully build a nuclear aircraft carrier on their own, their war strategies would have to be completely redesigned.

Since it was planned by India, Sandstorm naturally couldn't be stopped on the ocean, since they would cross the mountains in Tibet to step onto the land of China.

Wanting to catch this group of people on land was straight-up impossible. Regular armies would only end up serving as cannon fodder.

At the same time, if the fight was overly intense, innocent citizens would be harmed. Inevitably, it certainly was something that couldn't take place.

The most they could do was to wait for Sandstorm to arrive at the construction site in Zhonghai to initiate the battle!

Yang Chen was rather looking forward to meeting this group of fellows who were deeply associated with Indian legends. Also, he wouldn't be too happy if they caused a commotion in the country he was residing in.

However, if he really helped the Yellow Flame Iron Brigade, he would spoil his relationship with the organizations from other countries. He said, "I can send Molin to lead the small team of Sea Eagles to assist you guys. With them, holding back a group of mercenaries from Sandstorm isn't a problem. However, I myself will only protect my Sea Eagles teammates. It's none of my concern if your people die."

"Understood. It'd already be a huge help if you can send the Sea Eagles over." Lin Zhiguo felt very much relieved. Smiling, he said, "Then the way to contact the Sea Eagles..."

“You must’ve already checked up on them. Don’t act like you haven’t investigated them in front of me. I’ll inform Molin tonight and you’ll contact him yourself.” Yang Chen directly exposed Lin Zhiguo’s intention.

Being old, Lin Zhiguo wasn’t at all awkward in this situation. “Young Man, you’re still my junior at the end of the day. Leave me some face where applicable.”

“If you want to fight for your face, do something that will make me respect you first.” Yang Chen shook his head and turned around before walking away from the tree.

Standing in the distance, Cai Ning had been waiting for Yang Chen in a car. Evidently, she had planned to personally send Yang Chen back.

Chapter 365: Unwilling

“I don’t know what you’re talking about,” Yang Pojun answered expressionlessly, in response to Gue Xuehua question.

Guo Xuehua seemed to have further confirmed her suspicions. She said, “The other day, I bumped into Yang Chen at the orphanage. At that time, I felt that I used to know the young man, as if he was an old friend of mine, but I couldn’t think of who it was and soon dismissed that thought. When I went to beg him to save Lie’er today, again, I was hit with a strange feeling of familiarity... I couldn’t understand why I felt a connection between us, when the fact of the matter was I didn’t know who he is...”

Guo Xuehua let out a pathetic smile. “Only a foolish mother like me would fail to recognize her own son. When I saw you earlier, I suddenly thought, isn’t Yang Chen’s look very similar to yours when you were young? Although his appearance isn’t exactly identical, the contours of his face seemed to be made from the same mold. Your eyes, your noses... look almost entirely the same...”

“Xuehua, you’re overthinking this. It’s merely a coincidence,” Yang Pojun replied while his eyes betrayed his emotions.

Guo Xuehua snorted in disdain. “Coincidence? Yeah, how coincidental. His family name is Yang, and he looks very similar to you. Although we were complete strangers, I felt that he looked extremely familiar the first time I met him... Oh yeah, Sister-In-Law talked to him like he was her relative earlier. How coincidental, that even she should know this young man. Also, when I kneeled down to beg him to save Lie’er, he forbade me from kneeling to him ever again...”

“What?!” Yang Pojun widened his eyes. “You said you kneeled before him?! How could you kneel before your own son?!”

Following his burst of anger, Yang Pojun quickly noticed that he fell into Guo Xuehua’s trap!

Expectedly, elation surfaced in Guo Xuehua’s eyes. She panted so heavily that her chest rapidly inflated and deflated, as if she receiving the news of a newborn. Her body shivered while she stared at Yang Pojun with teary eyes.

“You... you finally admitted it... Yang Chen... Yang Chen... that child really is my son... really...”

The corners of Yang Pojun’s eyes twitched. Gloomily, he said, “So what if that’s the case? His emergence couldn’t have happened at a worst time.”

However, Guo Xuehua completely ignored him. She had been immersed in joy following Yang Pojun's affirmation. Everything else was secondary to her at that point!

Tears flowed uncontrollably. The son whom she'd been separated from for more than twenty years was still alive to her surprise. Guo Xuehua felt that the grey clouds which overcasted her blue sky earlier were all blown away by the metaphorical wind of the news.

"My... my son... I knew it... I knew that I could find him..."

Guo Xuehua wiped her tears. With a smile on her face, she walked towards the door.

"Where are you going?!" Yang Pojun leaped towards Guo Xuehua and blocked her from leaving the room.

Anxiously, Guo Xuehua yelled, "I'm going to look for Yang Chen! I want to tell him that his Mother has been looking for him for more than twenty years. I want to tell him immediately!"

"Do you think that he's so oblivious to the fact that you are his mother?" Yang Pojun asked.

Guo Xuehua got stunned. Did he forbid me from kneeling before him because he knew my identity?

"He knows you're his mother and I'm his father, but the fellow straight-up treated us like strangers. Do you think he'd treat you nicely if you went looking for him?" Yang Pojun followed up with yet another question.

Guo Xuehua held her chest as she felt a heartache coming. After that, she bit her lower lip and took a deep breath. "We've abandoned him for twenty years without checking up on him. He'll hate us for that no doubt, and refuse to acknowledge us as his parents. However, this is a completely different thing with me looking for him. I'll let him know that my love for him has never waned. For the rest of my life, you can be damned sure that I will make it up to him. So, whether or not he wants to acknowledge me as his mother, I'll still meet him and tell him the truth."

Yang Pojun shouted angrily, "Why do you have to be so ignorant! Do you know the consequences that will arise from your actions if you do this?! If outsiders find out that a son popped up in the Yang clan out of nowhere, how are they going to look at us?! When the incident gets exposed, not only will me, you and Father be affected, our entire clan will be humiliated! Do you even grasp the extent of which this will affect us negatively?!"

"Wasn't this caused by us at the end of the day?! Are you going to ignore your own offspring for the sake of your safety, and treat him like he doesn't exist?!" Guo Xuehua shouted on top of her lungs.

Arrogantly, Yang Pojun said, "It's for sake of the Yang clan. For our family's honor, sacrificing a stupid kid who had been lost for decades is nothing!"

Guo Xuehua was so mad that she started laughing. Looking at her husband who she suddenly felt was like a stranger to her, she said, "Yang Pojun... when have you started behaving this way? You were never like this back then... Back then, you yourself told me that you'd definitely retrieve our child from the orphanage... You were still tearing away in the room when the child was lost... Didn't you say we'd bring our child home together? Why... why is your main priority only your face and power? Why are you being

so shameless for your authority? In your eyes, is it worth sacrificing your own offspring for the clan's pride? Is it worth being looked down upon by your wife?!"

Slap!

Failing to endure the insults, Yang Pojun slapped Guo Xuehua right cheek forcefully!

Being an ordinary housewife, Guo Xuehua got thrown aside after being slapped by the military expert Yang Pojun, while her right cheek got swollen. Her eyes were red as a result of crying. However, it was soon replaced with astonishment and emptiness. She couldn't process what had just occurred!

Yang Pojun felt a heartache when he saw his wife's dull expression, as if she refused to believe what had just happened. Regretful, he walked towards Guo Xuehua and wanted to help her up.

"Xuehua... I... I didn't do it intentionally..."

"Get away from me!"

Guo Xuehua flung Yang Pojun's approaching hand away. She staggered her way up and held her swollen, hot cheek. Letting out a mournful yet beautiful smile, she said, "Yang Pojun... we've been married for almost 25 years... Ever since I've known you, no matter what I did wrong, no matter what I said wrong, you've never scolded me before..."

"Today, you just hit me because I want to look for my lost son?"

Yang Pojun shut his eyes as he calmed himself down. He muttered, "Xuehua, it's my fault for hitting you, but you must know the consequences of acknowledging him. My election will come down in shambles! After that, no one from the Yang clan will be able to enter the core of the country for decades. Do you know what this means to the clan? Do you know how many people are relying on our clan? All, every single one of them will lose their support, and suffer from attacks."

"Do you think I'm so naive that I can't tell if you are lying? Father-In-Law is very much respected. He has students all over the central government. Even if you fail to become the vice chairman of the military commission, the Yang clan will become stagnant at most, or stop becoming one of the top clans. But so what if that's the case?" Guo Xuehua snorted in contempt. "No, the main issue is that you are unwilling to part with the authority you have in hand, to let go of the operations in recent years, and to let go of your pride..."

"You!!!"

With his face reddened, Yang Pojun raised his hand up and wanted to slap her again. However, staring at Guo Xuehua who was looking at him with a disdainful smile, he failed to swing his hand down no matter what.

Yang Pojun snorted before turning around to open the door.

Outside the door, Guo Xuehua's bodyguards Little Wen and Little Li had been waiting. They could vaguely hear the argument within the room, so they were rather worried.

"Chief!"

Upon seeing Yang Pojun, the two instantly greeted him.

Yang Pojun said to the two ladies, "Bring Madam back to our compound. From today onwards, unless I have given my express permission, Madam is not allowed to communicate with the outside world, nor is she allowed to leave the house. Fulfill her requests as much as possible. Report to me if someone wants to see Madam. If I refuse, no one is allowed to meet her!"

"Yang Pojun! You can't do this!!! I want to meet Yang Chen!!!" Guo Xuehua shouted loudly when she realised that Yang Pojun wanted to lock her up to prevent her from seeing Yang Chen.

Little Wen and Little Li looked at each other as they felt troubled, but soon nodded and replied, "Yes."

Although they were Guo Xuehua's personal bodyguards, they were first and foremost, female soldiers under Yang Pojun's command. Soldiers had to follow orders at the end of the day.

Yang Pojun turned his head to look at his wife whose eyes were filled with dissatisfaction and resentment. At last, he turned back before striding to leave in an indifferent manner.

"Madam, let's go back," Little Wen said mournfully. Although they weren't aware of why their chief made this decision, no matter how much pity they felt for Guo Xuehua, they still had to follow orders to restrain her.

Guo Xuehua seemed like she heard nothing. She soon lost the energy to stand. Absentmindedly, she sat onto the ground before muttering something which no one could hear.

Chapter 366: Ten Seconds

Sitting inside the Audi Cai Ning was driving, Yang Chen could get a whiff of her body scent which was splayed all over the car. This should be the car she usually drives.

Cai Ning wasn't a talkative person. Although she wasn't as cold as Lin Ruoxi, she still was considered a surprisingly dull woman, possibly due to her being away from home since young, in an effort to practise martial arts in Shushan. Yang Chen just didn't know what to make of this woman.

Having driven for more than ten minutes, Cai Ning finally opened her mouth. "Actually, you didn't have to promise the General. I know that you don't like to be involved in these things."

Being one of the core members of the Yellow Flame Iron Brigade, she was naturally aware of Lin Zhiguo's intention. Their enemy this time was much stronger than expected. Her team would be fighting with their lives at stake.

However, they'd be emboldened with Yang Chen's participation.

Smiling faintly, Yang Chen said, "How did you know that I'd accept his request?"

"General certainly has his way to make you agree to him," Cai Ning said.

Yang Chen looked at Cai Ning strangely before saying carefreely, "Do you know why I agreed to help you guys out?"

Cai Ning frowned. "Is it because of Ruoxi?"

Yang Chen smiled slightly. "I previously thought so too. Your general is too cunning, and thinks that he's so smart, he can predict my moves. He feels that he has the ability to make me help him. However, in fact, I'm only helping you guys for personal reasons."

I've returned to this country for more than a year now. There are many people I love and people who love me here. At the very least, I owe it to them to ensure that they can live peacefully. I can't bring them trouble because of my existence. So, I have to try my best to eliminate everything that could threaten them. This way, I can be a little selfish and at the same time help you all. After all, you're still a layer of protective umbrella, aren't you?"

Cai Ning nodded, and stopped raising more questions.

Yang Chen recalled about Cai Yan's matter. He asked, "What happened to Cai Yan? You came to my house earlier and said a bunch of stuff blurrily. Why didn't I see her at your house today?"

Speaking of Cai Yan, Cai Ning quickly turned cold. "You don't need to ask. Just stay away from my sister in the future."

Yang Chen was shocked by the answer. He sighed and didn't try to prod any further.

When the car drove past a street of bars, Yang Chen suddenly thought of Rose whom he hadn't visited in awhile. He had been rather busy ever since he came back from Japan, and started missing her already.

Rose was the kind of person who would silently wait for you to come when you were away. Every time Yang Chen thought of this behavior of hers, he'd feel extremely guilty.

"Stop the car here. I have something to do before I go home," Yang Chen said to Cai Ning.

Frowning, Cai Ning asked, "What?"

"I want to look for my woman," Yang Chen said happily.

"Your woman?" Cai Ning looked at the surroundings, only to find bars and nightclubs. Lin Ruoxi wasn't someone who would come to such places. She instantly realized Yang Chen wanted to meet his other lovers. Staring at him angrily, she shouted, "Get out of my car, you shameless fellow!"

Cai Ning pulled the emergency brake, which confused Yang Chen. What's happening to this girl? She isn't the one I'm teasing, is she?

After Yang Chen hopped down from the car and walked towards Rose Bar, Cai Ning sat in her car as she stared at his back view which was slowly distancing away.

After quite a while, Cai Ning sighed slightly. She murmured, "My stupid sister... is a man like him really worth it...?"

Yang Chen was unaware of Cai Ning's thoughts. Upon seeing the sign of Rose Bar, he had the urge to rush inside to hug Rose and kiss her.

Nothing would happen when he was too busy to think of her. However, once he got reminded of her existence, his mind would start heating up.

Since it was in the afternoon, the bar was relatively empty. Yang Chen walked to the front counter and saw Chen Rong who was diligently cleaning a crystal wine glass.

Upon seeing Yang Chen, Chen Rong let out a smile. "Brother Yang, you're finally here. Elder Sister has been downhearted nowadays, which gave us heartaches when we see her."

Yang Chen smiled in an embarrassed manner. "I'm quite busy nowadays. I just returned to the country. Rose isn't angry, is she?"

"Brother Yang, even if you're busy, you should at least consider giving Elder Sister a call every once in awhile. It's not like you don't understand Elder Sister's personality. She's not the type to take the initiative to call you out of nowhere," Chen Rong said as she protested for Rose. Since she got close to Yang Chen, she could afford to be more straightforward.

Gloomily, Yang Chen realized that he didn't have the habit of calling his women. It certainly looked like he had never taken the initiative to call the women around him to ask about them.

It could be because of his negligent behaviour previously, not to mention he had always been extremely independent, so keeping in touch with the people around him didn't come naturally.

It sure seems like I have to change my bad habit. I can't always let the people I love suffer.

"You don't have to change. You wouldn't be you anymore if you did."

Suddenly, the gentle and joyous voice of Rose resounded from the front.

Yang Chen raised his head, only to see Rose who was smiling at him, dressed in a purple, low-necked cardigan together with a grey, ripple-like, Irish skirt.

Rose appeared to have gone to a salon and received a hair treatment recently. Her beautiful hair was originally straight and smooth, but was now slightly curled, causing her to look less heroic, but more gentle and charming.

Awkwardly, Yang Chen said, "I have to change. I can't always make you suffer. It's not like its a good habit anyway."

Rose shook her head as she smiled. "To me, your habits are all great. So don't change them."

Why does this woman never fail to say something so heartwarming? If this was her way to bind men, Yang Chen felt that he'd willingly be tied up from all directions.

Chen Rong made an exaggerated expression, signifying sourness. "Elder Sister, so even you know how to spout cheesy lines like this."

"What is it? Does our Rongrong want to look for a man who could say the same to her?" Rose asked with a smile.

Chen Rong stuck her tongue out before remaining silent.

Yang Chen walked forward and held one of Rose's soft, jade-like hand before pinching it lightly. He then pulled Rose to a quiet corner in the bar. "I went to Japan a while back, and was extremely busy when I came back, so I haven't had the time to come visit you."

“There’s no need for an explanation. I’m not a spoiled little girl who wants to be with her boyfriend all day. I can wait,” Rose said helplessly.

Smiling bitterly, Yang Chen said, “Babe Rose, to be honest, if you acted like a spoiled little girl in front of me, hit me, or scold me, It’d actually make me feel much better. I don’t like looking at you silently waiting for my arrival.”

“I’m happy enough to hear you say that. Moreover, if I really wanted to, I could find you at your company if I really miss you. I’m a shareholder of your company,” Rose said before winking.

Yang Chen patted the back of Rose’s hand. He knew that saying anything more would be useless. The fact that Rose behaved this way was no different than him finding it hard to treat his women properly. It was hard to change.

Suddenly, Rose poked Yang Chen’s chin with her finger. “Hubby, raise your head.”

“Hmm?”

Rose’s bright, watery eyes stared right into Yang Chen’s eyes.

“Just like this. Don’t move, let me look at you face-to-face, while you look at me this way as well.”

“What’s going on?” Yang Chen didn’t understand what she was up to, but still obeyed her.

After the two held their gazes for around ten seconds, Rose chuckled, as if she was overjoyed.

“Babe, why are you smiling like a fool?” Yang Chen asked, confused.

“You’re the fool, not me,” Rose replied. “I read a magazine yesterday, which had a segment written about a foreign married couple, who lovingly lived together, all their lives. Some people asked them why they had never fought, and how they could keep loving each other so much. Their answer was, no matter how busy they got, they would free up around ten seconds of their time to look at each other. They maintained this habit ever since they got married, until they neared the end of their lives...”

Yang Chen’s heart shivered lightly. When Rose gently narrated the matter, her tone almost melted his heart.

“Although we can’t look at each other every day, starting from today, every time we meet, look into my eyes for ten seconds, can you give me that?”

Ten seconds... All this woman wants is ten seconds...

Yang Chen felt his eyes start to heat up. He didn’t know if it was because of the heater in the bar being too strong, or something else entirely

“You’re such a stupid woman. You’re always waiting for me like this. Don’t you feel aggrieved in any way?”

Rose quietly shook her head. “Not at all. I thought about it when I was making my decision, but still chose to follow you at last.”

“Hubby, to me, it’s a blessing every time you come to see me. Actually, every second I get to wait for you to come is a blessing to me as well.

“Happiness is always two-sided. I’m very blessed when you treat me nicely. Waiting for you is my blessing as well.”

Yang Chen smiled. Yeah... happiness is always two-sided. One gets happiness in return for giving out happiness. Rose understands this principle, but unfortunately too many people in this world do not.

As the two were sweet talking to each other, a couple walked inside the bar. Before Yang Chen and Rose looked over there, Chen Rong who was at the front counter shouted, “Elder Brother!”

Chapter 367: Too Much Sugar

Chen Rong’s elder brother?

Yang Chen was shocked for a while. Isn’t that Chen Bo, my former colleague whom I haven’t seen in some time? When he was still working at Yu Lei International, Yang Chen and Chen Bo were colleagues who worked in the same office.

Yang Chen could clearly remember the time that Chen Bo was chased down by gangsters and forced to serve men since he was extremely feminine. He heard that Chen Bo left to become an editor, and he hadn’t seen him since.

Yang Chen and Rose stood up and looked towards the entrance. It was indeed Chen Bo.

Wearing a black jacket, Chen Bo looked a lot more lively than before after cutting his hair short. At the same time, he started growing out his moustache, which made him look more like a man.

However, what surprised Yang Chen more was the lady dressed in red winter clothing who was clinging on to Chen Bo like a child.

The lady had a figure which could rival Rose’s. At the same time, she had snow-white skin while her long hair was dyed slightly yellow, giving her a hint of a Japanese beauty.

“Rongrong.” Chen Bo’s voice had gotten a lot louder than Yang Chen remembered. He didn’t sound like the cowardly man he was back then anymore. Although he sounded gender-neutral, it was the tone of a man. Patting Chen Rong’s head, he said, “Didn’t you say you wanted to meet my girlfriend? Here, this will be your future sister-in-law.”

Sister-in-law? Chen Bo’s girlfriend?

Yang Chen and Rose looked at the person beside Chen Bo out of curiosity. However, they were instantly dumbstruck upon seeing her appearance.

Chen Rong’s face had fear written all over it, with her mouth wide open, as if witnessing something terrifying.

The charming lady smiled faintly and said, “Nice to meet you. I’m Chanel.”

“Ni—nice to meet you too...”

Chen Rong replied in shock. She couldn't believe that the person in front was Zhou Dongcheng from Dongxing whom she last met at the bloody scene of the banquet!

Of course, she was the lady who casually bade farewell to Yang Chen after her father Zhou Guangnian was killed by Yang Chen—Miss Chanel.

At that moment, Chen Bo noticed Yang Chen who was standing beside Rose. Happily, he laughed and yelled, "Yang Chen! You're here as well? What a coincidence! Ah, Boss Rose, thank you for taking such good care of my sister."

Yang Chen forced himself to greet back even though his body was stiff in shock. He then smiled awkwardly at Chanel.

Chanel wasn't at all shy or acting unnaturally. She acted like it was her first time getting to know Yang Chen. Using her gentle female voice, she said "You must be my hubby's friends. Nice to meet you all."

"Yang Chen had assisted me on countless occasions in the past. Dear, why don't we treat him for a meal?" Chen Bo asked.

"You shall make the decision," Chanel said obediently.

"Erm... I can't make it today, I still have to return home to eat." It wasn't that Yang Chen wasn't willing to eat with them. He promised Lin Ruoxi that he'd have dinner at home, and didn't want to break his promise.

"How unfortunate. Maybe next time. I'll give you my phone number," Chen Bo said before forcefully asking Yang Chen to type his number on Yang Chen's phone. He even gave himself a miss call to record Yang Chen's number.

Yang Chen gazed upon the overly active Chen Bo who looked every bit like a successful man. He couldn't connect this with the man Chen Bo used to be, timid and shy. Is it possible that one year was enough to elicit this amount of change?!

Also, when did Chanel's voice changed to one of a lady?!

Chen Rong too noticed that everything is happening too quickly and she couldn't keep up. Pulling her brother's hand, she said to Chanel, "Sister... Chanel, I have something to tell my brother. We'll be back soon."

"Alright, go ahead. You haven't met in so long after all. Of course there are somethings you want to say," Chanel replied.

After Chen Bo was pulled away to a corner by Chen Rong, Chanel looked at Yang Chen and Rose with a teasing gaze. "You're very curious to how all of these turned out, aren't you, Mr Yang and Miss Rose?"

Yang Chen smiled bitterly, while Rose looked at Chanel waiting for an explanation.

Chanel looked at Chen Rong lovingly who was chatting with Chen Bo afar. She said, "More than six months ago, I received a sex reassignment surgery from the best doctors in Thailand. After that, I truly became the woman I had always wanted to be. I was very lost abroad and didn't know what I wanted to do next. Should I live all my life in solitude... or should I look for a man who didn't mind my past... In the

end, I met Chen Bo who came to Thailand because of his job for a magazine interview. I guess you can call it fate. He recognized me. I felt bored and started playing with him... At last, I quickly realised that he was an extremely kind man.

“So, I worked hard to change his appearance, to make him what he is today, and we fell in love at the same time.”

Yang Chen was sure that there were more absurd twists and turns in the story, but it wasn't appropriate for him to question any more than he should. “Then he knows about your past, while you know about his as well. Don't you guys feel awkward together?”

“Love is a magical thing. Because of love, we got to know each other all over again. He is the masculine editor Chen Bo, while I'm his woman Chanel he raises. Isn't this great? Our lives should've been simple and blessed from the start,” Chanel said happily. “I'm actually a true woman now. I can even give birth to children.”

Seeing Chanel's proud look, Rose couldn't hold it in anymore and turned her head away while smiling.

Nothing is certain indeed. Within a year, such significant changes have happened to these two, Yang Chen thought.

However, despite of what has happened, Yang Chen genuinely felt happy to see them this happy together.

Before long, the siblings regrouped with the rest after quite a long chat. With a slight smile, Chen Rong called Chanel, “Sister-In-Law,” causing Chanel to become incredibly shy.

After chatting with Yang Chen for a while more, Chen Bo left the bar together with Chanel, with the view of a loving couple's back fading in the distance.

“Rongrong, do you feel that it's fine?” Rose asked.

Chen Rong smiled and answered, “Elder Brother said that he found love. What else can I do anyway? I'll just hope for their happiness.”

Smiling, Yang Chen said to Rose, “Babe Rose, we have true love between us as well. Look at how loving they are. Don't you feel that we should do something to express our love?”

Rose blushed before rolling her eyes. “Didn't you say you had to return home for dinner?”

Yang Chen pointed at the clock hung on the wall. “I'll be able to make it even if I leave at 5 o'clock. It's not even 4 now, we still have an hour.”

“No, I'll give you half an hour at most. An hour will tire me out,” Rose said in dissatisfaction.

“That isn't for you to decide.” Yang Chen laughed before carrying Rose to the bedroom behind the bar.

Chen Rong looked at the two walk inside with a little envy. She mumbled, “Can't you do it when you two are alone? I'm still standing here, you know.”

After more than an hour, Yang Chen walked out from the room feeling rather pleased with himself. Contentment was sprawled all over his face. After waving goodbye to Chen Rong, he rushed home for dinner.

When he reached home, Wang Ma and Hui Lin were taking the freshly cooked dishes onto the dining table. Upon seeing Yang Chen's return, Hui Lin who was worried the whole time immediately asked, "Brother Yang, how did it go?"

Yang Chen smiled and answered, "How else could it have gone? He's was treated and is now resting."

"Phew..." Hui Lin relieved herself. "I knew that Brother Yang could do it. I'm sorry Brother Yang. I didn't know it'd turn out this way."

"Let sleeping dogs lie. It's in the past now. Since I promised your grandma that I'd take care of you, I couldn't allow you to be snatched away by someone else, can I? Let's eat." Yang Chen looked around. "Where's Ruoxi? Is she out? Or is she still working upstairs?"

Before Hui Lin answered him, Lin Ruoxi walked out from the kitchen. Wearing a pair of thick cotton gloves, she held a big white bowl which contained their soup and placed it onto the table.

Smiling, Wang Ma said, "After you left, Miss insisted that she cooked. She made a bowl of snow fungus for you. Young Master, make sure to eat more of that, it's good for your body."

Lin Ruoxi looked at Wang Ma in dissatisfaction. "Wang Ma, who said I purposely made this for him? I... I just wanted to eat it myself."

Yang Chen looked at the blushing Lin Ruoxi who was trying her best to refrain herself from smiling. This housewife-like woman wearing an apron and cotton gloves looked a lot more adorable than before.

Lin Ruoxi felt her ears start to heat up when she noticed Yang Chen's gaze. Pouting, she said, "What are you looking at? I said I didn't make it specially for you. Don't overthink it. Just eat!"

As soon as she finished speaking, Lin Ruoxi ran back to the kitchen like a little rabbit scampering away.

"Young Master, Miss has always behaved this way. Don't mind it at all," Wang Ma said happily.

Yang Chen nodded and took a bowl from the table. He scooped a large bowl of snow fungus cooked with jujube before devouring away.

Lin Ruoxi wasn't very skilled in cooking, so the fungus was a little burnt. However, Yang Chen wasn't somebody who would let a little thing like that dissatisfy him. He felt that it was tasty.

When Lin Ruoxi got seated, and the four started eating together, half of the huge bowl of snow fungus had already entered Yang Chen's stomach.

Lin Ruoxi was extremely pleased. She then noticed that Yang Chen winked at her, which made her retort with a fierce stare. "Is eating the only thing you know? Who asked you to eat this much? Can't you leave more for us?"

Yang Chen smiled foolishly and replied, "It's because my wife's cooking is too excellent."

“Stop sweet talking me.” Lin Ruoxi acted strictly and ignored him as she lowered her head to start eating. However, everything that she ate became too sweet. Did I put too much sugar into this?

After the meal was over, Wang Ma busied herself cleaning up in the kitchen, while the sisters Lin Ruoxi and Hui Lin started watching Korean drama on the television. The exceedingly sentimental show full of sobbing whose actors and actresses would cry and run frequently made the two ladies cry and laugh occasionally.

Back then, Hui Lin hadn't had the chance to watch these programs, living in the mountain and all. Now that she had spent lots of time with Lin Ruoxi, she got infected by Lin Ruoxi's habit of binge watching dramas, which allowed them to become close 'drama partners'.

Yang Chen wanted to watch the news, so he was forced to go upstairs to watch it in his room. Why does it feel like I'm living in a female only accommodation?

However, as he watched the news, Yang Chen's mind was filled with the time he spent with Lin Ruoxi recently, and her various behaviors.

It felt like his wife was slowly starting to accept him, get concerned about him. For example, she intentionally erected her cold mask during dinner earlier. But in fact, she was so happy that flowers bloomed in her heart.

As he thought of Lin Ruoxi's perfect appearance and figure, Yang Chen's hormones which he couldn't fully release on Rose's body earlier started to get active. Is it possible that... I can try a strategic attack tonight?

Having brought forward the intentions which he had restrained since his marriage, Yang Chen waited for the TV to be turned off and the footsteps of the two ladies to walk up the stairs. When he heard the sound of two doors shutting, he finally slipped out of his room in his pyjamas.

Lin Ruoxi's precious room was right beside his. Yang Chen realized that he was too good at enduring! Having lived beside such a treasure for half a year, I have never dared to test my luck before. I'm indeed well-deserved of receiving the title of a gentleman!

In the blacked-out hallway, silently, after making sure that Wang Ma and Hui Lin wouldn't appear, Yang Chen walked towards Lin Ruoxi's door and lightly twisted the knob.

To Yang Chen's surprise,—Lin Ruoxi's door wasn't locked!

Chapter 368: Bow, Please Don't Be Angry Anymore

Actually, Yang Chen wasn't sure if Lin Ruoxi had the habit of locking her door when she slept. However, such questions weren't of importance now. The most important thing was he could enter the room with ease.

Click! The sound the knob made when twisting was so minimal that ordinary people couldn't possibly tell that the door had been opened.

Upon entering the room, he was hit with a wave of a female's scent. The indistinct smell of Lin Ruoxi's body was just like the fragrance of a cape jasmine, which made Yang Chen deeply inhale multiple times in satisfaction.

Yang Chen regretted the fact that he was only half-conscious during the night of entangling with this woman at his rented apartment. If his mind had been clear back then, he was sure, it would've been a much more enjoyable experience.

However, fortunately, the fate had allowed them to arrive at to where they were now. At least, over the course of six months, their relationship has improved. Even if it was the cave of a tigress, he still intruded the room!

Since the lights inside weren't switched on, the room was basically pitch-black. However, because of Yang Chen's keen sense of vision, he only needed minimal amount of light to allow him to briefly look at the surroundings in the room.

Lin Ruoxi's boudoir had a combination of warm colors, including pink, light yellow, light blue and red and white polka dots. Her blanket, bed sheet, and pillows all had pictures of cartoon characters... Although the structure of the room was almost similar to Yang Chen's, its tone was basically one of a little girl who liked love fantasies, totally contrasting Lin Ruoxi's cold behaviour.

However, the more Yang Chen thought about it, the more it made sense to him. She was a woman who loved cheesy dramas, it was natural that she enjoyed dabbling in romance. However, she only usually puts on her icy cold facade which drives people away, when facing the men who hit on her.

The decorations and designs of the room was secondary at the moment. Yang Chen only paid attention to whether there was anyone on the bed.

He took two steps closer before getting surprised—no one's in bed?!

Before Yang Chen could analyze why Lin Ruoxi wasn't in her own room, footsteps could be heard coming from the pathway outside!

He listened carefully to the footsteps. They seemed to be headed towards the room. Yang Chen finally thought that it must be Lin Ruoxi returning to her room!

Being himself, Yang Chen wouldn't hide somewhere like a fool, or walk out of the room.

He was filled with resolution tonight. Wasn't he trying to regain his pride as a man from his legitimate wife's body?

Yang Chen seemed to have made a firm decision. Even if Lin Ruoxi struggled, he would clench his teeth and make her surrender herself to him tonight. Their relationship was slowly improving each day anyway. After getting so close, it was only natural that they should lower their restraint.

As a result, Yang Chen moved to the side of the door, before quietly awaiting for Lin Ruoxi's arrival. He had planned to give her a memorable hug... As the footsteps approached closer, Yang Chen's heartbeat became faster. He was so used to the affairs between men and women that he almost took it for granted. Despite being highly experienced, he still held the same excitement of a little boy, who was about to experience his first love, the moment he thought about the 'honorable feat' which he was planning on tonight.

Click! The door finally got opened.

A delicate figure walked inside. One of her arms was outstretched reaching for the light switch on the wall in an attempt to switch on the lights.

Yang Chen didn't give Lin Ruoxi the opportunity to do so. Everything was better in the dark after all!

As a result, the moment Lin Ruoxi wanted to switch on the lights, Yang Chen turned around and moved towards her back in the blink of an eye. Both of his arms were like winding vines as they wrapped around Lin Ruoxi's chest and waist!

"My dear little Ruoxi, you're finally back," Yang Chen whispered to Lin Ruoxi's ear with a smile.

After he finished speaking, Yang Chen sniffed her hair. Frowning, he said, "This is weird... Did you apply a different perfume? Why do you smell different than before? But it's okay, you still smell great, quite like an orchid..."

Yang Chen leaned his head forward, past Lin Ruoxi's shoulder and towards her tender cheek. He gave her a kiss on her earlobe, one of the more sensitive parts of a woman. The texture of the cold, jade-like skin caused Yang Chen to take a deep breath in enjoyment.

"Bro—brother Yang... Brother Yang... don't... don't do this... I'm H—hui Lin... I'm Hui Lin..." Hui Lin said with a crying tone.

The moment the 'Lin Ruoxi' in his arms slowly uttered those words, Yang Chen's body became stiff.

"Hui Lin?!"

Yang Chen violently let go of his hands and backed off aside.

Losing Yang Chen's support, Hui Lin's body softened and almost fell onto the ground. Luckily, she managed to grab the door frame, and used her other hand to clutch on to her chest, as she panted.

Without saying anything more, Yang Chen switched on the lights, causing the room to become bright.

He took a more careful look. She's indeed Hui Lin! Where's Lin Ruoxi?!

Hui Lin wore a thin, white cotton pyjamas. Under the loose pyjamas, her delicate and exquisite, but immature body portrayed a completely different beauty from that of Lin Ruoxi.

The pitiful, frightened girl's eyes had reddened and were filled with tears. She didn't have the courage to even raise her head to look at Yang Chen!

Yang Chen looked at Hui Lin in an incredibly awkward manner before taking a look at his left palm. The softness I pinched on earlier, belonged to Hui Lin?!

No wonder the measurements didn't feel right, and her fragrance was completely different from the one in Lin Ruoxi's room!

My brain must be infected with parasites! Why did I fail to notice such obvious differences?!

Staring at Hui Lin's resentful and wronged look, Yang Chen was even considering to end his own life!

Back then, he refused to admit he'd do anything to Hui Lin when Abbess Yun Miao accused him for having such intentions. However, today, he hugged her, felt her, and worse, kissed and teased her!!!

Although it was because he mistook her as someone else, how was this matter supposed to slide this easily?

Silence ensued for some time. Yang Chen couldn't stand it anymore. He asked, "Erm... Hui Lin, stop crying. Let's talk this out... Wh—why did you come to this room?"

Hui Lin bit her lower lip, while the flush on her face was still very visible. Lowering her head, she muttered, "Elder Sister took out a set of Korean drama discs to my room and said she wanted to watch them with me... She asked if she could sleep over in my room tonight and discuss the drama. Since she wanted to take a shower at my room as well, she asked me to get a set of pyjamas for her..."

Yang Chen got speechless. He then took a look at Lin Ruoxi's room again. There was indeed no form of multimedia entertainment devices in her room.

Since Hui Lin's room used to be a guest room, everything was complete there. It was normal that Lin Ruoxi wanted to watch in that room.

"Why are you guys watching Korean drama this late at night?" Yang Chen smiled bitterly.

Hui Lin pouted. "Elder Sister went to buy DVDs to continue watching tonight after we finished the episode on the TV just now..."

These damn TV stations! Can't they just play everything in one sitting?! They made my woman impatient and forced her to leave to buy discs! Yang Chen scolded in his mind.

Also, what's so great about these Korean dramas? Is it so addicting that Lin Ruoxi can't walk to take a set of clothes?!

However, all of these weren't the main problem now. He had to think of a way to explain to Hui Lin regarding his 'foolish' act.

"Hui Lin, don't get angry, I was just..."

"I know." Hui Lin didn't let Yang Chen continue his words. "I know that Brother Yang mistook me as Elder Sister, I—I'm fine..."

Yang Chen felt more guilty after listening to Hui Lin's words. However, what had been done couldn't be undone. If he were to act like nothing happened before, wouldn't he be no different from a rogue?!

"Why don't we settle it like this," Yang Chen said after thinking for a while, "Hui Lin, slap me twice on my face, and you may call 'moron' or 'idiot' or something similar. This way, you can treat it as something bad I did to you, which you beat me for afterwards."

Hui Lin's heart was beating intensely as she was feeling extremely shy and wronged. After listening to Yang Chen's suggestion, she couldn't stand but to burst out in laughter. Looking at Yang Chen, she said, "Brother Yang, what a stupid idea you came up with I'm not going to do as you say. I really don't blame you for that. It's not like you did it intentionally."

It's exactly because it wasn't intentional that I feel bad about it!

Yang Chen mourned in his heart. Why do I have to be this unlucky? I finally had the courage to test my luck tonight. Not only did I fail to sneak onto my wife, I accidentally touched her sister instead!

Something more unfortunate hadn't happened yet. When Yang Chen was talking to Hui Lin, Lin Ruoxi noticed that Hui Lin took a lot longer than she needed. She thought Hui Lin couldn't locate her pyjamas in the closet, or something insignificant happened. After pausing the show, she finally forced herself to move away from the television and scope the situation herself.

Lin Ruoxi's approaching footsteps could be heard by Yang Chen and Hui Lin, but they had no clue what they should do!

Yang Chen wouldn't break the window and jump down from the villa just for this. However, there was nothing in Lin Ruoxi's room he could use to cover himself, let alone a place for him to hide at!

Thus, when Lin Ruoxi came to the door, she noticed that the suspicious-looking Yang Chen was standing beside Hui Lin who was nervous and blushing.

Lin Ruoxi was slightly confused at first, but she soon realized Hui Lin's unusual behavior. Knowing that something was wrong, she frowned and asked Yang Chen, "Why are you here?"

Yang Chen wanted to explain, but nothing decent came up to his mind. There was no proper explanation he could think of for why he would end up in Lin Ruoxi's room!

Lin Ruoxi didn't expect an explanation from him. Her charming eyes soon became thousand-year-old stalactites as they pointed at Yang Chen, causing his senses to go numb and bones to freeze.

"What is it? You don't seem to be able to explain yourself," Lin Ruoxi said coldly.

Yang Chen remained quiet for a long time. He then smiled awkwardly and said, "We're husband and wife after all. Hehe, it's not wrong for me to take an interest in you sleeping is it?"

Lin Ruoxi knew that Yang Chen would come up with an explanation regarding their married status. She asked, "Then what happened to Hui Lin? You're not going to tell me Hui Lin's ears are flushed just because you looked at her once, are you?"

Hui Lin lowered her head so much that her chin almost buried itself on her chest. She slowly moved towards Lin Ruoxi to stand beside her, and didn't dare to speak a word.

Yang Chen scratched his scalp as he ran out of ideas. He wasn't a soft persimmon that anyone could pinch. Thus, he decided to be honest. Loudly, he said, "I'll be honest with you then. Your husband, who happens to me, wanted to 'take the bow by force'! However, the 'bow' didn't end up here, while I mistook the 'crossbow' as the 'bow' and touched it for a bit! But don't worry, I didn't 'fire an arrow', so the 'crossbow' is still a crossbow, 'Bow', please don't be angry anymore!"

The ordinary man would have absolutely no clue what nonsense Yang Chen was spouting.

However, Lin Ruoxi was smart by nature, in addition to Hui Lin's expression and Yang Chen's usual behavior, she immediately understood what had happened.

Lin Ruoxi was exasperated to see Yang Chen's shameless and indifferent look. He was well-aware of his wrongdoing, which made it more annoying to punish him.

Take the bow by force?! Is this guy's brain filled with nonsense?!

I've taken the initiative to express my approval to him. Can't he use a more appropriate way to communicate with me about it?

Which husband in the world actually sneaks up to his wife's bed to do it forcefully at midnight?!

In fact, Lin Ruoxi was actually rather reasonable about it, but she failed to take the pressure she usually exerted on Yang Chen into account.

They had been married for half a year. She had mostly treated him coldly and never given Yang Chen a chance to get close to her. Why would Yang Chen dare to toy with the sharp edge of the knife?

Thus, Yang Chen was led astray which caused him to come up with a series of absurd ideas. He didn't think Lin Ruoxi would straight-up agree to sleep with him on the same bed.

To make the matter worse, Yang Chen's plan went completely sideways because of Hui Lin's appearance.

Lin Ruoxi treated Hui Lin as her own sister. It was totally reasonable for her to be mad after finding out that her sister and her husband had a vague but existing affair.

"Get out. You're not allowed in my room in the future," Lin Ruoxi said expressionlessly in an ice-cold manner as she tried to suppress her anger.

Yang Chen could tell that Lin Ruoxi got pissed, severely pissed. He regretted that he spoke so 'rudely'. Even if that was indeed his honest thought, he should've used a euphemism instead.

"Ruoxi..."

"Get out!!!" Lin Ruoxi stared at Yang Chen fiercely while her shoulders shivered.

Yang Chen felt helpless. He knew that all he could do was to wait for her anger to disperse. Otherwise, any attempts would be as ineffective as trying to catch fish with a broken net.

Gloomily, Yang Chen walked back to his own room, leaving Lin Ruoxi and Hui Lin standing outside. The two women remained silent for quite a while.

At last, Hui Lin murmured, "Elder Sister... I'm sorry..."

Lin Ruoxi shut her eyes. "You don't need to apologize. I know that it wasn't your fault."

"Actually..."

"Enough, there's no need for you to explain anything. I'm not blaming you for what happened. I'm tired now. I want to rest early today, its best you take your rest as well," Lin Ruoxi said before walking towards her bed and arranging her blanket.

Hui Lin was shocked. She wanted to ask Lin Ruoxi if she still wanted to watch Korean drama or not. However, she soon thought that Lin Ruoxi wouldn't be in the mood for that.

Sourness and complexity surged in her heart. "Goodnight Elder Sister," Hui Lin said before quietly going back to her room.

After Hui Lin left, Lin Ruoxi fell powerlessly onto her bed. Gazing upon the ceiling, she muttered, "Lin Ruoxi... even I'm starting to hate you..."

Chapter 369: The Distressed Hui Lin

The drama-like experience that night made Yang Chen lose courage to look at Lin Ruoxi in the face the next morning during breakfast.

It wasn't because Yang Chen was shy. He just felt that he was acting rather childish, not to mention that his plan failed! How embarrassing.

Lin Ruoxi on the other hand, acted like nothing happened. She minded her own business as she slowly chewed her food, which was the only good thing about an iceberg, whose emotions were always unclear. No one could tell that something went wrong.

Hui Lin was most gloomy and nervous. Sitting in between them, she couldn't look left nor right.

Yang Chen had touched her body last night and kissed her on her ear, which caused her body to heat up for the entire night. Her heart had been uneasy, which rendered her unable to fall asleep.

She had stayed by Abbess Yun Miao's side since young. She even planned to become a nun for the rest of her life. However, her plans went out the window when she was forced to live in this house by her grandmother, and asked to get close to Yang Chen to accomplish her marriage...

Originally, Hui Lin didn't have any intentions to get between Yang Chen and Lin Ruoxi, since they had interacted rather well. However, due to recent events, she found it increasingly difficult to practice her self control.

At the end of the day, she had received an education which emphasized mainly on the traditional mindset of things. Her body had never been touched, not even by a man's finger, but she got kissed, hugged, and felt up last night. It was impossible for her to just dismiss it.

But, that man is my brother-in-law...

Distressed, Hui Lin lost the appetite to eat breakfast. She merely had a few mouthfuls of porridge before putting her bowl and chopsticks down.

Wang Ma saw what she did and asked, "Hui Lin, are you not feeling well? Why are you eating so little?"

Hui Lin quickly shook her head. "No, Wang Ma, it's just that I'm not very hungry. I'm alright."

"Oh..." Wang Ma nodded, unconvinced. She knew that most young people have things they are troubled about one way or another, so she didn't follow up with more questions.

As Hui Lin squirmed uncomfortably on her chair, the doorbell rang.

"I'll go open the door!"

Hui Lin found an escape route. She immediately ran towards the door before opening it for the visitor.

Yang Chen looked at Lin Ruoxi, only to find her ice-cold gaze at his direction.

Yang Chen scratched his nose. He felt that it was best to avoid looking at her for now. He wanted to wait for a week at least for her to slightly defrost.

“Who is it at the door so early in the morning?” Wang Ma asked.

Yang Chen shrugged. “Someone might be here again to visit for the new year.”

Hui Lin slowly opened the door. The smile on her face instantly vanished upon seeing the people outside while her eyes revealed astonishment.

There stood two old people outside the door. More accurately, there was an old man and an elderly lady who appeared to be his maid.

The old man wore a red, thick Chinese suit and pants made with coarse cloth in addition to a pair of black and white handmade cloth shoes. Numerous age spots and kind wrinkles could be seen on his face. He seemed to have a slight stumped posture, or it may just be his below average height which caused him to look skinny and small.

The old woman behind him was wearing a cotton-made, grey clothing from the olden times of the Republic of China. She looked friendly as well. Her hair had fully whitened, but she looked surprisingly energetic.

The old man looked at Hui Lin as if she was his granddaughter. He smiled which caused more wrinkles to appear on his face. Looking at Hui Lin from head to toe, he said, “You must be the from the Lin clan. You’re all grown up already.”

Hui Lin took a double take to make sure that she recognised this man correctly. Quickly, she took three steps back and bowed down strictly and excitedly. She bowed down twice, forming a right angle around her waist.

“Cha—chairman! Nice to meet you!”

Hui Lin’s strange actions attracted the attention of the three people inside. Why did this kid suddenly bow down? Who are the visitors?

The old man waved his hand. Humbly, he said, “I have given up that post for awhile now, your actions are not necessary. I came here quite early in the morning, I hope I haven’t disrupted your breakfast now, have I?”

“We’re actually still eating... Oh, no, no, no! We—we’re not disturbed!” Hui Lin almost told the truth, which made her so nervous that she didn’t know what to say.

The old man laughed. “Don’t be nervous. I’m not a human-eating, old monster.”

How am I supposed to stay calm? Since young, I could only remember having met this man thrice, all three times behind my grandma’s back. But there’s no way that i would have forgotten his look.

He’s one of the few people, who are descendants of the founding fathers of China, who were the reason China became so developed!

Leaving other things aside, although Hui Lin hadn't gone back to Beijing frequently since she stayed at Emei Mountain, solely based on the occasional description of Abbess Yun Miao, Hui Lin knew how powerful this old man was.

Within the Central Bureau today, except the chairman himself, almost everyone had some form of relationship or connection to this man, let alone the other ministerial officers. It wasn't too far a stretch to say that one in three ministers was willing to call the old man 'Master'.

Although the Lin clan was a well-established clan in Beijing, when compared to the clan built by this old man, it could only be considered a second-class one.

When this old man was still in power, even without the aid of the internet, social media and the television, he was still widely recognised and admired by many, many people!

Unfortunately, he was from a different generation after all. When this old man abdicated as the chairman, very few young people remembered him. At most, the ones who did could, only vaguely recalled the shape of his face.

Since Hui Lin wasn't born and bred from the outside world, and instead was an inexperienced, naive little kid, she naturally got frightened and nervous upon seeing the true, behind-the-scene leader of the country.

"I'm older than your grandpa by quite a number of years, but we're still considered as the same generation. If you can't think of what to refer me as, just call me Grandpa Yang," Yang Gongming said with a smile when he noticed Hui Lin's confused look.

Softly, Hui Lin answered, "Yes, Grandpa Yang."

Hui Lin was initially nervous about Yang Gongming's sudden arrival. The more she thought about it, she assumed that he wanted to fight for his grandson Yang Lie. As a result, she looked at Yang Chen beside the dining table as she felt worried.

Unexpectedly, Yang Gongming smilingly walked towards Yang Chen. Politely, he said, "Pay me no mind. Enjoy your breakfast. I was just impatient to come over, not to mention the elderly people usually wake up early anyway, so as a result, I came here quite early. We can chat after you finish eating."

Yang Chen had a sensitive hearing. He heard Hui Lin call him 'chairman'. When he thought about it more carefully, the person whom the granddaughter of the Lin clan had to pay such respect to could only be the largest head of the Central Committee.

This position was not unlike the president in the United States. Although he wasn't as prominent as the prime minister, he had always been the person setting the overall plans of the country.

However, Yang Chen didn't recognize this old man although he frequently watched the news. He then concluded that the old man should be a retired committee head.

Why wouldn't Yang Chen know who the old man was, especially when he was referred to as 'Grandpa Yang'?

Yang Chen smiled bitterly as he looked at the smiley, thick-skinned old man who was minding his own business admiring the decor of the villa. There was nowhere Yang Chen could hide.

Yang Chen felt that it was already quite surprising that his father was the commander of a military region. However, his grandfather was actually someone who used to lead the country.

I hadn't seen or heard a peep from my family in the twenty over years I have lived. Now that I've returned to the country for one year, why are there so many VIPs related to me appearing out of nowhere?

Lin Ruoxi watched Yang Gongming with curious eyes for a while. Soon, she managed to recognize who the old man was, let alone Wang Ma who was much older than her.

Wang Ma who lacked bravery didn't dare to continue eating. After looking around for a bit, she used the excuse of boiling hot water in the kitchen to slip away.

Lin Ruoxi pondered for a while. She was aware of Yang Gongming's origin. In addition to Yang Lie's incident a few days ago and Yang Chen's reaction, Lin Ruoxi had a feeling that this VIP had a significant relation with Yang Chen.

However, the more she thought about it, the more she found it ridiculous!

They're both surnamed Yang. Is it possible that... such a man is a member of the strongest clan in China?!

You must be kidding me. Wouldn't that make him a prince of some sort?

Lin Ruoxi secretly gazed upon Yang Chen. He's not much different than when he was still selling mutton skewers.

Chapter 370: Whatever Happens Outside Has Nothing to Do with Me

The rest of the meal became awkward and bland. Regardless, Yang Chen still managed to gulp down a huge bowl of porridge, while Lin Ruoxi had a few spoonfuls before putting down her bowl and chopsticks much like what Hui Lin did.

Wang Ma quickly tidied the dining table like a typhoon, and passed the task of making tea to Hui Lin. It was clear that she didn't dare to make tea in front of such a person.

Why would such an important person visit? Did Miss's business get so huge that even the leader of the country wanted to meet her? Wang Ma thought, confused.

Yang Gongming was staring at an oil painting created by a famous artist which was bought by Lin Ruoxi. The old woman saw that Yang Chen and the others were waiting for him and said, "Master, they've finished their meal."

Yang Gongming turned around smilingly. Pointing at the painting on the wall, he said to Lin Ruoxi, "This painting done by westerners looks impressive indeed. But I still feel that taking pictures is more practical."

"Erm..." Lin Ruoxi didn't know what to say. She couldn't just say that he lacked the artistic mindset to admire the painting. However, she'd feel uneasy in her heart if she said he was right.

Yang Gongming didn't mind her reply. He looked at Yang Chen and said, "Yang Chen, you must've given yourself this name, didn't you?"

Yang Chen nodded slightly. "It's just a code name. It doesn't matter what my surname and real name are."

"Young Man, you shouldn't let go of it this easily. We shouldn't forget our roots, much like loving our country. We should first love ourselves, then our country. If we don't even care about our roots, what is else there that we're supposed to be concerned with?" Yang Gongming asked politely.

Yang Chen felt that his words was akin to punching through a clump of cotton. The old man sounded gentle, and the smile on his face was always there. It was said that 'one does not slap a smiling person'. Since the old man had taken a step back to talk this nicely, it wouldn't seem nice for Yang Chen to continue being stubborn, not to mention bullying old people was absurd.

"You didn't just come here today to talk about my name, did you?" Yang Chen wanted to rush to the main point. He wanted to finish the conversation as soon as possible.

Yang Gongming nodded. "It's about something a bit more important. But... I guess... we'll have to find a more private setting for this topic of conversation. May I know if that's possible?"

"You need not hide anything. If you want to speak, speak. Otherwise forget about it," Yang Chen said impatiently.

Frowning, Lin Ruoxi stared at Yang Chen fiercely and scolded, "Yang Chen, have care for your speech!"

This fellow is too disrespectful. Even if you do not enjoy their company, they're the elderly after all. Moreover, the old man was just trying to discuss about something. How could he speak so rudely? she thought.

"Yang Chen, if you don't mind, could you please continue your discussion in my study room?" Lin Ruoxi suggested.

Yang Chen knew that he spoke a bit too mercilessly. As Lin Ruoxi took the initiative to make the atmosphere less tense, he didn't say anything more.

Yang Gongming wasn't angered. Happily nodding, he said, "Thank you then, Little Girl."

Lin Ruoxi stood up and made a gesture which signalled an invitation before leading Yang Gongming and the old woman upstairs.

Before going up, Lin Ruoxi looked at Yang Chen in dissatisfaction. What she meant was obvious—Come up with me!

Yang Chen felt a bit off put by the fact that Lin Ruoxi got herself involved in these matters. She isn't a busybody, but why did she get herself involved in this matter? Is it because of the old man's well-respected identity?

Actually, Lin Ruoxi herself didn't know the answer to this question. She just instinctively felt that she should behave this way, in front of this old man.

Yang Chen saw that Lin Ruoxi brought Yang Gongming upstairs, and knew that he would still be troubled even if he refused to go up. As a result, he slowly climbed up the stairs as well.

Hui Lin was busy downstairs making tea for Yang Gongming. She was stunned and nervous when she saw that the four people go upstairs.

As they approached the room, Lin Ruoxi politely opened the door for Yang Gongming. "Thank you," Yang Gongming replied smilingly before entering the room with the old woman.

The friendly-looking old woman said, "This kid is so adorable," before entering the room, causing Lin Ruoxi to blush in shyness.

Although it was merely a compliment from an old person towards a child, it was still an unusual experience for Lin Ruoxi as she seldom received this form of treatment.

Yang Chen soon entered the study room, after which Lin Ruoxi had planned to leave the room to allow them their privacy, and head downstairs.

However, before she left, Yang Gongming said, "Ruoxi, you may sit in as well. You have the right to know about these things as well."

Lin Ruoxi shuddered lightly. He's well aware of my identity. I have the right to know? What does he mean? Is it possible that Yang Chen really is...

Worried, Lin Ruoxi hesitated for a bit before nodding. She then entered the room and closed the door behind her.

The study room was filled with deafening silence. A few strands of sunlight shone into the room through the blinds of the window. The dull atmosphere soon dissipated.

Yang Gongming looked at the dazzling display of books all around him. Smiling, he said, "Ruoxi, are all these books yours?"

Lin Ruoxi answered softly, "Yes."

"Not bad. Although the ancients said that women were lucky possessing no knowledge, cultured women are often rational, especially when it comes to taking care of the matters of a major clan. It's a good thing," Yang Gongming said before turning his head to Yang Chen. "Yang Chen, Grandpa is very satisfied regarding this granddaughter-in-law."

Grandpa?!

Lin Ruoxi's eyes widened to its max. She suddenly felt that there was a lack of oxygen flowing into her brain. Dumbstruck, she turned to look at Yang Chen beside who had been silent.

Yang Chen frowned. He certainly didn't expect Yang Gongming to reveal their blood relations this casually.

"I never said I had a grandpa. You must've found the wrong person," Yang Chen replied calmly with a faint smile. He was surprisingly calm when he said it.

Yang Gongming didn't mind his reply, as if he had completely missed what Yang Chen said. He seemed to be recalling something while saying, "During the winter, no less than twenty years ago, about this time of the year, my son Yang Pojun and at that time yet-to-be daughter-in-law Guo Xuehua gave birth to a child. However, they kept it a secret from me, since the child was born before Xuehua was married into the clan.

"They thought I was unaware of this, but I actually had long known about it. Fortunately, they didn't abort the child. I would certainly have stopped them should they attempt to do so.

"Since the heavens decided to let the child be born, its existence was one to be preserved. Even if it hadn't come out yet, it was still part of the Yang clan, my grandson or granddaughter.

"Unfortunately, I was faced with the most crucial moment for the chairman election of the party committee. Hundreds of members, old and young, male and female, were waiting for me to be elected so that the position of the clan could be consolidated. Back then, it was the quickest era for the development of the country. The clan whose representative was elected would certainly prosper, while if I failed in that election, all the government officials and state-owned enterprises related to the Yang clan would certainly be heavily affected, so bad as to say bones wouldn't even remain after they were devoured.

"At that time, I wasn't given the privilege of devoting attention to my grandchildren. Furthermore, to a clan like ours of that generation, an unmarried pair giving birth to a child would definitely give rise to a scandal.

"My son and daughter-in-law were well aware of the consequences as well. As a result, they put my grandson at an orphanage, and planned to retrieve him once the election was over..."

As Yang Gongming slowly narrated the story, Yang Chen's mood was slowly becoming worse.

Lin Ruoxi finally understood the truth. Shocked, her gaze towards Yang Chen slowly became tender.

So, has his life always been this rough?

"After that, I lived up to everyone's expectation. With the help of so many students and colleagues, I earned the foundation for the Yang clan to survive and develop in Beijing.

"I still remember the day I was elected. The first thought I held was to retrieve my grandson from the orphanage. If it wasn't for the child who endured the suffering, his grandpa wouldn't be able to run the election peacefully.

"However, when my son and daughter-in-law returned to the orphanage, they found out that the orphanage had relocated, while the group of children had disappeared, of course including our family's newborn." Sorrow surfaced in Yang Gongming's eyes. The incidents back then were so clearly remembered by this old man, as if they happened yesterday. It was hard to imagine that this was something he'd repent about frequently.

As Yang Gongming spoke, the old woman beside looked dejected as well. She quietly wiped the tears from the corners of her eyes.

Lin Ruoxi glanced at Yang Chen who held no expression. So it's real that he grew up without parents, after losing all his relatives when he was still a baby. How was he brought up then?

Similarly, Lin Ruoxi finally understood why Yang Chen said stuff like 'never to beg' on the day Guo Xuehua kneeled down to him. She also found out the true reason he didn't kill Yang Lie... It was obvious that Yang Chen was well aware of his roots, even from the start.

"Do you really think that coming here and speaking to me about my past will change anything? Ever since I could remember, in my world, the so-called relatives have never existed. Just like my personal records, I've forgotten everything before I was five years old. I don't know if I was adopted, or if I was sold off. All I remembered was my surname which I'm not sure who told me or how I came to remember it. After I was five, I got sent abroad. Until now, I still don't know how I managed to survive, and how I'm still standing here." Yang Chen laughed in contempt at himself. "Even the Monkey King knows that he broke out from a stone. When I was at my lowest, no one was there to tell me how I came to be. I'll leave the suffering my body has endured aside. Do you know how it feels to not know myself? What's so sorrowful about the sorrows you just described?"

Yang Gongming was stunned as he gazed upon Yang Chen. He failed to answer Yang Chen's questions.

Lin Ruoxi's eyes had reddened slightly. The usual laziness found in Yang Chen's aura had completely scattered, as if he was engulfed in utter desolation, lifelessness, and despair.

"My heart is exhausted. I don't have intentions for revenge, but my only hope is for you guys to stop intruding into my life. I just want to live peacefully. Whatever happens outside has nothing to do with me," Yang Chen said before turning around as he wanted to leave the study room.

"Wait!" Yang Gongming suddenly shouted.

Yang Chen stopped moving forward. He wanted to turn his head around, but heard a bang on the floor.

This sound? Yang Chen was astonished, his eyes were wide open. He finally turned around to have a look, only to find Yang Gongming who had kneeled down with a solemn look!

Not only was Yang Chen shocked, even Lin Ruoxi and the old woman were dumbfounded!

Whether or not he was the elderly, or a former leader of the country, Yang Gongming kneeling before his grandson was definitely something astonishing!

Chapter 371: Never Separate

Yang Gongming looked at Yang Chen who revealed astonishment on his face before laughing loudly.

"Don't hate this old fellow for shamelessly kneeling before you. I come before you not as your grandpa, not as your elder, and certainly not as a stupid retired government official.

"I kneel before you to thank you, for your sacrifice back then, which ended up protecting the hundreds of people in the Yang clan. This is the very least the clan owes you. Although I can't change anything that has happened by kneeling, I hope at the very least I'll feel better myself."

As soon as he finished speaking, Yang Gongming stood up slowly before standing straight and confident. He wasn't at all ashamed for his act earlier, but looked very relaxed instead.

Yang Chen couldn't help but to laugh. "What makes you think I'll acknowledge you after this?"

Yang Gongming shook his head. Sincerely, he said, "I don't expect you to accept us, your family members, just because I kneeled down. I said it before, and I shall repeat. Being your grandpa, being your elder, I've never felt the need to kneel before you, no matter how guilty at heart I feel. There's never a reason for someone to kneel before their grandchild.

"At the same time, there's something a little controversial, which I feel is reasonable however. Regardless of the circumstance, parents should never have to feel like they owe to their children, since said child wouldn't have been born without their parents!

"Although your parents didn't raise you, they were the ones who gave birth to you. Even if you suffered greatly after that, you still cannot deny the fact that you are alive now because of them. Furthermore, they never intended for you to suffer as you have. Giving birth to you was already a huge risk that they decided to bear.

"You may hate them, but you cannot deny the fact that they're your parents, and you can't forget that they've given you your life."

Yang Chen remained quiet. He wanted to say something to refute Yang Gongming, but he then noticed that he certainly had no reason to do so.

Maybe, deep down his heart, he hadn't actually cut off his relations with his relatives completely. Otherwise, he wouldn't have told Guo Xuehua to not beg him and shown Yang Lie mercy.

Yang Chen was aware that although he was referred to as 'god' by others, he was no more human than the next person.

It was just that he was able to do certain things that ordinary people couldn't. His mentality was one of a human, which had seven emotions and six desires.

[TL note: Seven emotions and six desires include joy, anger, grief, worry, fear, sentiments, affection, lust, vanity, dignity, pleasant sounds, good life, and sensual pleasures.]

He was still young after all. Although he had had numerous experience, which meant he had been through a lot, he was still rather immature when it came to emotions. He would love others, and at the same time enjoy the love shown by others. Similarly, he would hold hate and anger just like everyone else.

He used to teach Tang Tang that holding grudges against your parents is not worth the time and effort. Fate played a huge role in allowing a child to be given birth by specific parents. In the grand scheme of things, one's suffering and frustration is so insignificant that considering it at all would be absurd.

However, people being people, were often hypocrites themselves. Teaching Tang Tang was a separate issue. His situation wasn't as simple as an argument between parents and children.

Yang Gongming seemed to have said everything he wanted. Signalling the old woman behind, he planned to walk outside the room.

As he walked past Lin Ruoxi, Yang Gongming smiled and said, "Ruoxi, sorry for frightening you."

"I—I'm fine..." Lin Ruoxi didn't know what she should refer Yang Gongming as.

Logically speaking, she was Yang Chen's wife, which made her the granddaughter-in-law of Yang Gongming, which meant that she was supposed to call him 'Grandpa' as well. However, she couldn't seem to be able to refer to him as such, so she stammered for a bit.

Yang Gongming turned his head back and said to Yang Chen, "Your mother just found out that you're her son. She had been looking for you for more than twenty years. She founded so many orphanages in hopes of drowning her regret for you. Actually, being her father-in-law, I feel that she's in a rather pitiful position. She really wants to see you, but due to certain reasons, she got detained by Pojun at his compound.

"Although I'm his father, I would never interfere with the matters between them. If it's convenient for you, I hope that you can pay the pitiful woman a visit.

"Of course, this is merely an old man's wish. I know that seeing them should be something painful for you, so decide for yourself."

After he finished speaking, Yang Gongming walked downstairs together with the old woman.

Yang Chen turned back when he heard Wang Ma and Hui Lin bidding farewell to Yang Gongming.

Lin Ruoxi stared at Yang Chen's emotionless face, as she tried to think of something to say so that she could console Yang Chen. However, she didn't know where to begin. In the end, she settled for silence.

After quite a while, the corners of Yang Chen's lips revealed a slight smile. He pouted at Lin Ruoxi and said, "Hey, Babe, don't you have anything you want to tell your hubby?"

Lin Ruoxi knew that Yang Chen erected a mask to cover his true emotions. She didn't return his tease with a cold gaze. Instead, she asked seriously, "What do you plan to do?"

"Plan what?" Yang Chen asked.

"Mr Yang said earlier that Madam Guo was detained by Commander Yang. Don't you..." Lin Ruoxi didn't continue speaking. She was afraid that Yang Chen would get mad. The more Yang Chen acted like he was fine, the more frightened she became of him.

This is too weird.

Yang Chen slowly walked towards Lin Ruoxi's leather seat before sitting down. Stretching his body, he said, "I was wondering what you were going to say. Wife, your husband ended up being a prince. It's about time your risky investment has paid off, hasn't it?" Yang Chen winked at Lin Ruoxi.

Lin Ruoxi ignored his joke. "Yang Chen, please don't do this... I know that you must be feeling terrible..."

"What do you know?!"

Yang Chen stood up viciously before pouncing onto Lin Ruoxi, pressing her against the wall!

Lin Ruoxi paled in shock. She felt that Yang Chen had suddenly turned into a beast before pushing her against the wall in the blink of an eye.

Yang Chen's face was all up against Lin Ruoxi's face. It was his first time appearing this ferocious and violent! A scarlet light shone in his eyes, as if they were burning with blazes of fire!

Yang Chen's arms acted like iron walls as they pressed against Lin Ruoxi's shoulders, while his boiling-hot breaths hit on Lin Ruoxi's face.

The mountain-flipping, terrifying momentum made Lin Ruoxi feel that her chest was pressed by a boulder, causing her difficulty in breathing.

However, Lin Ruoxi didn't cower in fear. Biting her lower lip, she gathered all her energy to open her eyes to look into Yang Chen's eyes.

Staring at the dazzling beauty, Yang Chen laughed and said, "Woman, have you any clue what it's like to have to pick apart corpses for a meal? Let me tell you, it actually doesn't taste too different from rat meat. Oh yeah, privileged folks like you never had the opportunity to have tasted it before.

"Then do you know how it feels to play dead in stacks of corpses for three entire days? Let me tell you. Maggots and worms a few times larger than earthworms would drill into your nose and come out from your ears...

"Do you know how it feels to be treated like a lab rat, to have more than ten types of biochemical medicines poured into your body? Let me explain it to you. It feels exactly the same as having your body scraped with countless knives from within, which would last for weeks, and even months!

"Do you kn—"

Yang Chen wasn't allowed to continue speaking.

Lin Ruoxi whose eyes were wide open and bloodshot suddenly leaned forward to kiss Yang Chen on his lips!

All Yang Chen could feel were two pieces of cold, soft lips which emitted the fragrance of jasmine. In a domineering and choppy manner, all his words were blocked from exiting his mouth.

Did I just... get forcefully kissed by her?!

Lin Ruoxi's eyes were still open. Their gazes met, lips connected and noses touched.

Lin Ruoxi's breath quickened, which showed her nervousness and struggles within.

Yang Chen indulged in her sweet breath.

Soon, however, Yang Chen could clearly see that Lin Ruoxi's eyes were slowly tearing. Little by little, tears filled her eyes. At last, two lines of tears flowed down her face willfully.

Since Lin Ruoxi kissed him hard, their faces stuck together tightly, leaving no gap in between.

Between each other's face, Yang Chen could feel just how hot Lin Ruoxi's tears were...

After a while, when Yang Che had lost sense of time and his surroundings, Lin Ruoxi slowly moved her lips away. She looked serious as usual, cold as an iceberg. Just like that, she quietly gazed upon Yang Chen.

"I know that you must have a torrent of bad emotions running through your mind right now, in fact, I'm feeling just as bad.

"Having been left all alone, I gave up on living my life the way I saw, and became a poisonous scorpion to protect what my Grandma had left behind. My irresponsible father drank alcohol and messed with women outside, and sent people to bully, insult and even hit me... I thought of committing suicide, thought of dying with him, thought of everything to make him disappear, or a way to free myself.

"I didn't feel sad when he became insane. I even thought he was lucky to have only gone crazy

"However, when you told me he died in the mental hospital, I was anguished to my surprise. I looked down on myself. That night, I even ended up praying that he wouldn't suffer in his afterlife."

Lin Ruoxi bit her lips. As she teared, she continued speaking, "It was you who made me who I used to be. So I hope that you don't repeat my mistake, to regret not paying that guy a visit after he died. I wouldn't have felt as sad this way. Even if you can't accept that person in your heart, in this world, married couples can divorce, friends can part ways, colleagues can switch... but parents and children are one bond that could never be broken..."

Yang Chen's eyes cleared up. Looking at this charming lady, Yang Chen managed to calm down.

Soon, Yang Chen smiled and muttered, "No wonder the old fellow said it was a good thing for women to be knowledgeable..."

Lin Ruoxi couldn't hear him clearly. Her eyes revealed confusion.

Smack!

Suddenly, Yang Chen kissed Lin Ruoxi on her left cheek at lightning speed!

Lin Ruoxi cried out in astonishment. She felt that her left cheek was sucked on by a suction cup!

"Ah, how tender. It's just as smooth and soft as your lips," Yang Chen praised while he tasted his lips. Laughing, he moved Lin Ruoxi's body aside before turning around to leave the study room.

Lin Ruoxi was shy, annoyed, and a little joyous at the same time. Seeing that Yang Chen left just like that, she asked loudly out of concern, "Where are you going?!"

Yang Chen waved his hand as he said, "Your husband is going to rectify your regret."

Chapter 372: Bribery

Whether or not he was planning to accept his mother, and if their relationship was going to be sustained, Yang Chen felt that what Lin Ruoxi mentioned was right. If he refused to pay his mother a visit, he might not get another chance for the rest of his life.

Yang Chen couldn't deny the struggle in his heart. Since this was the case, he felt that he should continue with this plan, instead of acting cool and intentionally ignore the people from the clan.

However, according to Yang Gongming, Guo Xuehua is locked up at Yang Pojun's compound in the military district of Zhonghai.

Ignoring why Yang Pojun wanted to stop Guo Xuehua from meeting him, strictly speaking about the location, he was not familiar with its terrains. He also lacked permission to enter. The residence of the commander in chief was certainly tightly secured as it was a place for national defense.

As a result, Yang Chen had the members of the Sea Eagles to provide help, and soon found out the address of Yang Pojun's compound. He then used the GPS system in his car to navigate.

After driving for almost an hour, Yang Chen came to the destination according to the GPS.

It was in the foothill area located at the southwest region of Zhonghai. When seen from afar, there were only a few tall communication towers and endless hills which were visible.

Since it was winter, the hills were yellowish, while the trees were not as lush, making the compound more visible.

Yang Chen slowed down his car and carefully searched the area. It didn't take him long before he discovered a residential area guarded by soldiers.

The house had a more oriental design. The combination of green and grey made the place look simple yet stylish.

Being at the foothill, the surrounding lands were rather barren. There parked a few rows of jeeps and delivery trucks outside the tall walls.

Yang Chen parked his car at a designated area and exited it. The building was a lot bigger than he expected. Yang Chen presumed that it was filled with soldiers. Including technical staff and armed soldiers, many people should be working and on duty there, otherwise it wouldn't make sense for so many houses to be empty.

He walked to the entrance which had two majestic stone lines which were placed on each side of the scarlet door. Behind two pine trees, there stood two soldiers dressed in their military uniforms.

Seeing that Yang Chen approached the door casually, the two soldiers stood in front of Yang Chen effectively blocking him off.

"Halt. Who are you?" a square-faced soldier asked loudly.

Smiling, Yang Chen answered, "I'm looking for your commander, and there is somebody I would like to meet as well."

"The chief isn't somebody that you could meet without a clearance or without an invite. You may enter, but you have to show your pass!" the soldier yelled loudly.

A pass? How do get that thing? No one told me about it! Yang Chen thought as he frowned.

The old fellow asked me to come pay a visit, but didn't give me a pass. How am I supposed to get in now? Do I jump over the walls?

Jumping over the walls would mean trespassing, which would force him to fight the soldiers within. Although it wasn't anything he was afraid of doing, it would be absurd for bullets to rain just for his arrival.

“No one is allowed to enter without a permit!”

Yang Chen pouted. After thinking for a while, he took out the remaining packet of poor-quality cigarettes worth two yuan from his pocket. He looked at it reluctantly, before offering the two soldiers smilingly.

“Brothers, let’s make it easy for me, and these two cigarettes will belong to you. Deal?”

The two soldiers looked at each other at the same time. They could see the same message in each other’s eyes—is there something wrong with this guy’s head?

“Don’t try to tempt us. We’re not interested in smoking these cigarettes. Don’t even think about getting in!” the soldier shouted with a serious expression. He dares to take a cigarette worth only a few cents to bribe us?

Yang Chen quickly put the cigarettes back into the pocket of his pants. He scratched his head as he thought of what to say. However, the two soldiers ran out of patience and reached their hands to their rifles...

“Are you done yet? If you continue fooling around, we have the right to suspect that you’re a spy and kill you!” the square-faced soldier threatened.

Yang Chen turned gloomy. Do I have to get in by force? Do I need to deal with these people? I can’t come here in vain right?

At that moment, two black Audi A6’s sandwiching an A8 drove to the entrance.

Yang Chen looked back, only to find seven or eight bodyguards dressed in suits coming down from the two A6’s before surrounding the A8 on all four sides. Then, a well-built young man came down from the front passenger seat to open the rear door. A middle-aged man wearing a grey jacket then came out of the car.

Yang Chen was shocked. He didn’t expect to see the premier Ning Guangyao here, even his son Ning Guodong was here.

Upon exiting the car, Ning Guangyao saw Yang Chen and frowned slightly. He then remembered who Yang Chen was. Thus, he let out a friendly smile and walked towards Yang Chen under the cover of his bodyguards. He asked, “You’re from Yu Lei International right?”

Yang Chen didn’t expect Ning Guangyao to remember him. He appeared to be extraordinarily concerned about Yu Lei. Yang Chen clearly remembered the overly passionate gazes Ning Guangyao and his son gave to Lin Ruoxi like it was yesterday.

“Premier indeed has a good memory,” Yang Chen simply replied.

Ning Guodong, however, had no clue who Yang Chen was. When he heard that Yang Chen was from Yu Lei International, he instantly recalled the beautiful figure. He asked, “Did you come here alone, or is Boss Lin here as well?”

Ning Guodong wasn’t bothered about Yang Chen’s arrival. The first thing he did was ask whether or not Lin Ruoxi was there.

Yang Chen was deeply displeased, but he couldn't castrate him on-the-spot. Thus, he said, "How is her presence related to my visit?"

"Then why are you here?" Ning Guodong finally realized he asked the wrong question. Even Lin Ruoxi had no reason to come to such a military district.

Yang Chen sighed. "I'm here in search of someone. But they refuse to let me enter."

Ning Guangyao looked at his son with a complex gaze before sighing. He then asked, "Who are you looking for?"

"Commander Yang Pojun, or more accurately, I'm looking for his wife," Yang Chen answered.

Ning Guangyao was rather surprised. "You know Commander Yang? Why do you want to look for his wife?"

"In short, it's for personal reasons. Premier, would you be so kind as to ask them to allow me to enter?" Yang Chen asked happily.

Ning Guodong felt displeased when he saw that Yang Chen wasn't acting nervous in front of his father, and even acted in a carefree manner. He snorted coldly before saying, "Why should we bring a smooth-talking guy like you inside? Do you deserve to enter such a place? You're onl—"

"Guodong!" Ning Guangyao immediately stopped his son from speaking. Strictly, he said, "Who taught you to speak in this manner?!"

Yang Chen's gaze had already turned cold. If Ning Guangyao failed to stop him on time, Yang Chen felt that he would've given his son a slap, causing him to lose at minimum seven or eight teeth.

Ning Guodong too realized that he went over the line. This was not his usual way of speech, but Yang Chen behaved too differently from others. Normally, even the highly-ranked ministers would talk to his father politely as they couldn't afford to anger him.

It wasn't only because his father was the premier of the country. In Beijing, the Ning clan was among the strongest in the country, with unfathomable connections. Only a handful of clans could rival the Ning clan.

As a result, Ning Guodong who had been more powerful than the others since young was annoyed when he faced Yang Chen who completely dismissed his position.

Having scolded his son, Ning Guangyao looked at Yang Chen with a friendly gaze. "You're an interesting young man and I'm in a good mood. Let me help you. I'll see what you want to do inside."

"Father..."

Ning Guodong wanted to object his father's decision, but was given a terrorizing gaze by his father, which caused him to immediately shut his mouth up. All he could do was to stare at Yang Chen fiercely.

Yang Chen ignored this pampered prick. Smilingly, he said to Ning Guangyao, "Thank you, Premier."

Walking to the entrance, one of the bodyguards took out a pass which had the national emblem printed to show the two soldiers.

The two soldiers recognized Premier Ning Guangyao, but they still had to follow rules which was to perform a series of checks. They then greeted him promptly, "Premier!"

Ning Guangyao greeted back with a smile and said, "I know this young man. He's with me."

The two soldiers looked at Yang Chen who was elated and only felt contempt in their hearts. However, they didn't dare to go against Ning Guangyao's will, so they agreed to his request.

After walking into the compound, Yang Chen noticed that the place was constructed like a huge maze. Without guidance, he would need at least half an hour to look for the people he wanted to meet.

Being led by a soldier, Yang Chen, Ning Guangyao and the others headed to Yang Pojun's office.

At this moment, Yang Chen seemed to have thought of something. He asked Ning Guangyao, "Premier, is your visit purposed as an inspection?"

Ning Guangyao smiled and answered, "This is just a private meeting. I've actually known Commander Yang and his wife for many years already."

"You will meet the husband, but you won't necessarily see his wife," Yang Chen murmured.

Ning Guangyao didn't manage to listen to what Yang Chen said, but didn't ask him to repeat, since Yang Pojun emerged from a dark green wooden door to personally welcome him. He was wearing a beige tank top, which revealed his well-built body.

Chapter 373: Putting an End

"Premier Ning, why have you come to visit so suddenly? I'm really surprised that you're here. Haha," Yang Pojun said and laughed. Before walking close to Ning Guangyao, he had reached his arm out to offer a handshake.

Yang Chen who was standing beside Ning Guangyao, however, was completely ignored, as if he didn't exist.

Ning Guangyao looked overjoyed. "Yang Pojun, how many times have I told you to stop calling me that when we're in private? Do you believe that I'm not aware that your words are untrue?"

"Hehe, Old Ning knows me well indeed. However, it's appropriate for you to be honored in front of so many soldiers, isn't it?" Yang Pojun asked.

Ning Guangyao didn't reply to his surface-level talk. Although he was half a head shorter, he still put his arm on Yang Pojun's shoulder. "The last time we met was at the National People's Congress. A few months have passed so quickly since then. Despite being old friends, we still meet up very seldom."

"I'm pretty much free every day here. Being a soldier, I'm not too busy as long as there's no war, unlike you, who has countless speeches to give and places to inspect. You even have to face consultation every once in awhile, it's quite natural that you may not have the time to spare," Yang Pojun said with a smile.

"Aren't you joining the election of the politburo? Based on your qualifications, being chosen as one of the national leaders is pretty much guaranteed. When the time comes, you may just get as busy, if not more, than me."

“Haha... hopefully that’s the case then...”

The two middle-agers chatted while they walked down the pathway.

Ning Guodong and the group of bodyguards stood behind Ning Guangyao. As the two highly ranked officials were chatting, none of the others dared to make a sound.

Yang Chen knew that Yang Pojun was intentionally treating him as a stranger, but didn’t get angry. After all, it wasn’t worth his time to get into a conflict, not to mention he didn’t come here for Yang Pojun.

However, he didn’t expect Ning Guangyao and Yang Pojun to be this close. Ning Guangyao should be a few years older than Yang Pojun, albeit small. After all in their generation, seniority wasn’t as big an issue as it is now.

Having chatted for around five minutes, Ning Guangyao pointed at Yang Chen and said, “This kid said he came round looking for you and Xuehua. Do you guys know each other? Eh, now that I think about it, why isn’t Xuehua here?”

Yang Pojun couldn’t avoid interacting with Yang Chen anymore. The smile on his face slowly vanished. “This matter is a bit too complicated to be explained now. Old Ning, my men will bring you and the others inside. Have some tea. Xuehua isn’t feeling too well today, so she isn’t able to see you now.”

“Not feeling well? You detained her like a prisoner. Anyone in her position would not be feeling well,” Yang Chen said with a smile.

Infuriated, Yang Pojun yelled, “What are you talking about?!”

“Detained?” Ning Guangyao asked in shock. “What does he mean? Yang Pojun, did you really detain Xuehua?”

Yang Pojun took a deep breath as he restrained his anger. “It’s a personal matter. Don’t worry about it.”

“How can I overlook this matter? You, Xuehua, and I have been friends for more than a few decades. I’m privy to your behaviours. Xuehua had always been a gentle woman. She would never have provoked anyone, and had obeyed you diligently since marriage. This begs the question, why lock her up?” Ning Guangyao frowned slightly as he was confused.

The more Ning Guangyao spoke, the more Yang Pojun looked displeased. Wrath surfaced in his eyes, but he didn’t let his emotion take over. “This matter really isn’t a topic for now. Old Ning, don’t talk about it for now. I’ll properly deal with this young man.”

After he finished speaking, Yang Pojun looked at Yang Chen coldly. “Come with me.”

Yang Chen wasn’t afraid of him, so he didn’t choose to obey his orders. Without moving the slightest bit, he said, “There’s nothing I want to hide when I talk to you. Say what you want now, or I’ll go look for her myself.”

“Do you know who you’re speaking to?” Yang Pojun asked with a deep voice.

“Who I’m talking to depends on your attitude,” Yang Chen said.

“What makes you think I’ll allow you to wander around the military camp on your own?” Blazes of anger almost shot out from Yang Pojun’s eyes. “What makes you think I won’t lock you up in front of Premier Ning?”

“You can try,” Yang Chen said with a smile.

Ning Guangyao saw the tension between them. Feeling confused, he quickly advised, “What’s the relationship between you two? Pojun, explain to me what had happened. Who is this young man to you?”

Yang Pojun remained quiet as he shot a baleful gaze at Yang Chen. He was a commander after all, his hands had been drenched in his enemy’s fresh blood before. Currently while enraged, his aura rose sharply, causing the bodyguards around Ning Guangyao to tense up.

Yang Chen looked into Yang Pojun’s eyes fearlessly. The man in front of him seemed to be far more unwilling to meet him than he imagined. Yang Chen was clueless as to why Yang Pojun wanted to avoid seeing him so badly. It was clear that, such a behavior was also why Yang Pojun locked Guo Xuehua up.

When Yang Chen planned to stop wasting his time with Yang Pojun and look for Guo Xuehua himself, a cheerful woman’s voice resounded from the other end of the pathway. “Yang Chen?!”

Yang Chen looked back, only to see Guo Xuehua standing by an arched door. Her hair was rather messy, her eyes held tears while she gazed upon Yang Chen in excitement.

How she managed to endure detainment was not known, although it only lasted for a little more than a day. Compared to the last time Yang Chen saw her, she looked as if she grew a few years older. Looking dull, her eyes were slightly sunken in while her lips turned pale. She stood in the cold wind like an Autumn leaf hanging weakly on a tree.

Yang Pojun, Ning Guangyao and the others in addition to Yang Chen all revealed a strange expression when they saw how Guo Xuehua looked, as if they witnessed something incredibly horrifying. It was clear from Ning Guangyao’s eyes that he was outraged at Yang Pojun. He was extremely dissatisfied with the way Yang Pojun treated his wife.

Right at that moment, Guo Xuehua wasn’t bothered with how she looked. Ignoring her messy hair which covered part of her vision, she used all her energy to run towards Yang Chen.

Yang Chen frowned a little, but still allowed Guo Xuehua to hug his waist tightly.

Guo Xuehua cried out with delight as she hugged Yang Chen even tighter. Leaning her head on Yang Chen’s chest, she repeatedly called out, “Child... my child... Mother has finally found you...”

Although it wasn’t clear, the people around heard her well.

Standing in silence, Yang Pojun looked extremely afraid.

Ning Guangyao and his son Ning Guodong were first dumbstruck. They then turned their attention to Yang Pojun and Yang Chen, refusing to believe what they just heard.

Guo Xuehua’s child? Then... these two have a father-son relationship?!

Although none of them understood why a child suddenly popped up in the Yang clan, evidently, what they'd just witnessed wasn't false. Otherwise Yang Pojun wouldn't have to conceal this matter.

Yang Chen was lost as to his emotions. His brain was void of thoughts and feelings. He allowed the sobbing woman lying on his chest to hug him, to call him 'Yang Chen', 'Son', and 'Child'... Her voice was hoarse and weak, but acted like a strong hammer violently smashing against Yang Chen's heart.

He experienced a severe heartache. However, even though that was the case, Yang Chen felt an unusual warmth, as if something was slowly melting away.

This is something... I had never gotten a chance to experience... Yang Chen thought.

Guo Xuehua's bodyguards, Little Wen and Little Li, rushed over as well. Their faces and ears had reddened. They felt extremely guilty to Yang Pojun and didn't dare to raise their heads and face him.

Yang Pojun looked at the two fiercely. "Who allowed you two to let Madam out?" he asked.

Little Wen and Little Li looked at each other, but none of them said anything.

"It's me."

An old voice echoed from behind the door. Looking downhearted, Yang Gongming and the old woman walked out together and appeared in front of the crowd.

"Mr Yang?" Respectfully, Ning Guangyao bowed down from afar, causing Ning Guodong to immediately follow. He had to bow to an elder whom even his father had to pay respect to.

The fury in Yang Pojun's eyes immediately dispersed. He cried out, "Father?!"

"It was me who let Xuehua out. It was also me who told her Yang Chen came for her," Yang Gongming said and sighed before walking towards the few people. Facing the astonished Yang Pojun, he said, "Pojun, you've certainly crossed the line this time. Xuehua only wanted to meet her own son. How could you treat her this way?"

"Father, I..." Yang Pojun wanted to explain, but knew that it wasn't time for that. Sighing, he looked at Ning Guangyao who was so dumbstruck that he became speechless. It could be seen from Yang Pojun's eyes that he was extremely worried.

It was a terrible thing for Ning Guangyao and the others to find out, or so he thought.

Guo Xuehua was almost through with crying. Although Yang Chen hadn't spoken a single word, she was pleased enough to have been able to hug him quietly, causing a smile to surface on her face. Involuntarily, she put both her hands on Yang Chen's face as she stared at his expressionless face, mesmerized by his look.

"Yang Chen, thank you for coming to see me. I'm really happy that you're willing to meet me. I have no more regrets should I die now."

"What are you talking about? Is this something you should say in front of an old fellow like me?" Yang Gongming said as he laughed. He then said to Ning Guangyao, "Premier Ning, this old man is trying to deal with family matters. May I know if you and your son can give us some space?"

Although Ning Guangyao really wanted to know what happened, he didn't dare to disobey Yang Gongming's request. "Alright, Mr Yang. I'll bring them to Pojun's office."

After Ning Guangyao brought his men away, silence ensued in the empty pathway. Only a few of Yang Pojun's personal subordinates were there, seriously looking at everything.

Yang Gongming looked at his son whose face was filled with distress, then at Yang Chen who looked expressionless. "Yang Chen, bring your mother to your place."

Yang Pojun's eyes widened in shock, while Guo Xuehua suddenly turned around to look at her father-in-law as well. Surprise filled Yang Chen's eyes.

"Father, how can you allow Xuehua to leave with this kid?" Yang Pojun asked.

"Should I allow you to continue treating Xuehua like a prisoner instead?" Yang Gongming asked in dissatisfaction. "Furthermore, I am almost certain that Xuehua hopes to be able to see Yang Chen more often."

Guo Xuehua glanced at Yang Pojun, with her eyes filled with coldness and disappointment. She then looked at Yang Chen who appeared to be reluctant. Nodding, she said, "As long as Yang Chen allows, I'm willing to go with him of course. If he doesn't, I'll follow Father-In-Law back to Beijing."

"Why do you want to return to Beijing? Your body is weak now. Take care of yourself here in Jiangnan. The mansion in Beijing has no need for a daughter-in-law. I'm also looking to stay a few more days here," Yang Gongming said. He then said to Yang Chen, "Yang Chen, don't be so indecisive. She's your mother, a mother who became this miserable just to see you!"

Yang Chen's body shivered lightly. He looked at Guo Xuehua's pitiful yet delighted smile before taking a deep breath. He nodded and said, "Alright, I can bring her back, we have rooms to spare."

"No way!" Yang Pojun suddenly shouted. His brows lowered as he finally couldn't resist himself. Loudly, he shouted, "Father! Even if you have decided, I'm going to have to disobey you for once! I can live with the fact that they know each other, and accept you bringing Xuehua back to Beijing. However, what I cannot take is Xuehua living with this kid! What does this even mean?! Being her husband, does this mean I have died? Or am I inferior to this stupid kid who hasn't had anything to do with the Yang clan for more than twenty years?! Letting him return to the clan is already a huge sacrifice. He's now going against my will in every way. Why should I still tolerate him this time?!"

"Pojun!"

"Silence! Father! My decision has been made!"

Resolution could be seen in Yang Pojun's eyes. Suddenly, he drew out a Type 54 pistol and pointed straight at Yang Chen's heart!

"If you dare to bring your mother home today, I don't care if my blood flows through in your body, I'd put an end to all of this, treat you as an intruding spy and kill you!"

Chapter 374: For Whom

Immediately after noticing Yang Pojun point a gun at Yang Chen, just like an over-protective lioness, Guo Xuehua used her body to block Yang Chen!

“Yang Pojun! Are you crazy?! Yang Chen is your own son! Only a savage tiger would feed on its child! You are no better than the common animals!”

“Animal...” Yang Pojun paled. “Xuehua.... did you just say... I’m inferior to an animal...”

“Isn’t it true?! I withstood the pain when you refused to let me search for him. I’ll act the same if you don’t let me leave with him. But why are you pointing a gun at him? If you really want to pull the trigger, you’ll have to go through me first! I’ve been feeling extremely guilty for what we have done to him. So much so that I won’t be able to repay him in this life and the next. If I should die with him, then so be it,” Guo Xuehua said before extending her arms, staring at Yang Pojun resolutely and coldly.

Yang Chen looked at the fearless woman who looked like a swaying reed in the wind. For whatever reason, he felt as if huge waves surged in his heart...

In Yang Chen’s memory, when he was in Hong Kong, Mo Qianni who wasn’t aware of his ability at the time, used her body to block on coming bullets before.

That was due to her love that erupted, having struggled repeatedly for him.

Much like Mo Qianni, Guo Xuehua had used her body to shield Yang Chen. Similarly, she had no clue regarding his abilities, but she rushed over just like that without hesitation!

Why?

The corners of Yang Chen’s lips revealed a smile, like a warm light shining late in the night.

Yang Gongming was furious. He got so mad that he panted heavily, tipping him off his balance, causing him to stagger a few steps backwards.

Fortunately, the old woman nervously held him up, so that Yang Gongming didn’t fall onto the ground.

The old man looked at his own son pointing the gun at Guo Xuehua and Yang Chen, while disappointment filled his eyes. However, he didn’t say anything to try to stop him.

Even if he wanted to, he couldn’t have in his current state.

“Master, are you going to stop them?” the old woman asked as she felt deeply concerned.

A light flashed in Yang Gongming’s eyes. Shaking his head, he said, “No need.”

At the same time, Yang Gongming gazed upon Yang Chen while contemplating some things...

If everything that’s said about him is real, this child should be fine... Yang Gongming thought.

Yang Pojun’s anger was at its peak. He was not prone to tremors when dealing with firearms. However, his hand was currently trembling, with only a small pistol in hand.

Yang Pojun whose eyes turned bloodshot, with his voice all cracked up, said. “Xuehua, having been married for so many years, am I not more important to you than some kid whom you haven’t seen

before?! All my hard work, all my hours invested, all of it will be in vain! Our clan will suffer huge losses! You... don't you know who I'm doing all of these for?!"

"It's you, Yang Pojun, who is so ignorant about our marriage. I've had enough of your so called perfect ideals. All I'm asking for is to live peacefully as I watch my children grow and prosper, have happy family reunions every now and then. However, you've been undermining my plans and always putting something in its way... You know more than anyone who you're doing this for. Don't tell me you shaped me, modeled me, this way for my sake. Are you still going to say you're doing everything for me?" Guo Xuehua looked at Yang Gongming apologetically. "Father-In-Law, I've been so busy running orphanages and managing their funds all these years. I haven't had enough time to take care of you, I'm really sorry. Thank you for allowing me to leave with Yang Chen. After I fulfill my responsibilities as a mother, I'll definitely serve you by your side..."

After she finished speaking, Guo Xuehua turned around and pushed Yang Chen's back. "Yang Chen, you'll walk in front. Mother will be behind you. Don't worry, he won't dare to pull the trigger."

Yang Chen was downhearted and felt complex emotions when Guo Xuehua spoke as if it was something insignificant.

"I don't need a woman to take bullets for me, regardless if she's my lover or mother."

As Yang Chen spoke, he pushed Guo Xuehua to the front, exposing his back to Yang Pojun's gun.

Elated, Guo Xuehua said, "Yang Chen, you... did you just refer to me as your mother? You've accepted me, haven't you?"

Yang Chen didn't answer her. Putting one of his hands on Guo Xuehua's shoulder, he brought her to the direction he was.

Yang Chen knew that Guo Xuehua was fully relying on her adrenaline to walk, otherwise she would have fainted long ago. He guessed that Guo Xuehua hadn't had anything to eat or drink for the past day or so, nor had she gotten any sleep.

Yang Chen was glad that he listened to Lin Ruoxi's advice. This woman would've slowly deteriorated further had he not come today. A person like Yang Pojun wouldn't admit his mistake for this.

"When we get back, take a shower and eat something. You should be really hungry by now. The house is pretty big, you've been there before. I'll ask Wang Ma to arrange a room for you. Just rest there peacefully for a while," Yang Chen said.

It was his first time so close to his mother. Yang Chen had no clue how to speak to his mother, so he tried his best to remain plain and sincere.

Guo Xuehua reached her hand out to wipe the unstoppable flow of tears. Pleased, she sounded like she was crying when speaking. "Alright, Mother will listen to you. You may make the arrangements however you want."

Guo Xuehua had hoped that Yang Chen could actually start calling her 'Mother'. However, she was aware that Yang Chen had started accepting her through his show of consideration earlier. It was good enough that he was willing to let bygones be bygones.

It wasn't realistic for Yang Chen to immediately accept her as his mother, as he hadn't met for more than twenty years. There was a large gap between them that needed to be bridged with lots of love. However, she believed that as long as Yang Chen was willing to see her, there would come one day where they could finally interact properly.

"Stop moving! Are you going to leave just like this?! Do you guys think I don't dare to pull the trigger?!"

Being ignored by the rest, Yang Pojun was further exasperated. His arm finally stopped shaking, while he flicked the safety switch off.

Yang Chen and Guo Xuehua stopped in their tracks. Worried, Guo Xuehua looked back and wanted to say something, but Yang Chen voiced out first.

"I'm standing right here, the gun is in your hand. Whether or not you dare to pull the trigger doesn't depend on me, but you yourself."

After he finished speaking, Yang Chen turned Guo Xuehua back and continued their journey.

Anxiety filled Guo Xuehua's face. Based on her understanding towards Yang Pojun, he wouldn't go so far as to shoot Yang Chen. However, she wouldn't be able to accept it even if it was just a slight graze.

However, Yang Chen looked extremely calm, so Guo Xuehua did not know what to say. Silently, she prayed that Yang Pojun wouldn't do anything foolish. Otherwise their marriage would really be finished.

However, Guo Xuehua had underestimated Yang Pojun's current fury.

When Guo Xuehua left with Yang Chen without turning back, Yang Pojun felt as if the entire world had betrayed him!

The agony he felt in his heart was akin to being bitten by a trillion ants, causing Yang Pojun's gaze to reach its freezing point!

In his mind, the treatments he used to give Guo Xuehua included love, tolerance, and care flashed. Why? Yang Pojun couldn't understand Guo Xuehua's unwavering decision to leave.

Holding a high position, amongst every man of his age, there weren't many people who could rival his qualities. He had been so faithful to one woman, but she decided to leave him for a stupid kid who would affect his future and the development of the clan.

Even if my blood flows in that kid, he still can't snatch the woman I love the most away from me!!!

Yang Pojun couldn't rationalize his thoughts anymore. The surging rage caused him to violently pull the trigger.

Bang!

The sound of gunshot echoed in the pathway!

Guo Xuehua's body shook in fear. At first, she was stunned, but soon felt a heart-tearing pain, causing her to be terrified!

"Yang Chen!"

Guo Xuehua turned around hurriedly. She felt Yang Chen get shot!

However, the indifferent-looking Yang Chen turned his head to smile at her.

At the same time, Yang Pojun who had finally calmed down upon firing the gun was dumbfounded, as if he just witnessed a ghost. Staring at Yang Chen's back, his mouth was wide open while he failed to utter a word.

Not only was Yang Pojun stunned, the soldiers around them were all astonished. They looked at Yang Chen's back which they felt possessed magical qualities.

Yang Gongming and the old woman smiled at each other and nodded, with their eyes expressing approval.

Guo Xuehua noticed that Yang Chen seemed to be fine. Did he miss? But why would he miss at such a close distance? He could even hit a flying mosquito, she thought.

As Guo Xuehua doubted the events, she turned back to have a look, before finally understanding why the entire scene was in silence.

Around three feet away from Yang Chen, a golden, bean-sized grain could be seen floating in midair!

Is it a bullet? The bullet shot at Yang Chen?!

A series of complicated thoughts emerged in Guo Xuehua's mind. She looked at Yang Chen, then at Yang Pojun. After making sure that it was a bullet, she got completely speechless. Things like this only happen in the movies!

The best part was that, it wasn't the end of the magical display!

Guo Xuehua heard that Yang Chen sighed a little. The bullet hung in the air became a golden straight line!

Shoot!

Clang!

The bullet directly flew back into Yang Pojun's handgun, faster than the speed of sound!

Upon getting hit by the enormous force, the gun got flicked out of Yang Pojun's hand!

The series of metal-clunking sounds confused everyone!

Earlier, the people present doubted what they just witnessed and heard. However, the pistol lying on the ground was proof that the series of events did take place!

What's that! Is it a superpower?!

Yang Chen turned his head back and let out a disdainful smile as he gazed upon Yang Pojun. "I have a quirk. I don't like being threatened, and I hate being pointed at with a gun.

"However, the old man told me that because you gave birth to me, I owe you a favor. I personally don't like to owe anyone anything. So, I didn't stop you from pointing your gun at me earlier.

“If the bullet had hit my heart, it would have killed me. I declare this act to void the favor I owe to you. But it isn’t my problem that you failed to kill me. It’s your own inability.

“In short, we have nothing to do with each other anymore. Commander Yang, I highly advise you to not point your gun at me anymore, nor should you say anything that could displease me.

“Otherwise, the bullet you fired wouldn’t just end up going back to your gun...”

Yang Chen didn’t care how Yang Pojun looked or felt. He only wanted to say that everything had ended. Killing Yang Pojun without hesitation was entirely possible should he try to harm him again.

No one shall even think of stopping him!

Guo Xuehua failed to recover awareness from the shock earlier. Being held by Yang Chen, she slowly walked out of the military camp, while her mind was replaying Yang Chen’s magical performance earlier.

Yang Pojun stood at his original position absentmindedly as he looked at Guo Xuehua being brought away. He didn’t move the slightest bit. It wasn’t known if he was afraid or dumbstruck.

“Pojun,” Yang Gongming said as he walked towards Yang Pojun. Looking exhausted, he sighed and said, “Stop daydreaming. Premier Ning and the others are still waiting for you. Go back to your office...”

Chapter 375: Ants

The door of Yang Pojun’s office was shut. Only four people were inside the room—Yang Gongming, the old woman, Yang Pojun and Ning Guangyao.

Even Ning Guangyao’s son, Ning Guodong, wasn’t qualified to listen to the conversation.

Yang Gongming sat on the office chair which was usually used by Yang Pojun, while Yang Pojun and Ning Guangyao sat beside each other, on two wooden chairs.

After thinking for a while, Yang Gongming said, “Premier Ning, this matter has been entirely an internal issue. It shouldn’t have been exposed, but since you’ve no doubt heard something, in addition to the good relationship between the Ning and Yang clans, it doesn’t matter too much if I tell you the whole story.”

“Father.” Yang Pojun frowned. He didn’t expect that Yang Gongming was going to reveal these matters to outsiders. Moreover, the first person he told was the current premier of China.

Ning Guangyao noticed Yang Pojun’s nervous look. Soon, he said, “Old Yang, I initially wouldn’t have asked about it if you weren’t going to mention it. However, since you want to explain it to me, I assure you I’ll keep absolute secrecy of the events that happened today.”

“Hehe, I believe Premier is a trustworthy man,” Yang Gongming said before briefly telling the story about Yang Chen.

Having listened to Yang Gongming talk about the past, Ning Guangyao appeared to be rather sorrowful. “If you didn’t get elected back then, the Chinese government would’ve collapsed long ago. Although ordinary people cannot grasp your meritorious contributions to the country, at the very least your juniors have all received your teaching. It’s the same principle as me continuing to treat you as my

respected teacher even after my father had passed away and I took over the Ning clan as the clan master. I didn't expect that something this saddening had occurred before Old Yang was elected. Fortunately, Yang Chen had grown to be an outstanding man. In a way, this had brought round some good news."

"Humph," Yang Pojun snorted in disdain. "He's domineering and cocky. How is he outstanding?" he asked.

"Pojun!" Yang Gongming yelled furiously. "Stop provoking Yang Chen in the future. Are you still so oblivious to his power?"

Yang Pojun clenched his teeth before nodding.

Although he was still extremely displeased, he knew that his long-lost son was exceptional, having seen his ability to stop bullets.

However, no matter how competent Yang Chen was, Yang Pojun felt that he wasn't as commendable as people revered him to be, as he still refused to follow his father Yang Pojun's commands.

Yang Pojun's biggest fear was that, the events that transpired today, would be leaked to the media, which would significantly affect his elections two months down the road, causing his hard work to all be wasted!

Ning Guangyao seemed to be able to tell what Yang Pojun was worried about. "Pojun, don't worry, if I must, I'll assist you in your elections."

"Eh?" Yang Pojun was shocked by what he just heard. Ning Guangyao was known to be an impartial man. He wasn't one who would use his position and power to tip the scales to his favor.

Ning Guangyao said, "It would not be right for Yang Chen's case to affect your election in the politburo. Everyone knows the effort you've put in over the years. You shouldn't be affected by such a matter."

Yang Pojun rejoiced as he heard the news. As long as Ning Guangyao was willing to help him, his success in winning the election were pretty much guaranteed. However, this would mean that his success was brought by the hands of another. Even if he managed to become one of the country's leaders in the future, he'd be mocked by others behind his back...

At last, am I still inferior to him?

Ning Guangyao wasn't someone who had too much free time. He looked at the time before standing up. Before he left, he hesitated for a while and said to Yang Pojun softly, "Pojun, find time to reconcile with Xuehua. She's a pitiful woman. She doesn't deserve to continue to be sad..."

With his head lowered, Yang Pojun hummed in acknowledgement. However, no one saw the glint in Yang Pojun's eyes.

After sending Ning Guangyao off, Yang Gongming turned around and said to Yang Pojun, "You, come with me."

Yang Pojun's mind was flooded with questions, regarding why Yang Gongming was constantly trying to misconstrued his plans and his biased behavior towards Yang Chen. More importantly, he was most

curious about Yang Chen's background. Father seems to know a lot about him, but why didn't he tell me? Is there possibly a backstory to this? Just how important is the 'military secret' Lin Zhiguo mentioned?

Following Yang Gongming, Yang Pojun was led to a courtyard near the foothill, at the back of the military compound. Yang Gongming walked into the house reserved for his use. From a red, wooden cabinet, he extracted a thick book made of sheepskin and silk. The book looked ancient, but was kept in mint condition as it wasn't damaged at all.

Yang Pojun fixed his gaze on the book upon seeing it. "Is it the clan pedigree?!"

"That's right, this book holds the records of every member from the Yang clan," Yang Gongming said before putting the pedigree onto a stone table in the courtyard. He flipped it open carefully. The yellowed pieces of paper, made of silk, had words written by writing brushes. The names of each ancestor from the Yang clan in addition to their dates of births and deaths, and brief descriptions were written down.

Some of them were nobles, while others were merely hawkers. Various types of people could be found.

Yang Gongming flipped through the book as he said, "Our clan inherited this pedigree some time between the Tang and Song dynasties. It got destroyed a couple times, but most of the information was recovered. In this pedigree, most of our ancestors from their times were elites, although there were a few black sheep from time to time. In every period of history, the Yang clan played a major role in almost every dynasty.

"When he was educating me, your grandfather once said, 'No matter where you are, everyone from the Yang clan must live their lives to guard the honor of the Yang Clan, and always remember your identity as the clan member every time you make a decision.' This was how you were educated from young, like your father has and your forefathers before you..

"In your grandfather's generation, our clan suffered significant losses at the hands of some foreigners. It was believed that half of our businesses were lost in the process. However, your grandfather relied on his courage as a clan member to guard the clan's honor, even if it meant it would cost his life. Because of your grandfather, our clan managed to bring itself back to its former glory.

"I've never felt that all my achievements that I have gotten, was impressive in any way. Compared to your grandfather, I got lucky, as I was able to get elected due to the reputation of the Yang clan..."

Yang Gongming currently looked at Yang Pojun in an indifferent manner. Sighing, he said, "Pojun, no matter what challenges you are faced with, regardless of the outcome, none of them represents anything. Remember that your life which was given unto you, was to be part of the Yang clan and its ideals. Everything you do is in the light of the clan's honor. Thus, you must do that which is the same. Regardless of your rank or style of life, you mustn't lose conscience. This way, centuries later, our names will be deeply engraved in this pedigree as well..."

Yang Pojun looked at the pedigree engraved with the brilliance of his ancestors on the stone table while flames filled his eyes. Encouraged, he said, "Father, I understand it now. I definitely won't bring shame to the clan."

Yang Gongming frowned as he looked at the passionate expression of his son. He asked again, "Do you really understand what it means to bring honor to the clan now?"

"Yes, I do."

Yang Gongming sighed before smiling. "Since you have understood, go and do what you need to. Treat what I said as nonsense that wasted your time."

"Thanks Father for your teaching!"

Yang Pojun bowed before turning around and leaving.

Yang Gongming touched the golden knitted words 'Pedigree of the Yang Clan' on the book with his skinny and weak hand. As if he was talking to himself, he said, "You claim you do, but I wonder, how much do you really understand of this..."

At this moment, the old woman who had been silently standing behind Yang Gongming walked forward and said, "Master, there is nothing that can be forced. Everyone has their own calling."

"Hehe, yeah, everyone has their own calling," Yang Gongming replied. He then seemed to have thought of something. "Sanniang, what do you feel about Yang Chen's competence?"

The old woman called 'Sanniang' smiled as she looked at Yang Pojun's face which held high expectations. "Are you referring to his ability in martial arts?"

"Yes. Judging by the show he put up earlier, his internal energy should be incredibly profound, am I right?" Yang Gongming asked with a smile. "The information provided by Lin Zhiguo is accurate indeed."

"It's accurate." Sanniang's highly wrinkled face revealed a kind smile. "I'm too was astonished when I found out Young Master Chen reached Xiantian Full Cycle at such a young age. Even Song Tianxing did not possess the talents of this man. Based on my estimation, it's certain that Young Master Chen has the potential to proceed to the next step. It's only a matter of time before he understands the key."

Yang Gongming first looked serious, and soon got extremely pleased. "Really? Is the kid Yang Chen really able to understand the key?"

"Young Master Chen practises Endless Resolve Restoration Scripture, a long-lost technique from Kunlun Mountain. He should've found out that the ninth level of internal energy of that technique, will give him a feeling that he had stopped midway. When his understanding towards internal energy slowly deepens, he'll soon progress to a whole new level," Sanniang said confidently.

"Hahahaha," Yang Gongming laughed comfortably. "At that time, I bet he'll be distressed."

"Distressed? Why do you say so, Master?" Sanniang asked.

Yang Gongming said, "He must be thinking he's at the peak of the world after getting the inheritance of 'Pluto'. However, who would've expected him to have always been an ant in the eyes of the others..."

"I see..." Sanniang nodded. Her smile made her eyelids come together, forming two lines on her face.

Chapter 376: Fate and Mother-In-Law

Inside the villa in Dragon Garden, Yang Chen lazed on the sofa of the living room, watching the boring, political news on the television alone. Lazily, he yawned out of boredom.

He reached out to take his piping hot mug of British black tea. It was a nice blend of dark red, contrasting the white smoke which lingered above the mug. Before he drank some of the tea, the heavy scent filled his nose.

Yang Chen took a small sip. In truth, he wasn't a fan of drinking tea in this manner. However, he wasn't in the 'tea drinking' mood right now. Almost all of his attention was focused in the kitchen.

The four women had been chatting for almost an hour, filling the kitchen with all sorts of laughter. Furthermore, strange chuckles would even resound from there. Even the usually stoic Lin Ruoxi guffawed occasionally. Yang Chen off-put by their ignorance of his existence.

How did the preparations of a simple meal, require the work of four ladies and over two hours?! Wang Ma usually takes less than an hour when she cooks herself!

Also, it was the third day that Yang Chen's meal was significantly delayed. The root of the problem was simple—Guo Xuehua was here!

Guo Xuehua's arrival gave rise to a new branch of topics to converse about. Chatter in the house had increased dramatically. The cause had started three days ago...

Three days ago, when Yang Chen brought Guo Xuehua home, Lin Ruoxi, Hui Lin, and Wang Ma were all surprised.

Lin Ruoxi knew that Yang Chen went to see Guo Xuehua, but didn't expect him to bring her home. Guo Xuehua even wanted to stay at her home temporarily!

Lin Ruoxi blushed while her heartbeat thumped rapidly. Her jade-like, white, charming cheeks turned as rosy as a juicy peach. The CEO of one of the largest companies, who had no problems dealing with people, thousands of employees, panicked when she was face to face with Guo Xuehua. Legally speaking, she was her mother-in-law!

"Ma—Madam Guo... Nice to meet you." It was Lin Ruoxi's first time in her life that she didn't know what to call someone. At the same time, she had to show a sincere welcoming gesture toward Guo Xuehua. The ice beauty really suffered on this day. She had no clue what to refer Guo Xuehua as!

Will I appear overly presumptuous if I call her 'Mom'? Also, it's too difficult for me to call her this way. Should I say 'Miss Guo'? Although she's really young, she's still my elder! Calling her 'Madam Guo' would make me indifferent... Lin Ruoxi had a massive headache!

Hui Lin didn't have too much to think through. She had known Guo Xuehua for quite some time after all. Calling her 'Aunt Guo' would do. Since Wang Ma was a few years older than Guo Xuehua, she, naturally, had nothing to feel awkward about. As a result, she called her 'Madam Guo' to show respect.

Guo Xuehua asked Yang Chen who Wang Ma was, before greeting them one-by-one. When it was Lin Ruoxi's turn, she looked at Yang Chen who gave off an indifferent, unhelpful look. She then said to Lin Ruoxi, "You must be Ruoxi. We've met a few times before, but we haven't been able to properly introduce ourselves. I hope to be happily related to you."

Lin Ruoxi suddenly became incredibly shy. What Guo Xuehua meant was obvious. She had started seeing Lin Ruoxi as her daughter-in-law, which implied that Yang Chen had accepted her as his mother. Moreover, she also planned to accept this daughter-in-law who popped out abruptly.”

Yang Chen was actually muddle-headed at the moment. He suddenly ‘caught’ a mother home. Since it was the first time that his mother was around, he found odd and hard to get used to. He even almost went the wrong way when driving home earlier! Thus, he wasn’t in the mood to think about how Lin Ruoxi and Guo Xuehua would interact.

When Yang Chen was driving earlier, he secretly cultivated True Qi to flood Guo Xuehua’s meridians, so she didn’t feel tired.

Everyone welcomed Guo Xuehua and had her seated on the sofa. Wang Ma boiled a pot of tieguanyin tea before striking up conversation. Generally, they asked about why Yang Chen’s family member suddenly appeared, and where Guo Xuehua planned to stay.

“Ruoxi, your mother is Xue Zijing, isn’t she?” Guo Xuehua asked Lin Ruoxi gently, which instantly shocked the three ladies.

Lin Ruoxi’s body shivered while she widened her eyes. The expression of her face turned from nervousness to astonishment, which allowed her to finally recover her usual calmness.

“Madam Guo... how do you... know that?”

Lin Ruoxi was curious as to how she knew, even Wang Ma who was familiar with the ancestry of the Lin clan looked at Guo Xuehua weirdly. They didn’t understand why she knew about Lin Ruoxi’s mother.

Upon getting married with Lin Kun, Lin Ruoxi’s mother Xue Zijing had lived a quiet life, and had limited interaction with the outside world. Most people from the Xue family even emigrated abroad, and hadn’t been in touch with Xue Zijing.

When Lin Ruoxi was in high school, Xue Zijing’s life quietly ended due to blood cancer. In fact, Xue Zijing’s personality was not unlike Lin Ruoxi herself, cold and aloof, as if she didn’t belong to this world, possibly due to her husband constantly getting drunk outside and messing with women, failing to take care of his home.

Lin Ruoxi never got the chance to interact with her mother like normal families do, but her lonely and cold behavior was largely influenced by her mother. Except coldness, she basically left nothing for Lin Ruoxi.

After all these years, no one had mentioned her mother’s name in front of Lin Ruoxi. The most Lin Ruoxi thought of when she reminisces of the past, was of her grandmother, not her unnoticeable mother.

Guo Xuehua smiled faintly before saying, “There’s nothing surprising about this. Actually, I had an inkling feeling that you were related due to your likeness, but I just wasn’t sure back then. When I found out that you’re the CEO of Yu Lei International, I was finally sure that you were Zijing’s daughter. Ruoxi, I actually grew up with your mother as best friends. We went to the same schools, and entered the same university.”

Lin Ruoxi was stunned for a while. The blurry memories of her mother flashed in her mind. Her eyes watered up slightly. "Is it... My mother... She hadn't mentioned it before."

"When Madam was still alive, she was an exceptionally quiet person. She certainly hadn't talked about Madam Guo before," Wang Ma said as she sighed.

Sorrow appeared on Guo Xuehua's face. Sighing, she turned to Yang Chen and smiled. "Yang Chen, I'm starting to believe that this is the work of magic. It's fate, I guess. When I was young, I told Zijing that when we gave birth to a child in the future, we'd let them treat each other as siblings if they were both boys or girls, and marry them if they were of different genders. Originally, due to our incompetence, I lost you. I thought I would never be able to fulfill our promise. However, the heavens thought otherwise and several years later, you two were married."

Yang Chen looked at Lin Ruoxi who looked dreary. She looked like she was immersed in recalling the past. "There's nothing strange about this. I used to think I wouldn't ever get married back then, and would live all my life alone."

Lin Ruoxi regained awareness after listening to Yang Chen's words. Her gaze which brought complicated emotions met Yang Chen's. Lin Ruoxi bit her lips while her cheeks turned pinkish. Evidently, things like fate and destiny made her rather shy about it, but at the same time, she thought it was sweet.

Hui Lin turned dismal after listening to what Guo Xuehua said. Brother Yang and Elder Sister really were fated to be together...

Soon, Guo Xuehua recalled her memory as she said, "More than twenty years ago, I was married into the Yang clan, while Zijing got married with Ruoxi's father. Since Beijing was very far from Zhonghai, and I hadn't had the chance to visit, in addition to Zijing's personality, we drifted apart with each passing year. A few years ago, I suddenly heard from a classmate that Zijing had passed away due to illness, which made me feel miserable for a long time."

"Madam Guo, can you tell us about Mother's past? In... in my memory, Mother would sit at the balcony alone as she stared into the distance for the entire afternoon without saying a single word," Lin Ruoxi said as she felt rather embarrassed. Her pitiful look gave rise to compassion.

Guo Xuehua smiled weirdly and said, "Ruoxi, when it comes to intimacy, we'd appear too distant if you call me 'Madam Guo', as your mom and I were best friends. Also, you shouldn't call me 'Madam', since you're married to Yang Chen. However, if you find it hard to call me that... You can follow Hui Lin and call me 'Aunt Guo'. That should suffice. You may take you time to adapt to this form of calling."

Wang Ma repeatedly signalled Lin Ruoxi by blinking her eyes. Evidently, Wang Ma hoped that Lin Ruoxi could quickly improve her relationship with her mother-in-law. As a result, calling her 'Mom' was most appropriate.

However, Lin Ruoxi called, "Aunt Guo," while smiling, escaping her awkwardness.

Next, Guo Xuehua briefly talked about a lot that had taken place in the past regarding Xue Zijing. The four ladies laughed really hard about some of the things Xue Zijing had done. Lin Ruoxi found out that her mother hadn't lived her whole life in solitude.

Guo Xuehua had the opportunity to partake in many events, and founded so many orphanages throughout the years. Naturally, she was excellent in socializing. Thus, sounds of laughter could often be heard in the house due to her presence.

Yang Chen felt that something was off. Since his mother was the best friend of Lin Ruoxi's mother, why hasn't she visit her tomb and pay her respects every once in a while, after Xue Zijing passed away for so many years? Moreover, no matter how busy she was after getting married, there was no reason for her to not meet up with Lin Ruoxi's mother for so many years.

However, these questions Yang Chen had in mind were secondary, not to mention he was too lazy to ask. He just hated that these women treated meal preparation as a time for them to talk about the past.

Yang Chen watched the morning news and all through the afternoon news. If this continued, he'd have to rewatch the morning news.

"Hey, are you guys done yet? I'm very hungry!" Yang Chen finally couldn't hold himself back anymore.

In the kitchen, Wang Ma answered, "Young Master, please be patient. It'll be finished soon. We'll take the dishes out now."

Before long, the four women carried a few dishes out from the kitchen together with bowls and chopsticks. Upon putting down a plate of stewed fish, she frowned and said, "Yang Chen, you're the only man at home. Even if you can't cook, you can help them carry the plates out, can't you? Why do you let Wang Ma and the others do all the housework?"

A mother educating her son at its purest form. Having experienced various hardships in life, she was a reasonable person. Although her heart was full of guilt towards Yang Chen, she would still try her best to fulfill her responsibility as his mother. At the same time, she didn't think obeying Yang Chen in every way was the right way to repay him.

She hoped that she could make Yang Chen a better character to inherit the clan.

At least, she managed to spot a few issues through her experience of staying in the house for a little more than three days.

For example, the house, the car, and everything else belonged to Lin Ruoxi. So my pitiful son is a poor fellow?!

Also, Yang Chen and Lin Ruoxi clearly slept in different rooms. Although she couldn't tell if they had nighttime activities or not, she knew that they weren't the type of couple who would cling onto each other all day. They sleep in separate rooms at this age? Something must be wrong between them, Guo Xuehua thought.

Guo Xuehua could easily tell that Lin Ruoxi was dissatisfied towards Yang Chen's carefree attitude. His laziness, casualness, occasional rudeness, and absurd thinking certainly weren't qualities a girl like Lin Ruoxi would like. She even couldn't accept his behavior sometimes being his mother.

As a result, before Lin Ruoxi took action, Guo Xuehua felt that she had to fix her son's bad habits, in hopes of making him a man who could truly stand proud in front of Lin Ruoxi.

Although she understood what she was supposed to do, a part of her didn't want force Yang Chen into doing something he didn't want to. Parents do nothing to harm or give suffering to their children. Guo Xuehua wanted Yang Chen to live a good life at the end of the day.

After listening to Guo Xuehua's lecture, Yang Chen scratched the back of his head. He didn't usually do housework. Since moving into this house, Wang Ma took care of everything, so he never thought that he should help.

He wasn't angered after being complained at by Guo Xuehua, but felt a strange warmth in his heart instead. Blushing, he smiled as he ran into the kitchen to carry the two hottest plates out.

Lin Ruoxi didn't expect Yang Chen to behave this obediently to Guo Xuehua. This was something she had always wanted to ask Yang Chen to help out with, but she never expected that Yang Chen would listen to her. She turned her gaze towards Guo Xuehua, only to find that Guo Xuehua was looking at her as well. The gazes of the two women met. Guo Xuehua winked at Lin Ruoxi.

Lin Ruoxi quickly lowered her head. She felt embarrassed as Guo Xuehua knew what she was thinking about. However, a slight smile could be seen hanging on the corners of her lips.

Chapter 377: Disciplinary Teacher

During lunch, Yang Chen noticed that the large soup bowl, which he usually used, wasn't taken out. Since he had an insatiable appetite, he loved to gulp down large amounts of foods at a time. As a result, he had Wang Ma prepare an extra large soup bowl to accommodate for his eating style.

Wang Ma noticed that Yang Chen was looking for the bowl. Smiling, she said, "Young Master, Madam Guo said you weren't allowed to use the soup bowl to eat anymore."

"Ah? Why?" Yang Chen looked at Guo Xuehua. Isn't my mother restricting too much of me?

Guo Xuehua coughed to clear her throat. "Although we're at home, you still shouldn't eat so fast, your food isn't going to be snatched away, nor will it disappear. Also, you cause such a huge commotion every time you eat. I know that you have been accustomed to eating this way, but the girls Ruoxi and Hui Lin feel distressed watching you eat like an insane man. They didn't voice it out back then because they tolerated your behavior. You should consider how they feel as well."

Yang Chen smiled bitterly. He asked Hui Lin, "Hui Lin, be honest with me. Does the way I eat affect your appetite?"

Hui Lin was an honest girl, so she wouldn't lie. Having stammered for a while, she said softly, "Actually, it isn't a very big problem. When I looked at Brother Yang eat, I still consider the meal was delicious... but... but before I have even started to eat, I'd get full just by looking at how you ate..."

Yang Chen instantly got embarrassed. He really didn't know he gave off such an impression. He then looked at Lin Ruoxi, only to find a don't-ask-me expression. It didn't take him long to realize his eating behavior was indeed inappropriate.

"Then... what about a slightly larger bowl? This bowl is overly small. This can only hold a few mouthfuls of rice," Yang Chen said gloomily to Guo Xuehua as he held the palm-sized bowl.

Guo Xuehua shook her head resolutely. With a serious tone, she said, “Nope, you can refill the rice if you need more. Everyone’s using this type of bowl to have their meals. Although you’re the only man at home, you are not an exception.”

“Young Master, I’ll just help you refill your rice when you finish. The worst that can happen is to fill up a few more times,” Wang Ma said with a smile.

“Wang Ma, don’t make him get used to your pampering. How can he make an elder serve him during his meals?” Guo Xuehua immediately stopped Wang Ma from doing so.

Yang Chen finally understood the situation. He didn’t fetch a mother home, but hired a ‘disciplinary teacher’ instead to ‘correct’ his ways.

Although it wasn’t too much of a bother, he still wasn’t used to a lot of things. Finally, he pouted and used the small bowl to eat together with the others.

Guo Xuehua was glad to see that Yang Chen stopped talking about bowls. She smiled when she saw Yang Chen eat uncomfortably before pinching some vegetables for Yang Chen with her chopsticks. Looking at him warmly, Guo Xuehua said, “Have more vegetables during the winter. Your stomach and skin will benefit from it. Don’t just stick to eating meat. Although you’re not fat, you still need to make sure that your diet is balanced.”

Yang Chen nodded. Although he was eating some delicious food prepared by the four, it tasted tasteless to him. He was too focused in his thoughts. Having lived for more than twenty years independently, no one had taught him stuff like what a ‘balanced diet’ is.

Unconsciously, Yang Chen felt a bit upset but satisfied at the same time.

Lin Ruoxi felt envious when she witnessed the little actions between Yang Chen and his mother. Although he hadn’t had parents by his side in the past, Guo Xuehua who was determined to make up for her absence in the past, appeared. On the other hand, although Lin Ruoxi was loved by her grandmother when she was young, she was very lonely.

At this moment, Guo Xuehua pinched some vegetables again, but put them into Lin Ruoxi’s bowl. She gave Lin Ruoxi a warm gaze with a slight smile at the corners of her lips.

“This is what I have to do. If I want to treat my son well, I very well can’t overlook my daughter-in-law,” Guo Xuehua said in a half-joking manner.

Wang Ma and Hui Lin both nodded, as if they fully agreed with Guo Xuehua, while Lin Ruoxi’s face and ears reddened so much that she wanted to look for a hole to hide in.

Why does she always seem to know what I’m thinking about?

Yang Chen very much enjoyed to see Lin Ruoxi’s current shy behavior. Since his mother came, Lin Ruoxi seemed to be a lot more emotional. He didn’t know if this was a tactic used to get on the good side of her mother-in-law, or she truly enjoyed interacting with Guo Xuehua. Either way, it was a good thing that Lin Ruoxi became more empathetic.

After the meal, under the supervision of Guo Xuehua, Yang Chen helped to carry the plates back into the kitchen. Fortunately, Guo Xuehua was reluctant to make him wash the dishes. As a result, Yang Chen managed to survive the tragedy.

Since it was almost Lunar New Year's Eve, they felt that it was time for some shopping to celebrate the coming of a new year.

Although the well-off family didn't lack foods, drinks, or any necessities, certain things still had to be bought.

For example, fireworks.

In the past, since the old CEO passed away, Lin Ruoxi and Wang Ma were the only ones at home, so they didn't care much about festivals. However, not only did Lin Ruoxi get married this year, she even got a sister Hui Lin and mother-in-law Guo Xuehua. Naturally, they had to properly celebrate the festival.

Thus after dinner, Yang Chen being the only man, was sent out to buy fireworks. However, Guo Xuehua was afraid that Yang Chen was too reckless in his decisions that he would not choose the fireworks correctly, so she let Hui Lin who had high expectations to go with him.

Lin Ruoxi felt emotional as she watched Yang Chen driving away together with Hui Lin.

Around this time last year, the house was quiet and lonely. Only Wang Ma and I were here. No matter how rich I was, I never seemed to be able to fill the loneliness in my heart. However, after a year, I finally managed to feel such enrichment and warmth, Lin Ruoxi thought.

Everything has changed since that guy's arrival... As Lin Ruoxi was immersed in her thoughts, a smile involuntarily surfaced on her lips.

"Ruoxi, what are you smiling for?" Guo Xuehua asked as she gave Lin Ruoxi a mischievous gaze. Lin Ruoxi didn't know how long she had been standing there.

Lin Ruoxi got frightened. She turned around to finally identify who the person speaking was, before patting on her chest. Pouting, she said, "Aunt Guo, you scared me."

"Why would I frighten you? If anything bad happens to you, the baby I finally managed to retrieve may dump me away," Guo Xuehua said sadly.

Lin Ruoxi knew that she was teased again, so she acted like she heard nothing.

Guo Xuehua felt that her daughter-in-law sometimes really wasn't bothered to entertain her, but she got slightly better when she thought of the usual coldness Lin Ruoxi gave Yang Chen.

Sighing, Guo Xuehua asked, "Ruoxi, are you free now?"

"Yeah, I don't have much to do these days during the new year," Lin Ruoxi said.

"Then come upstairs with me. I want to show you something," Guo Xuehua said.

Lin Ruoxi didn't ask what Guo Xuehua wanted to show her. She obediently followed her upstairs and entered Guo Xuehua's room.

Guo Xuehua's room was specially arranged by Wang Ma. The bed and other furnitures had always been complete. Lin Ruoxi had more money than she could possibly spend, so even the usually empty rooms had all the furnitures a person would require, making it easy for guests to stay over.

Guo Xuehua walked towards the bedside table and bent down to lift a small, handmade bamboo basket before taking it for Lin Ruoxi.

"This is..." Lin Ruoxi blinked her eyes. She didn't expect to be shown such a thing.

"They're knitting tools," Guo Xuehua said with a smile. Pulling Lin Ruoxi with one hand, she walked towards her bedside and took out a half-complete, light grey scarf from the basket. As she touched the cashmere, she said in satisfaction, "This is the scarf I planned to make for Yang Chen. Unfortunately, I only know how to make simple ones. My skills are rusty as it is. I asked Wang Ma to get these for me. Yang Chen doesn't wear many layers of clothing in cold weathers, so I thought of doing this for him. Although I know that he's different from ordinary people and shouldn't be afraid of low temperatures, I just can't hold myself back from making him a scarf. It isn't for him to keep himself warm, but act as an undeserving redemption for myself perhaps..."

Lin Ruoxi quietly listened to Guo Xuehua's speech. She took a look at the remaining large amount of wool, then at the half-complete scarf. She must have been working under the cover of the night for the past three days, Lin Ruoxi thought.

"Ruoxi, after I finish making this scarf, can you promise me to deliver it to Yang Chen and put it on for him?"

Lin Ruoxi was stunned by Guo Xuehua's sudden request. She didn't understand what it was for.

"Don't feel strange about it. Just say that you made it yourself," Guo Xuehua said with a smile.

"But, this isn't m—"

"He won't believe you." Guo Xuehua couldn't help but to shake her head. "Foolish Child, trust me, Yang Chen certainly wouldn't believe that you made it. He'll know that I'm the one who made it instead. However, it'd be easier for him to accept it if I passed it to him through you. Also, I too hope that you can wrap this scarf on his neck as Yang Chen's wife."

Confusion flooded Lin Ruoxi's eyes. She then managed to slowly understand what message Guo Xuehua was trying convey. Not only did Guo Xuahua want Yang Chen to know how much she loved her, she only wanted to tell Lin Ruoxi that she was merely Yang Chen's mother, the one who would walk with him to the ends of time was his wife.

Her good intentions didn't have to be spoken explicitly to be understood.

"Ruoxi, although I don't know why, I know that there exists a small gap between you and Yang Chen. I won't force you to accept everything about him. In my eyes, he's my son, while you're Zijing's daughter. To me, you're both just like my children. I won't act as an unreasonable mother-in-law and push you into doing various things, but I hope you can accept this small request of mine."

Lin Ruoxi had long been convinced. Thus, she nodded her head in agreement.

Guo Xuehua let out a smile. "You're such an obedient child. Do you want to learn some needlework? Although I only know some of the basics, it's more than enough to get by."

"Can... I learn it as well?" Lin Ruoxi suddenly felt moved. At the end of the day, she was still a young lady, and was the kind with a traditional mindset. She hadn't had a chance to interact with embroidery back then. When Guo Xuehua suddenly offered to teach, she was immensely interested.

"Of course, you may make a vest for him next year once you know how to do it," Guo Xuehua advised.

Lin Ruoxi pouted as she thought, There's no way I'm knitting clothes for that bad guy... But soon, she got impatient and asked, "What... what do I do first?"

Chapter 378: Market

I'm not in charge of the page, nor have I looked through every single information. You may contribute to the page if you have time, or refer to it when you forget some of the characters. =)

Brilliant lights decorated every corner of a market in Zhonghai. Shuffling through the crowd, happiness could be seen on the faces of the people there. Occasionally, foreign hawkers who hadn't gone home for the new year could be seen fighting their weariness in hopes of making extra money on New Year's Eve.

Shouts and loudspeaker sounds in addition to the fast music playing in the background and the chattering crowd made the entire market an incredibly merry place to be.

Hui Lin didn't expect Yang Chen to bring her to such a place to get fireworks. She thought she'd be brought to a shop specialized in fireworks instead. However, since she wasn't familiar with stuff like this, she followed Yang Chen wherever he went.

Yang Chen walked in front while Hui Lin followed close behind. The surrounding clamors and noises made her afraid of straying too far from Yang Chen, in fear of getting lost. She had lived on quiet mountains since young after all. Hui Lin felt strange and nervous to see so many people gathered together.

When she saw the new year's small ornaments with novel designs, or certain cute little gifts, she couldn't refrain herself from stopping. The slightly childish girl would gaze at the items for a few seconds before reluctantly continuing her journey with Yang Chen.

Yang Chen turned her head back with a smile before saying, "We will be walking the same road to return to the car. I'll buy everything you like for you. Don't look at them for now. We'll come back after getting the fireworks."

Hui Lin didn't expect her actions to be noticed by Yang Chen. She nodded happily while she blushed when she heard that she could get those things.

Actually, Yang Chen didn't know what type of fireworks to get. Since he lived in a 'female accommodation', he certainly would be the one igniting the fire if he got an overly powerful one, which would be rather boring and meaningless. However, if he bought too unimpressive ones, it wouldn't look beautiful enough.

Yang Chen thought again and again. At last, he settled with buying both large and small-scaled ones.

Bringing Hui Lin to a large store which appeared relatively merry, Yang Chen looked left and right, and chose a huge box of fireworks containing 88 sticks before casually making payment.

The store owner was a kind, fat woman. She asked Yang Chen if he needed help with carrying the box, since it definitely wasn't light, but Yang Chen turned down her offer to help.

Hui Lin walked forward with a naive look. She asked, "Brother Yang, do you want me to carry it? I can do it, so that it frees you up for other things."

Hui Lin had practised martial arts since young after all. Other ladies may not be able to deal with the weight, but it was a piece of cake for her.

Yang Chen frowned. "Why should you do this? Go to the store opposite us, and ask your grandpa to send us two guards."

"Grandpa?"

Hui Lin was shocked. She turned around and noticed Lin Zhiguo in his casual wear with his companion Grey Robe who were indeed standing at the porcelain store, picking products like ordinary customers.

Lin Zhiguo saw Hui Lin's surprised look, and knew that Yang Chen had finally decided to stop ignoring him. Smiling bitterly, he brought Grey Robe and two other guards before approaching the firework store.

In fact, upon stepping into the market, they'd occasionally appear in Yang Chen's surroundings. Based on his ability, he had definitely noticed their presence from the start. However, Lin Zhiguo didn't know why Yang Chen intentionally acted unaware.

Lin Zhiguo was an elder after all, and a highly ranked official to boot. He initially hoped for Yang Chen to approach him to talk. However, Yang Chen didn't give a damn about him, and let them wander around for a very long time before deciding to deal with them.

"Kid, you're indeed proud. I thought you were going to bring my granddaughter around and leave without entertaining us," Lin Zhiguo said helplessly in dissatisfaction.

"Grandpa," Hui Lin greeted him nervously with her head lowered. Upon knowing what Lin Zhiguo had done back then, she hadn't had the guts to talk to Lin Zhiguo, as she was afraid of angering her grandmother Abbess Yun Miao.

Lin Zhiguo looked at his granddaughter who appeared to be afraid. Lovingly, he asked, "Hui'er, have you gotten used to the living in your elder sister's house yet?"

"Yeah, Elder Sister treats me very well," Hui Lin answered softly.

"It's great then. Don't let your relationship as sisters be ruined because of your grandpa. Oh yeah, does Ruoxi know your identity?" Lin Zhiguo asked out of concern.

Hui Lin hesitated for a bit. "She seems to know... but I'm not very sure. She should've found out about it already..."

“Really...” Lin Zhiguo sighed. “Ruoxi is able to accept you as her younger sister, but never treats me as her grandpa. I must have caused too much damage to her.”

Indifferent, Yang Chen said, “Stop talking about nonsense. Quickly help me carry my fireworks.”

Lin Zhiguo looked annoyed. “Is this how you talk to the elderly? Why should I carry the fireworks you bought for yourself?”

“Ask your guards to help out. I still have to bring your treasured granddaughter around to buy things. Do you want Hui Lin to get sad because of her grandfather whom she rarely meets?” Yang Chen asked in a mischievous manner.

“You...”

Lin Zhiguo glanced at the pitiful Hui Lin who looked troubled. Sighing, he ordered his guards to carry the fireworks away from Yang Chen.

Yang Chen looked satisfied. Waving his hand, he asked Hui Lin to follow him. Lin Zhiguo frowned and asked, “Are you going to leave just like this? Don’t you want to know why I came round looking for you?”

Yang Chen shrugged. “I don’t need to know if you don’t mention it.”

Lin Zhiguo got frustrated. It was evident that Yang Chen wanted to pull his pride down a notch. However, there was nothing he could do as he really needed Yang Chen’s help.

At last, Lin Zhiguo sighed and said, “I came to inform you that they will arrive on the night of the second day of Chinese New Year.”

Yang Chen simply nodded. “Alright. I’ll bring Hui Lin away if there’s nothing else you want to say.”

“Are you this confident? Don’t you want to know how many of them came, who they are, and what preparations you should do?!” Lin Zhiguo asked impatiently.

Yang Chen smiled relaxedly. “That’s your job. I’m just going there to scout. Don’t confuse my position with yours.”

After he finished speaking, Yang Chen brought Hui Lin out of the firework store without turning his head back, ignoring Lin Zhiguo who was deeply pissed.

Grey Robe advised, “Master, if Yang Chen wants to find out the situation, he’ll certainly get the information from the Sea Eagles. He’s just avoiding trouble now.”

“Humph. He’s obviously looking down on me. If he doesn’t take action, I’ll see how he’s going to deal with the people of Sandstorm once they have arrived,” Lin Zhiguo said in a serious manner. “According to the latest reports, the leader of Sandstorm is involved in this plan as well. The person who single handedly built this team definitely isn’t slacking.”

Grey Robe looked troubled as well. “While the country has been expanding continuously all these years, at the same time we’re getting more and more enemies. I wonder how much more we at Yellow Flame Iron Brigade can sustain.”

Lin Zhiguo looked distressed while his gaze was strange.

On the other hand, Yang Chen brought Hui Lin to the road they came from. Yang Chen let Hui Lin pick out whatever she wanted. Since she didn't bring any money out, everything was paid for by Yang Chen.

"Brother Yang, I'll return you the money once I get home," Hui Lin said seriously as she blushed.

"Stop being silly. Although I'm not as rich as your elder sister, buying small gifts for my younger sister isn't a problem for me," Yang Chen said with a smile.

Hui Lin pouted. She didn't know why she felt a bit downhearted, but still let out a sweet smile on the outside.

When the two returned to the car park, a tall woman wearing a white down jacket together with a black, tight-fitting pants walked towards their direction. She was holding a shopping bag in hand, while there wasn't any make-up on her face. Her hair was black like ink, while her skin as white as snow. Her face was pinkish as a result of the cold wind. In the crowd, she appeared clear and refined.

Yang Chen was slightly surprised. The woman in front seemed to have noticed something as well. Raising her head, she looked at Yang Chen before smiling in an overjoyed manner.

However, when she saw the woman beside Yang Chen who had a sweet smile, charming look, and curvy body, sorrow could be seen in her eyes.

Chapter 379: Faithfulness

Yang Chen smiled awkwardly as he knew that the woman got the wrong idea. Walking forward, he pinched the woman's cheek with one of his hands.

"Little Qianqian, that's Ruoxi's and my younger sister. Don't overthink it."

The woman roaming the market alone was none other than Mo Qianni. After listening to Yang Chen's explanation, she didn't mind being pinched on the face. As doubt surfaced in her charming eyes, she asked, "Younger sister?"

"Yeah, she's called Hui Lin, Ruoxi's younger sister. She came out with me to get fireworks. I also bought her a few toys she liked on the way back," Yang Chen said.

Mo Qianni finally noticed that Hui Lin seemed to be avoiding eye contact due to shyness. She then secretly glanced at Yang Chen, and concluded that Hui Lin must be feeling awkward after seeing the intimacy between her and Yang Chen.

Mo Qianni made sure that she perceived it wrongly earlier. Rolling her eyes, she smiled and said, "Why are you explaining it to me? It's not like I'm your legal wife. Getting jealous will just end up in vain. It can't be taken seriously."

"If you talk this way again, I'll smack your buttocks." Yang Chen raised his arm as he demonstrated the action of butt smacking near Mo Qianni's backside.

Shy, Mo Qianni pulled his hand down. "Do you plan on embarrassing me on the streets?"

“You’re the one who doubted my faithfulness to one person in the first place,” Yang Chen said before pouting.

[TL note: Added ‘to one’ so that the following paragraphs make sense.]

Mo Qianni rolled her eyes. She was very used to Yang Chen’s thick-skinned behavior. “Your ‘one’ should be the numerator in a fraction, right? What’s the denominator then?” Mo Qianni asked with a teasing smile.

Yang Chen patted his chest. “Little Qianqian, your words hurt so much my heart broke. If I had a knife now, I would scoop my heart out to show you. It’s now as fragmented as the stuffing in a dumpling.”

Mo Qianni frowned greatly as she forcefully hit Yang Chen’s chest. “I hate you! I came here today to get dumpling skins as I want to make some for the new year. Why do you have to make them sound so disgusting?”

Yang Chen chuckled. “Oh so Little Qianqian came to get dumpling skins. I didn’t know you could make dumplings. Can you make some for me? I only want to eat ones made by you.”

“Humph. Aren’t you buying new year’s goods for the family? Why should you have the time to eat the dumplings I make?” Mo Qianni asked as she pouted.

“There are two days left till the new year, are there not? I’ll go to your house tonight, and think about the rest later. I don’t think anyone at home is making dumplings,” Yang Chen said with a smile.

Mo Qianni stammered, “Yo—you’re really coming to eat them?”

“Of course,” Yang Chen said before nodding his head.

“Alright then, I’ll try to leave a few of them for you,” Mo Qianni said as she suppressed her laughter.

The matter could be considered done now. Both of them knew that it was merely a pretext for dining together during the festival, but none of them pointed it out explicitly.

Hui Lin saw Mo Qianni’s blushing face when she happily chatted with Yang Chen. Hui Lin couldn’t help but to feel slightly downhearted.

Brother Yang seems to have quite a lot of soulmates, but really only treats me as his younger sister...

As Yang Chen didn’t mind getting intimate with other women in front of her, Hui Lin could tell that Yang Chen never considered if she would get jealous or not.

However, Hui Lin wasn’t going to point it out after going home. To her, nothing was more important than a family living together peacefully.

On the way home, Yang Chen didn’t notice Hui Lin’s complicated facial expression. Other women currently occupied his mind.

Yang Chen had a faint heartache upon seeing Mo Qianni’s lonely figure wandering in the market by herself. She was a single woman who lived outside her hometown. On New Year’s Eve where tens of thousands of families gathered together, she, however, was eating the dishes she made herself. Even if she was eating boiling-hot dumplings, her heart might still be cold and bleak.

To most people, fireworks were splendid and fiery, but in Mo Qianni's eyes, they might just be lonely plum blossoms blooming in the cold.

However, Yang Chen couldn't directly express his pity for Mo Qianni. Thus, he chose to use the excuse of wanting to eat the dumplings made by her to keep her company during the festival.

Mo Qianni was a proud woman. She wouldn't agree on coming to Lin Ruoxi's house as her close friend. As a result, knowing Yang Chen's true intentions, she didn't turn down his request, but instead accepted his goodwill in satisfaction.

If this happens to Qianni, how about Rose who doesn't have a family to spend the new years with too? Yang Chen thought.

Whenever he thought of the foolish woman who only wanted ten seconds of his time occasionally, he would realize just how much of a scum he was. As he pondered, he felt that he should have a new-years dinner together with Rose as well after going to Mo Qianni's place.

On the other hand, Liu Mingyu had her own family. Although she may feel slightly sad, she wouldn't be too lonely.

Regarding the vixen An Xin, it was unlikely that she would feel disheartened due to her crazy personality. Moreover, her father An Zaihuan would be by her side, although he wasn't any good. Now that the An clan had skyrocketed in Zhonghai as a result of taking over the Liu clan, a bunch of their families and friends would come over for the festival. An Xin must be greatly irritated.

As Yang Chen thought about the people around him, a naive face flashed in his mind... I wonder how the kid Zhenxiu is going through the new year.

The festival would only last for two more days, while the tasks he had to get done seemed to be increasing. Yang Chen was annoyed, yet felt warmth in his heart at the same time.

After reaching home, Yang Chen carried the fireworks to the underground garage, as they would only be used on New Year's Eve. He walked to the living room and couldn't locate Lin Ruoxi. He then walked upstairs to knocked on the door of the study room.

Having a sensitive hearing, after knocking on the door, he heard clunking sounds coming from within the room. What's Ruoxi trying to hide? Yang Chen thought as he frowned.

Lin Ruoxi opened the door with an unnatural expression. Coldly, she asked, "What is it?"

Yang Chen acted like he knew nothing. "Oh, I was wondering how Zhenxiu is doing as she's alone this new year. Do you want to visit her with me?"

Warmth appeared in Lin Ruoxi's eyes. She suddenly felt that Yang Chen looked much more pleasant. "Yeah, we should really pay her a visit. I'll be visiting the orphanage tomorrow with Aunt Guo. Why don't we meet Zhenxiu tonight?"

"This..." Yang Chen scratched the back of his head. "I promised someone that we'd have dinner together later."

Lin Ruoxi noticed Yang Chen's strange smile. Needless to say, she knew that he was having a date with another woman. Instantly, the warmth in her eyes earlier vanished. "We'll go tomorrow then. You don't have a date every day, do you?"

"Of course not," Yang Chen said in a serious manner.

"I'll go back inside if you don't need anything else," Lin Ruoxi said before slamming the door of the study room without waiting for Yang Chen's reply.

Yang Chen was stunned outside the door as he looked helpless.

Upon closing the door, Lin Ruoxi forcefully kicked the ground in anger before walking to the study desk. She pulled the drawer to look at the yarn and knitting needles inside in addition to an incomplete, palm-sized cloth which looked loose.

Lin Ruoxi lifted the 'achievement' of hers which took her more than two hours to make. She stared at the piece of cloth absentmindedly as she sighed deeply.

Yang Chen who had returned to his own room was unaware that he obliterated Lin Ruoxi's determination in learning needlework. He was focused on making a call to An Xin.

If he had to pick a woman who was the most clingy, it would certainly be An Xin. However, the one who was most light-hearted would be An Xin as well!

After returning to the country from Hokkaido, An Xin hadn't contacted Yang Chen. The woman could be considered the kind who would use all her life to love someone, but would utterly ignore that person as long as she felt like doing so. Yang Chen used to love such a personality in the past. After all, he would only pursue short-term pleasures back then. However, times have changed and so has he.

The phone call was quickly connected. "Dear, you're finally thinking about me," the sweet voice of An Xin came from the phone.

"Hey, Little Vixen, I think you haven't given me a call as well, have you?" Yang Chen asked gloomily.

An Xin chuckled. "It's because you always act like a cool hero. I feel that heroes should be cold and proud. What if you feel disgusted when I cling onto you?"

"Are you taking revenge on me for leaving you alone for almost six months?" Yang Chen smiled bitterly.

"A little bit," An Xin said in a mischievous yet serious manner.

Yang Chen wanted to explain something more, but a noise resounded from An Xin's side.

Hurriedly, An Xin said, "Hubby, there are so many relatives at my house whom I haven't seen before. I have to go greet the guests. Happy new year! I have a surprise for you after the festival. Bye!"

An Xin ended the call, leaving Yang Chen stunned while holding his phone. Ignoring what the 'surprise' she mentioned was, Yang Chen felt that he had to punish her by smacking her butt the next time they met.

Yang Chen then made a call to Liu Mingyu's number.

After quite a while, Liu Mingyu finally picked up the call. She sounded in a hurry, asking, "What do you want? I'm cooking now. Say what you must and make it quick."

Yang Chen got speechless. As soon as he opened his mouth to speak, a woman's voice could be heard from his phone, "Mingyu, the vegetables are getting burnt! Why are you speaking on the phone?"

"Alright Mom, I'm coming."

"Beep..."

Yang Chen was dumbstruck. He hadn't spoken half a word, but his call got ended just like that.

Yang Chen wasn't in the mood to make phone calls anymore. He'd just visit Rose in person later. If she was currently having some kind of celebration with her men, and his call got ended again, wouldn't his tears dry up before he could cry?"

After changing a set of clean clothes, Yang Chen planned to tell Guo Xuehua and Wang Ma that he was going out.

Upon going downstairs, Lin Ruoxi and Hui Lin could be seen watching a hundred-episode Korean drama together, while Wang Ma was marinating something. He approached Wang Ma and said, "Wang Ma, I'm going out for dinner tonight. You don't need to prepare food for me."

Before Wang Ma replied him, Guo Xuehua who was walking downstairs asked out of curiosity, "The new year is here already, why are you still eating outside? Is it with a colleague?"

Yang Chen hesitated for a bit before answering, "Yeah, but no, it's someone important in short. I'll be having an early new-year dinner with her."

Before Guo Xuehua raised more questions, Lin Ruoxi who was sitting on the sofa said emotionlessly, "Aunt Guo, don't ask him anymore. Just let him leave if he feels that it's important."

Guo Xuehua doubtfully looked at Lin Ruoxi who spoke with a cold tone, before gazing upon Yang Chen who walked out of the house awkwardly. She pondered about something.

Chapter 380: Beauty and the Beast

Around half an hour later, Yang Chen arrived at Mo Qianni's apartment, and noticed that her door wasn't locked. She was awaiting his arrival.

Yang Chen slowly pushed the door open before walking into the house. The smell of freshly cooked dishes filled the house. There was flour on the dining table while the kitchen was full of steam.

Wearing an apron, Mo Qianni tied her hair up in a ponytail. She busied herself in the kitchen, looking like a housewife. She noticed that Yang Chen entered the house. Wiping the sweat on her temples and forehead, she smiled and said, "The meal will be ready in half an hour."

Yang Chen wasn't in a hurry. He walked to the kitchen and stood behind Mo Qianni before wrapping his arms around her waist. Leaning forward, he whispered to Mo Qianni's ear, "I'm not hungry yet. Why don't we exercise for a bit before eating?"

Mo Qianni knew what he wanted to do. She reached her arm to the back to tap Yang Chen's forehead. "Stop fooling around. We can start eating after I make two more dishes. You can busy yourself by watching TV for now."

Yang Chen looked at the dishes placed on the kitchen cabinet. There were six to seven of them. Surprised, he asked, "Why did you cook so much? There are even dumplings later. How are we supposed to finish them?"

Mo Qianni let out a mysterious smile. "There'll be guests coming later. Just wait."

"There are guests? Who are they?" Yang Chen was confused.

"You know them as well. You shall find out later." Mo Qianni didn't want to answer his questions.

Before Yang Chen could guess, the door got knocked on.

"Quick, open the door." Mo Qianni urged Yang Chen.

Feeling helpless and curious, Yang Chen walked towards the door before opening it.

The people outside included a well-built man and a petite beauty. Yang Chen blinked his eyes to make sure he saw them right. "Why are you guys here?"

"Brother Yang, long time no see!" Ye Zi said cheerfully.

Sky Dragon laughed as well. "Haha, why can't we be here? Since you're here for a free meal, we're here for the exact same reason as well."

The guests were Ye Zi from Dragon Group and Sky Dragon from Group of Eight. Why did these two come to Qianni's place together? Yang Chen thought.

Mo Qianni carried a few plates to the living room. Smiling, she said, "Ye Zi, Sky Dragon, come in make yourselves at home."

"Sister Qianni, I'll help you out." Ye Zi stuck her tongue out at Yang Chen before running to the kitchen to help her.

Yang Chen didn't let Sky Dragon leave. Frowning, he asked, "This isn't yet another trick you're pulling off, is it? You guys tricked me into helping you out in Tibet back then. Where are you going now?"

Helplessly, Sky Dragon answered, "It's not like that. It was the dead Broken Blade who betrayed us and plotted the scheme against you. That wasn't our intention at all. Furthermore, we came to Zhonghai to participate in the battle. Don't you know about it already? I came to eat here with Ye Zi because of the friendship between her and Miss Mo."

"Friendship?"

"Don't you know that Ye Zi has been in touch with Miss Mo all this time?" Sky Dragon asked, confused.

Yang Chen really wasn't aware about it. He looked at the two ladies in the kitchen who were happily chatting. They appeared to be rather close friends.

Qianni has been in contact with Ye Zi all this time without my knowledge. Ignoring whether or not she minded being tricked earlier, how did she manage to stay in contact with Ye Zi afterwards? Judging solely on how she maintained a close relationship with Ye Zi, it was clear that her nature of forgiveness was greater than most people. No wonder she could take on competitors in the industry with ease.

Yang Chen sat down with Sky Dragon in the living room and chatted about the recent situation after pouring two glasses of water. Yang Chen asked, "Why are you here with Ye Zi alone? Where are the other members of the Dragon Group?"

Sky Dragon smiled awkwardly. "Since you asked this question... it means you haven't been able to tell my relationship with Ye Zi."

"What's your relationship with her?" Yang Chen really couldn't tell.

"We're currently a couple!" Sky Dragon finally couldn't hold himself back from telling Yang Chen. He even looked elated after confessing.

Yang Chen took a double take and almost spit out the water in his mouth. Sky Dragon had such a huge build and a block face structure. Yang Chen then looked at just how small Ye Zi's figure was. He really didn't expect them to get together.

When the two ladies in the kitchen finished busying themselves, the dining table was full of dishes, while three plates of steaming-hot dumplings were brought out as well.

Yang Chen said to Ye Zi, "Kid, is there something wrong with your vision? Why did you choose Sky Dragon?"

Ye Zi blushed as she glanced at Sky Dragon in a shy manner. "I don't know as well."

"Ye Zi said she felt that I was a good and honest man," Sky Dragon said shamelessly.

Ye Zi pinched Sky Dragon's arm angrily, and didn't allow him to continue speaking. In return, Sky Dragon grabbed her into his arms before hugging her in a thick-skinned manner.

Mo Qianni witnessed this scene and started laughing. "Can you two stop showing your affection in my house? I'm getting too sour."

The four of them chatted away as they had their meal. Yang Chen initially thought he was eating with Mo Qianni alone, but somehow turned into a meal to welcome these two rare guests. He couldn't help but to feel slightly gloomy.

After the food got wiped out, Yang Chen helped Mo Qianni by carrying the bowls and plates back to the kitchen.

When they finally had their lone time, Mo Qianni carefully asked Yang Chen, "Hubby, you aren't mad that I've been in touch with Ye Zi, are you?"

"Why would I be mad?" Yang Chen asked.

"Because I haven't told you about it before," Mo Qianni said softly. Actually, she had wanted to tell Yang Chen in the past, but she didn't feel the need to report her personal life due to pride. After all, she had

only talked to Ye Zi on the phone before. But since Ye Zi was coming to Zhonghai today and wanted to see her, this dinner was a result of that exchange.

Yang Chen smiled relaxedly. "It's fine as long as you don't feel there are any issues. I can't take charge of your personal life, can I? You're not a little girl at the end of the day."

"Alright." Mo Qianni grinned as she relieved herself.

As they hadn't met in a long while, the four had a lot to talk about while drinking tea and eating dried fruits.

Yang Chen found much fun in teasing the 'Beauty and the Beast', Sky Dragon and Ye Zi. Firstly, Ye Zi would blush as a result of shyness, while she'd bully Sky Dragon afterwards, before finally getting bullied again...

Time passed really quickly during their conversation. They chatted until eleven o'clock at night. Ye Zi and Sky Dragon planned to leave as it was rather late already. They had serious things to do in Zhonghai after all.

During the conversation, the two from Yellow Iron Fire Brigade avoided talking about the confrontation of Sandstorm and Brahma. Evidently, they knew that Yang Chen was not in the mood to discuss it, while they hoped that Mo Qianni didn't notice anything unusual.

However, when they wanted to leave, the lights in the house suddenly dimmed!

Shortly after, all of the electronics in the house stopped in their tracks!

Is it a power failure?

The house was almost in complete darkness. Yang Chen's vision wasn't affected very much. However, he had a feeling that it wasn't an ordinary power failure.

Mo Qianni subconsciously moved towards Yang Chen. Softly, she asked, "It isn't a problem with the power circuits, is it? Why would there be a power failure during winter?"

"It's not a power failure. Sister Mo, look. The lights from all the other blocks are up, but ours have gone out." Ye Zi pointed outside the window at the other buildings.

Yang Chen vaguely felt that something was off. Seeing that Sky Dragon and Ye Zi stood by the window, he shouted, "Sky Dragon! Ye Zi! Get down!"

Following his yell, before Sky Dragon and Ye Zi could react, two silhouettes fell from the sky and stopped outside the floor-to-ceiling windows of the house!

Bang! Bang! Bang!

Guns strobed outside the window, while the bullets violently pierced through the window, straight at Sky Dragon's and Ye Zi's vests!

Being reminded by Yang Chen, Sky Dragon tensed up which allowed him to quickly react to the situation, having practised combat for many years. He pushed Ye Zi down before guarding her with his body!

Although he could dodge the bullets, he could clearly feel that Ye Zi who had mediocre combat ability wouldn't have been able to avoid them!

Yang Chen had to protect the totally defenseless and frightened Mo Qianni. So, as soon as the silhouettes appeared, he hugged Mo Qianni before dashing towards a relatively safe corner in the room.

When Yang Chen turned his head back, Sky Dragon who was guarding Ye Zi had two bullets penetrated into his back!

"Brother Sky Dragon! Brother Sky Dragon!" Ye Zi who got hold of the situation was horrified. She noticed that Sky Dragon's mouth was filled with warm blood, some of which spilled from his lips. Panicked, she started sobbing in fear.

Sky Dragon practised Shaolin Dragon Claws, not a technique like Golden Bell Cocoon that could grant protective abilities. As such, at this point in time, all he could do was absorb the damage dealt. The two bullets originally heading towards Ye Zi struck his organs, causing him to be in the zone of danger!

Mo Qianni who was shifted away from the danger by Yang Chen away instantly paled. The sudden disaster made her panicked and frightened.

However, the attacks didn't stop there!