

Chapter 131 - Meeting The In Laws

When Li Lanni left the employees cafeteria, she was no longer in the mood to go back to the studio. She called Cheng Yu, and they left Star Art International together.

After she had said her piece to Madam Ji, she no longer felt the need to continue speaking to her, so she had excused herself.

"Why would Madam Jiang want to speak to you? You didn't do something against the company policy, did you?" Apparently, Cheng Yu was having the same suspicion as she did earlier.

"No. In fact, it was nothing important.", Li Lanni shrugged it off.

Cheng Yu didn't press further. She was going to paint with Li Yuming later, so she was too excited.

On the other hand, Li Lanni was going to Xia Luna's. They still had things to talk about regarding Ji Feifei.

Meanwhile, in a high-end mansion,

A red-haired girl hugged a pillow on the sofa while she glanced at a middle-aged man beside her. He was busy typing on his laptop. After hesitating for a while, the girl spoke to him, "Dad, Ji Feifei has been arrested."

"Mmh. I know." The middle-aged man responded blankly.

"Then... is it time to make my move?" She asked cautiously.

"No." The man replied offhandedly, still immersed in his work.

"But why not? The Ji family is weak right now and..." The girl whined in a spoiled manner.

"It's exactly because they are weak. Ruby, don't do anything unless I tell you to do so." The man suddenly lifted his head, looked into her eyes, and warned her.

"But why..." Ruby was surprised. Her father had always allowed her to do what she liked. But when it came to this, he was keeping her waiting for too long. "I really want that b*tch to suffer for everything she did to me."

"I know, princess, but you should learn to be patient. I'm sure you are not the only one after her blood. That Li Lanni girl, for instance, is after her too."

Ruby thought about it. Indeed, Li Lanni hated Ji Feifei too. "Then should I befriend Lanni? I have been trying to, but she..."

"Don't." Her father interrupted.

"But why?" Ruby was shocked. Her enemy's enemy was her friend, right.

"That girl isn't simple. Don't court trouble. Also, discontinue your Art classes. You are doing nothing but wasting a lot of time there."

Saturday

Li Lanni had thought that the pervert had forgotten all about meeting his parents, but she should have known better.

This bastard was cunningly waiting for the perfect day when she couldn't turn him down.

"Darling, we still have more than two months before we can break up." He said with all confidence when she tried to make an excuse to slip away.

"That doesn't mean I should go to your home! What kind of condition is that?"

Ji Xiehan inched closer to her teasingly. "Honey, the main point was to bring a girl home so my parents will stop bugging me to get a woman. In fact, I am already a few days overdue. We should have met them last week itself."

Li Lanni was helpless. What kind of mess has she thrown herself into? When she saw Ji Xiehan's teasing look on his face, she gritted her teeth and regretted until her intestines turned green. She shouldn't have agreed to him in the first place. Was it too late back out now?

How could Ji Xiehan not perceive her emotions, so he quickly clutched his heart pitifully said in an aggrieved tone, "Honey, I already completed my end of the deal. Are you going to ditch me now?"

Li Lanni looked at him speechlessly. Every time she meets this guy, he shows her a whole new level of shamelessness. "Can you have a little more shame?"

Ji Xiehan rubbed his head with a hurt expression. "You are the one who doesn't have shame—you heartless girl. You let me decide when and where to appear for the media's sake, but when I want you to meet my parents, you want to come up with excuses and reject me. How could you be so feeling less?"

"What? When did I..." Li Lanni was about to refute but then remembered that such a thing did indeed happen.

At the time, she had just wanted to be a little fair since she already had the upper hand. Who would have known that her fairness would land her in his trap again?

She shouldn't have left him a leeway! If she gave him an inch, this bastard would take a mile.

Seeing that he was on the winning end, Ji Xiehan daringly slipped a hand around her waist. "Let's go?"

Li Lanni could only grit her teeth and agree to go.

Even though it was just a fake meeting, Li Lanni felt it would be rude not to get any presents when meeting elders. Hence she dragged Ji Xiehan to a gift store on the way to Ji Mansion.

He was happy to go, of course. That was just another opportunity to tease her, and he didn't waste it.

After looking around for a while, she decided to get an antique painting.

While Madam Ji disliked Li Yuming, it didn't mean that she hated all the painters and did not appreciate art. In a particular article on an interview with Madam Ji, she remembered reading that she was fond of many painters and had collected many of the masterpieces. Ji Huifen appreciated art too, so this covered the interests of both of them.

Even though this was just a meeting for the media's and Ji Xiehan's sake, but even then, Li Lanni decided to be sincere with her gift.

At the billing counter, Ji Xiehan insisted that he would pay, but Li Lanni stubbornly refused. How could she give the first-meeting gift to his parents with his own money? When he saw her acting stubborn, Ji Xiehan relented and let her pay.

After packing the gift, both of them then headed to his home.

On the way, for unknown reasons, she felt nervous about meeting her in-laws. She knew that meeting them was just an act, but she still felt anxious despite already meeting them.

Ji Xiehan was even more nervous. Knowing that his mother didn't like Li Lanni, he could only hope that the former wouldn't flip upon the latter.

Both of them felt as if they were sitting on pins and needles.

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They soon reached the destination in half-an-hour. Ji Xiehan quickly got out of the car and opened the door for her.

At the main entrance, a butler was already waiting for them, anticipating the arrival of their future mistress.

When he saw a gorgeous and elegant lady in a white sleek A-line dress with a minimum make-up on her face walk out of the car, the butler was stunned for a moment. How beautiful!

But he quickly adjusted his expression and went forward and greeted them respectfully, "Young master Ji!"

He then turned towards Li Lanni and greeted her, "I guess this must be Ms. Li. Nice to meet you. I am Wu Feng, the butler of the house you can call me butler Wu."

Li Lanni politely greeted, "Hello Butler Wu"

The butler then took them to the living room where Master Ji and Madam Ji was waiting for them.

Li Lanni exchanged pleasantries with them, trying to ease her nervousness and chatted with them cordially.

As anyone would expect, this was bound to be one of the most awkward meetings between a man's fiancée and his parents.

The atmosphere was even more tensed thanks to the fact that Li Lanni was not actually Ji Xiehan's fiancée.

After the talk they had a few days ago, Madam Ji didn't deliberately make things difficult for Li Lanni. But even so, they couldn't like each other overnight. There was still obvious tension between them.

After exchanging some small talk, Ji Huifen tried to lighten the mood a little. "Xiehan, why don't you take your girlfriend for a tour around the compound? Dinner will be ready soon."

Madam Ji coughed awkwardly. That was her line. "Yes. The backyard has been redecorated. I'm sure Lanni will love it."

Hence, Ji Xiehan brought Li Lanni to the garden for a stroll. It was only then that she realized how big and luxurious the Ji mansion actually was.

The backyard was nothing but a sea of green, with a small flower garden at the side and an ornate fountain at the center.

It gave the whole place a calming feeling as the water splashed and rolled its way down the tiles.

Ji Xiehan wrapped his arms around her. "Do you like it? If you do, we will have an even more beautiful fountain in our matrimonial home.

Before she could land him a fatal jab, he breathed against her ear. "Darling, my parents are watching us."

Li Lanni could only swallow her anger. Very well.. She should have known.

Chapter 132 - A Kiss By The Fountain

He only brought her here so he could take advantage of his parents' presence to do such things.

But shouldn't people be shyer when their parents were around? She just couldn't understand the pervert's train of thought.

Seeing that she was about to explode, Ji Xiehan slowly let go and stood beside her.

"Do you want me to show you the places I liked to frequent when I was a kid?" He offered with a chuckle.

For some reason, Li Lanni couldn't resist the thought of Ji Xiehan as a child. He must have been too cute with his silver hair and blue eyes.

"The old Jiang Mansion isn't far from here." Ji Xiehan said. He swallowed the second half of his statement, which was, 'you and your sister will still be able to spend time together after marriage.'

Li Lanni didn't want to go to the Jiang Mansion. Wouldn't that be too casual? So Ji Xiehan brought her to the places he used to play instead.

"Jiang Xingyu and I used to fight a lot. Then there was Lin Jian, the blabbermouth who liked to incite us to fight. We would drag each other over there for a good exchange." Ji Xiehan said, pointing at a somewhat hidden part of the backyard.

Li Lanni held her hand over her mouth and giggled. She couldn't help imagining the child version of Ji Xiehan fighting with his friends and then later getting punished for fighting.

It must be so cute... now she couldn't help curiously wondering what his son would look like. Would he be extremely adorable with eyes like his father's?

It would be especially cute if Ji Xiehan was a doting yet strict father... it somehow felt like an impossible combination but it would be the best - him doting on his kids to the heavens yet punishing them if they were too naughty.

Li Lanni could even almost picture them playing all around him and calling him "Daddy".

She was still lost in thought when she felt his lips land on her cheek.

Her eyes went wide as she turned to look at him.

He leaned over and kissed her again, this time on the lips. His expression was as though he had not done anything out of the ordinary.

Li Lanni's cheeks flushed as she glared at him and found her voice only after a while. "You... you... how could you just kiss my lips?"

Ji Xiehan gazed down at her, his eyes fiery, "You don't want me to kiss your lips? Then tell me, where do you like to be kissed? I'll kiss you right there."

"You..." Li Lanni was furious. This shameless man!

Li Lanni fumed, her face turned red, her lively eyes blazed as she stared at him. Her stare pierced right into his heart and it started pounding more loudly.

He slipped his arms around her and brought her into his embrace all so naturally. "Honey, I just saw that my mother is taking peeks at us. I'm just giving them a show."

As soon as he said this, he took her lips in his and kissed them gently as if he was enjoying the best delicacy in the world.

Li Lanni was shocked by his kiss again. She wanted to evade it but was soon enthralled by his presence. Her heart fluttered as an unfamiliar feeling swelled within her. She unconsciously wrapped her arms around his neck and closed her eyes. She knew she should resist him and push him away, but she couldn't help but savor this addictive feeling.

She was aware that no one was watching them. Perhaps the pervert just thought so... or he was lying.

Whatever it was, what she wanted right now was to indulge herself in his kiss selfishly. She didn't know before that it would feel this nice to kiss the pervert. Was she going crazy?

Ji Xiehan held her tightly against his body, gently biting her lower lip then soothing it with his tongue, making her feel things she didn't know she could ever feel.

She made the move to nudge his lips with her tongue, as though asking for access which he gladly gave her.

Deepening the kiss, her hand trailed along the back of his head all the way to his neck. For a moment, she even forgot where they were. Her fingers traced his collar and found his tie.

Ji Xiehan reluctantly broke the kiss and took her hand off his collar with a chuckle.

Li Lanni was still relishing the moment when he suddenly parted from her lips.

She looked at him with her rosy cheeks, her eyes still in a daze with a cute pout on her lips in disapproval. Ji Xiehan tried to control his breathing back to normal and kissed her forehead. "Honey, we are still in the backyard. Do you really want to do this here?"

Li Lanni came back to her senses and blushed in embarrassment. How could she have lost herself?

He leaned into her ear and gave her earlobe a gentle bite. "If you really want to, we can..."

"Who wants to do anything with you? Didn't you say it was just a show? Your parents must have stopped watching already, so that's... enough, I guess." She said guiltily, evading his eyes.

Ji Xiehan let out a light chuckle. He had only meant to tease her a little. Looking at her, he couldn't help but believe she might be developing feelings towards him.

Even then, her reaction just now surprised him. He didn't know that she so badly wanted to be kissed by him. Should he kiss her more often then?

He snuck a look at her lips that were slightly swollen from the intense kiss and really wanted to kiss her again. But then, they were still at his parents' house. "We should go back in. Dinner should be ready now."

Li Lanni was relieved. She practically dragged him back to the house, not willing to think about what happened anymore.

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This time, interaction with their parents went smoother.

They mostly ate and talked less, and the only thing they talked about was Ji Xiehan.

Once they were done eating, Madam Ji insisted on having a chat with them before they could leave.

Even though she had only insisted because mothers-in-law usually talked to their daughters-in-law, she was surprised by how easygoing Li Lanni actually was.

She was neither rude nor arrogant, and she was not pretentious either. As the icing of the cake, she wasn't as brain-dead as Wen Lin had assumed.

Wen Lin has judged her by her looks- she assumed that beautiful girls knew nothing aside from beauty - and she was delighted by Li Lanni's knowledge in various domains.

She couldn't help but wonder whether she had done the wrong thing by agreeing to let Ji Xiehan and Feng Ci meet up and ignite a spark.

In the end, she decided to watch and wait. If Li Lanni was really the best girl for Ji Xiehan, she would turn down the Feng family.

A while later, Ji Xiehan started getting jealous that his mother was hogging Li Lanni all to herself. "It's starting to get late. I should..."

The temperature suddenly dropped, followed by a ramble.

"Oh no. I forgot that the weather forecast predicted that there would be a thunderstorm tonight." Madam Ji sighed.

Ji Xiehan had forgotten about it too.

Li Lanni looked outside through the window for a while then turned to Ji Xiehan. "My home is not far. We can make it if we leave right now."

"That's crazy." Ji Xiehan refuted without thinking. "Drive at a terrifying speed to your home? You do know that's dangerous, right? Besides, it could start any minute now. Darling, I'm not about to put your life in danger."

Li Lanni's heart raced from the way he had called her. She tried not to blush as she consistently grabbed his hand. "But it might be harder to leave once it starts... and we don't know how long it's going to last."

Madam Ji saw the worried look on her face and made a suggestion. "Why don't you spend the night here? Xiehan can take you back home tomorrow."

"What?" ... eer... spend the night here?

She snuck a look at Ji Xiehan as though asking for his help. But how could he help her out? He would really love to spend the night with her. That, and the fact that it was indeed dangerous to leave right now, He was not about to do anything that might hurt her.

Li Lanni saw that he was obviously not going to side with her and helplessly looked at Ji Huifen. Even he sided with them.

It was as though even heavens really didn't want her to leave. Before she could try to insist, a loud rumble of thunder resounded before it started pouring like cats and dogs

Just great!

Now she didn't have a choice, did she?

Chapter 133 - Between The Sheets

Li Lanni wondered whether Ji Xiehan had made some arrangements with the weather. Why did he look so happy because she had to stay over?

Meanwhile, Ji Xiehan was secretly wondering whether fate had exclusively decided that they spend time together. It was a good thing, so he was overjoyed.

To avoid making the kids feel awkward, Madam Ji had the maids prepare hot drinks for them; then, she dragged her husband away with her. The maids retreated quickly, too, after delivering the drinks.

Now it was just the two of them, a man and a woman, in the living room.

There was nothing wrong with that, but Li Lanni couldn't help feeling conscious.

Especially when she recalled the kiss they shared earlier... and the question he had asked her about where she liked to be kissed. Her heart bit quickened. She didn't need a mirror to know that her face was bright red as a tomato.

When Ji Xiehan saw her blushing profusely, he wondered what she had in her mind that was making her blush so hard. Did it have anything to do with him?

After drinking the hot cocoa, Li Lanni felt a little warm. But a while later, she started feeling cold again thanks to the sleeveless dress she was wearing. Her arms were almost completely exposed.

Shuddering a little, she hugged her arms and rubbed against them for frictional warmth.

Ji Xiehan took in her little action and had concern written all over his face. "Are you cold? I'll give you one of my coats to wear."

Li Lanni imagined herself wearing one of his coats that would look extremely oversized on her. She laughed and shook her head. "It's okay."

He scrunched up his brows. "Would you rather wear my shirt instead? That's okay too." He looked serious as though he really meant it. His fingers even reached for the buttons.

Li Lanni blushed furiously. "Of course not! A coat is fine."

Ji Xiehan chuckled at her cuteness. He really wanted to take a pinch at her cheeks.

Without any warning, he flopped himself beside her, bringing her body into his arms.

Li Lanni was alarmed. "What are you doing?!"

"Keeping you warm." He said expressionlessly.

"What happened to the coat?"

"Honey, what use is a coat? Isn't it better to have me instead? I'm so much warmer and much more comfortable."

Li Lanni was speechless. Fine. It didn't hurt. It felt nice to be in his arms anyway. Besides, bickering with him right now would only exhaust her strength. She was only worried that he might do something to her.

After being nervous for a while, her body slowly relaxed when he didn't make any move. She even rested her head against his chest and drifted into sleep.

Ji Xiehan looked down at her, happiness flooding his heart. Even in his dreams, he didn't dare to imagine that Li Lanni would one day trust him enough to fall asleep against his chest.

Yet there she was, comfortably falling into a deep slumber, even hugging his neck like he was a plush toy.

He let her hug him as she wanted. How nice it felt to be a plush toy.

Because her position was uncomfortable, she only slept for a short while before waking up. Only then did she realize that she was still in Ji Xiehan's embrace. Not just that. While she was asleep, she had moved to a more comfortable position - his lap. She quickly moved away with burning cheeks.

Ji Xiehan was disappointed by the sudden loss of warmth.

It was only then she remembered that her mother must be worried. "Oh no!"

"What is it?" Ji Xiehan asked with concern.

"I forgot to tell my mom about my whereabouts. She must be so worried!" She quickly reached for her purse to take her phone.

Ji Xiehan took her hand to stop her. "No need. I already told her you are here."

"Oh... When did you do that?"

"Just a while ago. You were asleep." He didn't mention the fact that Li Yuming was so overjoyed when he informed her that he could swear she had broken into dance. She sounded like she was looking forward to cuddling some grandchildren soon.

Even after knowing that their engagement was fake, she didn't stop them from getting close to each other. That was only because she knew that their feelings were true. How could she mind?

Li Yuming could even imagine kids similar to Li Lanni and Ji Xiehan running and playing all around her. She almost blurted about how to take care of kids. But she didn't want to take up much of their time and get in their way, so she hung up after saying a few words.

"What are you laughing at?" Li Lanni asked when she saw Ji Xiehan randomly chuckle.

"Nothing. I just remembered something. Anyway, you should sleep soon. I'll take you to my room."

"You mean a guest room, right?" How could she sleep in his room?

"No, honey. You are sleeping in my room. Aren't we 'engaged'? It would be strange if we slept in separate rooms. Besides, all the spare rooms are occupied."

Li Lanni could only bite her lips. What?

It was already weird enough that she was staying over at his parents' house. Now she had to sleep in his room too? "Then, I will sleep here."

"That's insane." Ji Xiehan protested. How could he let his little beauty sleep in the living room?

"If you sleep anywhere else, my parents will know everything. There was already a rumor, remember? That, and the fact that we got 'engaged' in a flash. They already have their suspicions, and sleeping separately will only prove them right.

Li Lanni felt a headache coming on. "But we are only engaged, not married. Not every engaged couple shares a room."

"You are right. But we should make our relationship look real."

Indeed, he was right. But how could she just sleep in his room? It would still be okay if they were dating or least had a fling. But in their situation, wasn't that absurd?

"We don't have to sleep on the bed together." He said meaningfully.

Li Lanni contemplated then decided it was better. As long as they were not sharing a bed, she could just treat it as sleeping in a hotel room.

Ji Xiehan was relieved when she finally relented. He brought her to his room and changed the beddings. "If you need anything, you can tell me."

"Where are you going?" She questioned when he reached for the door.

"To the study. You can simply send me a text message if you need anything."

"You are not going to sleep?"

"No. I will sleep tomorrow." He said blankly, playing the pitiful card again.

Li Lanni felt guilty. Was he going to work the night away because she was occupying his bed? She glanced at the sofa in the room. It was a love seat, and she definitely wouldn't fit on it, let alone Ji Xiehan, who was significantly taller than her.

Biting her tongue, she walked towards the sofa. "You sleep on the bed. I'm not that tall, I can sleep here."

Ji Xiehan looked at the sofa and cursed inwardly. Why was it here?

"No way. Just sleep on the bed."

"But you should sleep too."

"Then I will sleep on the sofa."

Li Lanni sighed. "I would feel guilty about letting you sleep uncomfortably while I occupy your bed."

"Then let's both sleep on the sofa."

"Huh?"

He closed in on her teasingly. "Aren't you guilty that I will be uncomfortable? If not, then let's both sleep on the bed." His twisted brows seemed to say, "we are either going to be comfortable together or uncomfortable together."

Li Lanni knew that she couldn't outwit Ji Xiehan this time. Not only was this man cunning like a fox, but he was also proficient in reverse psychology. The way he had trapped her using the guilt, he knew she was rendered speechless.

In the end, Ji Xiehan and Li Lanni lay on the bed together. Li Lanni remained on the edge of the bed, keeping as much distance from Ji Xiehan as possible.

She knew that he couldn't possibly force her into anything, but she was still nervous.

Even she didn't know why she was so scared. She had slept against his chest earlier and also sat on his lap, and she wasn't even frightened then.

No, that was different. We were in the living room. But now they were in his room, on his bed, and under the same sheets. What kind of mess has she gotten into? Was it too late to let him go to the study? Li Lanni regretted being soft on him.

Ji Xiehan saw how she looked like she could take off any second and tittered. He won't bite, alright? Unless she let him... he quickly applied a sudden break to his thoughts.

He better not think those things; otherwise, the one who would be suffering would be himself.

Chapter 134 - Between The Sheets 2

Li Lanni didn't usually fall asleep fast. Paired with the fact that Ji Xiehan was beside her, she couldn't even sleep after counting sheep.

On the other hand, Ji Xiehan fell asleep pretty fast. Just a few minutes later, she felt his slow and steady breathing.

She sneakily turned and stole a peek at his handsome face, borrowing the light from the moon.

She couldn't help smiling as her hands itched to touch his closed eyelids. Why was it that every time she saw him, he was more and more handsome?

After fangirling over his face for a while, her eyelids felt heavy, she turned on her side and fell asleep.

Hearing her soft, steady breathing, Ji Xiehan slowly opened his eyes. He knew that she was scared of falling asleep in his presence, so he had pretended to be asleep.

Seeing that she had fallen asleep, he gently brought her into his arms then fell asleep too.

The next morning.

Li Lanni woke up to the bright rays of the sun.

She tried to stretch her limbs, then stiffened. Why was she in a man's arms?!

Her first instinct was to kick.

"Ow! What was that for?" Ji Xiehan groaned. He was immersed in a sweet dream, then it all got ruined by a kick.

Li Lanni's mind was more clear now, and she remembered that she was in Ji Xiehan's bed. "Sorry..."

"Honey, why are you so vicious? Are you trying to kill your husband in sleep?"

'What husband? Who was her husband?!' Li Lanni rolled at her eyes at his shamelessness. She could say that she was already used to it by now. But she was embarrassed by her actions. She tried to get up when she was pulled right back into Ji Xiehan's arms.

"I need to get up." She protested.

"No can do. You have to compensate me for that kick." He closed his eyes and went right back to sleep.

Li Lanni shrugged and rested in his arms. Perhaps because he didn't do anything he shouldn't at night, she was more relaxed and secure now.

Unknowingly, she fell asleep again.

This time, she woke up after only half an hour. Ji Xiehan was no longer in bed. She simply sat up, not knowing what she was supposed to do in an unfamiliar environment.

Just as she wondered what to do, Ji Xiehan came back.

"Beauty, you're awake. Freshen up, I brought clothes for you to change into." He placed the plastic bag on the nightstand. "You can use my bathroom. Are you hungry? I will cook it for you."

He realized that Li Lanni was looking at him oddly. "What's wrong?"

'Beauty, you're awake. Are you hungry? I will order breakfast for you.' The following statement replayed in Li Lanni's mind again and again. She somehow felt that she had heard these exact sentences somewhere before...

Li Lanni stared at the man before her as though she was looking at an alien.

"What's wrong? Why are you looking at me like that? Lanni, you are scaring me."

"We have met before." She stuttered.

"What?"

"We have met before, haven't we? That night at The Emerald Grand Hotel. No, to be exact, that morning."

Ji Xiehan paled in surprise. "You were not faking it? You had really forgotten?" He thought she was embarrassed by that incident and pretended to forget it, so he also played along with her.

Li Lanni tried to remember what happened after that, but her head swelled as pieces of memories resurfaced in her mind. She mumbled to herself, "That's strange. Why would I forget something that happened only a few months ago?"

No, I'm focusing on the wrong point here. Why would Ji Feifei drug me?"

"She did what?" Ji Xiehan's heart skipped a beat when she said that.

"She drugged me. Not only that, but she also told me that you were my husband and that you asked for me. I don't understand. What would she gain from that?"

Ji Xiehan didn't know whether to laugh or cry. Was he Li Lanni's husband? But that night was the first time they met, and she was asleep.

"She drugged you with sleeping pills?" he asked, remembering what the doctor had said that night.

"No way. Ji Feifei wouldn't waste so much time. It must have been an aphrodisiac. I don't know why I fell asleep instead of... you know..." she felt awkward speaking out the effect of aphrodisiac to him. Of course, he understood what she was talking about by seeing her expression.

"I have a feeling she was not just trying to get me into your bed.", she said as she tried to analyze her intention; countless possibilities came to her mind, but she could only think of one possibility

"She wanted to humiliate me." Li Lanni sighed.

Ji Xiehan raised an eyebrow, not understanding the logic.

"She knew you wouldn't touch me. But then, I thought you were my husband. Wouldn't I make a huge fool out of myself and get on your bad side in the process?"

Actually, she had been telling me that she was my sister-in-law ever since I woke up. I'm guessing she was planning something all along, but I just can't figure out what it was... but it must be related to you."

"Forget her. She is a chronic liar. She can even lie to herself. Don't let it get to you, okay? Don't overthink it." He said, annoyed by her sister's deeds.

He was currently thinking about something else. "Do you remember our second meeting? You know, at the theme park? I called you out, but you only looked at me before dashing away."

"What?" Li Lanni looked confused, unable to remember that piece of memory.

"Forget it. Do you know why you started calling me a pervert?"

He looked so wronged while saying that word making Li Lanni blushed. Then she shook her head as she couldn't remember anything related to those incidents at all. "I guess it was because you were stalking me. I don't remember all the details."

Ji Xiehan furrowed his eyebrows and asked again, "You don't remember how my former assistant kidnapped you?"

"Now that you mention it, I think someone kidnapped me before. I just don't remember much about it.

Ji Xiehan had now concluded. But he didn't want to shove it into her face so directly. "Why is your recent memory blurry? Do you have a clue?"

Li Lanni racked her brains. "I was hypnotized before. The last time, it failed. Do you think it could be a side effect?"

"I have never heard of hypnosis having such a side effect before." He frowned. After contemplating, he made a suggestion. "I know a friend who is well versed in hypnosis. Do you want to try hypnosis again? Maybe he can help you figure out some things."

IMPORTANT NOTE:

Hey readers, I put this here so that everyone can see it. Don't worry, it's a note so it will not affect the cost of coins.

--The progress of this book has strayed away from my original thoughts. It practically became different.

So I'm wondering whether to just go with the flow and edit it to make it better with the dimension it took, or to rewrite the whole book.

The plot might change to some degree. That's why I'm seeking my readers' opinion on this.

If some of you think the current plot is good, I'll just edit it and continue writing as it is.

If not, then I'll rewrite the whole book.

Do comment so I know what your thoughts are!

Chapter 135 - Misunderstanding...?

"Can I not?" She said, almost helplessly. There was a slight hint of fear in her voice, which didn't go unnoticed by him. The last hypnosis session must have scared her.

Ji Xiehan went forward and hugged her. "It's okay. You don't have to go if you don't want to."

He didn't know what exactly she felt, but it must be unpleasant. It wasn't easy to live with the knowledge that everything she had forgotten about herself could be anything. What if it turned out to be something she was not willing to face?

After all, most people had amnesia because of traumatic experiences. And the fact that she kept forgetting even things that happened after she woke up could mean that in her sub-consciousness, there was something she was trying to forget.

Because she felt secure, she couldn't keep it in anymore. "All this while I've been wondering who I really am, why my life just doesn't feel right. It's as though I'm living just for the sake of it.

Sometimes things happen, and instead of giving me answers, they only make me more curious... but scared at the same time. I'm afraid I may not be able to face the truth once I remember it. What if I was a bad person before?" She felt helpless, remembering that her mother had always seemed uneasy whenever she brought up anything related to regaining her memory.

What if her mother was hiding something from her because she couldn't face it?

"You don't have to force yourself to remember anything." Ji Xiehan coaxed. "Only when you are ready to do it, only then will we go for hypnosis."

Of course, there was something both of them were forgetting. Amnesia happened when one least expected, and similarly, they would recover their memory when least expected. And Li Lanni was bound to be shocked by the unforeseen events.

Unaware of this, Li Lanni rested her head against his shoulder, feeling safe. It was a different kind of security from what she felt when Li Yuming hugged her. It was also different from what she felt when Xia Luna and Cheng Yu hugged her... and she liked it. His broad shoulders were the only ones that could provide her this kind of comfort. She wanted to keep hugging him a little more. However, her stomach just had to rumble at that moment.

Ji Xiehan broke the hug, bursting into laughter. "Was that your stomach? Because I swear, I thought I heard thunder."

Li Lanni laughed at herself, too, playfully smacking his arm. "It was so loud. How embarrassing. It's as though Beel has possessed me."

"Beel?" He asked with a raised eyebrow.

"Beelzebub. That's one of the demons from an otome game I'm playing. He's the avatar of gluttony. He is always hungry, hahaha.

Oh, you must get to see his brother Lucifer. He's so handsome and..." she went on to ramble about the demons in that game and how she ogled at the handsome brothers, making Ji Xiehan so jealous his hair could turn green.

What was so good about some fictional 2D characters? He was more attractive and handsome, okay? He had to be. More importantly, he was real! He consoled himself and left her to take a bath then brought her downstairs for breakfast.

To her surprise, Madam Ji was even friendlier this morning.

For some reason she didn't understand, Madam Ji kept asking her to eat more nutritious food. At some point, Li Lanni thought she saw Madam Ji sneak a look at her stomach.

Ji Xiehan caught his mother's actions and coughed. Why were elders always so eager to have grandchildren?

Just like Li Yuming, Wen Lin seemed to forget that he and Li Lanni were not married yet and that she was still in school. Wouldn't having a baby disrupt her studies? These women's focus...

—

After breakfast, it was finally time to drop Li Lanni off.

Even though Wen Lin initially disliked Li Lanni, but now the more she looked at her, the more she liked her.

Now she understood why her son was so enchanted by her. Li Lanni was just too loveable.

She felt it was a pity that Li Lanni was leaving soon and wanted her to stay a little more, earning a displeased look from her jealous son.

Luckily it was Sunday, and Li Lanni didn't have to go to the studio. Otherwise, she would have been late.

"Honey, shall we go to the movies tomorrow?" Ji Xiehan asked as he pulled up in Li Yuming's villa.

"No." She rejected him instantly.

"Why not? You don't have anything to do after your class."

"I have things to do." She gritted her teeth.

"What things?"

"I'm meeting up with my sister."

Speaking of her sister, Ji Xiehan wondered what that girl had done to Jiang Xingyu. The poor man had been keeping himself away from humans and drinking his stomach swollen.

Poor thing...

...

Meanwhile, in Xia Luna's apartment,

Ever since meeting Jiang Xingyu again, Xia Luna was anything but friendly.

It was only lucky that she didn't like taking out her bad mood on people. If not, everyone around her would be dead already.

As usual, she would keep up an unfazed and alright front in the presence of her sister and best friend, but when she was alone and no one was watching, her true feelings would slowly start to reveal themselves.

"Ha..." she let out a bitter laugh, throwing her phone back to her bed.

"One week. It's been one week already. I guess I was right after all..."

She caressed a photo with her slim fingers. The man in the photo was smiling back at her. Only that this time, it seemed to mock her.

"Jiang Xingyu, you damned liar!" She cursed.

"What happened to 'I will still love you no matter what happens'? Were you taking advantage of the fact that I was young back then to tell me empty promises?"

Just when I decide to give you a real chance, shed off all my pride and tell you the truth about myself, you disappear on me? Just great."

She closed her eyes and swallowed hard.

Even though she knew that their relationship back then had been fake, she had still been moved by how much he loved her... or claimed to love her.

That night, she had made a decision. She was going to try dating him. She knew that feelings could be cultivated if people spent time together.

She was willing to learn to love him. It had taken her a significant amount of courage to decide to tell him the truth.

She didn't know how to face him, so she had written a snippet of it down. She had attached her personal phone number added that if he still loved her after knowing that, they should meet up and have a talk.

She knew she had acted like a coward, but she just couldn't bring herself to see his first reaction to such news.

So she had been waiting. A part of her hoped he would still want to talk to her and be with her.

Then came this kind of disappointment.

She crumbled the photo in her hands. Men...!

Right! Anyone else playing Obey Me? That's my favorite otome and it's super fun! Hahahaha I can ogle at Lucifer and Mammon all day.

Chapter 136 - Human Punching Bag

Once Li Lanni was dropped off, she went all the way to her room muddle-headedly. In the Ji mansion, she behaved nonchalantly during breakfast, but after speaking with Ji Xiehan this morning, she was edgy about her memory loss. She still couldn't understand how she could forget things so easily. Did this usually happen with amnesiac people?

Although she knew that she might not be ready to recover her memory, she was torn between wanting to know her past and wanting to remain in the dark.

But who would really want to be in the dark? She wanted to know something. Just a clue was enough.

As soon as she set her bag aside, she started rummaging through her things. She didn't know what she was looking for exactly. All she knew was that she had a nagging feeling that the last time she checked, she missed something.

It was as though a different brain was controlling her hands.

She went to her books and checked through all the notebooks, files, and even novels. Then she found a familiar diary lying at the bottom. It gave her a weird feeling.

The last time she opened it, she didn't find much information, and she had not written anything in it since then, but she still took it.

She sat on her bed and opened it, then let out a breath. Here goes nothing...

This time, she read all the words one at a time.

Just like the previous time, there was nothing much. Just random things that didn't mean anything.

By the time she was done with all the books, almost three hours had passed. She had not seen anything out of the ordinary. Of course, there couldn't be anything out of the ordinary.

She must have started being paranoid again.

Pushing everything at the back of her mind, she went to talk to her mother.

...

As soon as Li Lanni came to the living room, Li Yuming drowned her with questions.

"How did it go?"

"How did what go?" Her mother's sudden question shocked Li Lanni.

"Your meeting with your future in-laws. They didn't bully you, did they?" Li Yuming sounded like she had won the lottery.

"Of course not. They were... uhm... nice to me."

Li Lanni realized that her mother was giving her a strange look. "Mom, you're scaring me. What is it?"

"So, how was it?" Li Yuming asked, scrutinizing her.

"Huh? How was what?"

"You and Ji Xiehan. Did you do it?"

"..."

It took a while for her to figure out what her mother was talking about. Her face turned red with embarrassment. Ahem... really? Was there a mother who asked her daughter whether she did it and how it was?

Li Lanni didn't know where to put her face. "Mom! What kind of question is that?"

Li Yuming looked like she had done nothing wrong. "What's wrong with my question? I only want to know if I should start anticipating some cute little darlings. You are very beautiful, and Ji Xiehan is so handsome as well. Your babies will be the most adorable. Is it a surprise that I'm looking forward to it?"

Li Lanni coughed violently. "Mom, first of all, I'm only twenty."

"What's wrong with that? Nowadays, age doesn't matter as long as you are of legal age."

Li Lanni felt defeated. "Secondly, I'm still in school, did you forget that. And most importantly, Ji Xiehan and I are not even married yet." Heck! They were not even dating.

"That can be corrected, don't you think? There's nothing wrong with being married while in school. You can just work out the best time to get kids."

"..."

This must be an effect of spending too much time with the pervert. He must have transmitted some of his nonsense to her mother.

While she was still racking her brains over what to do, her phone rang. Speak of the devil! It was that pervert Ji Xiehan calling.

"What do you want?" She asked in annoyance, thinking that he simply wanted to tease her.

"Ji Feifei broke out of jail." Ji Xiehan's anxious voice came from the phone.

"What?" Li Lanni stood up in shock. "How did that happen?"

"Someone must have helped her break out. I didn't want to alarm you, but you should be careful. She might go looking for you."

Li Lanni slapped her forehead and inwardly cursed. She shouldn't have done this legally. She should have simply killed her.

"What happened?" Li Yuming held Li Lanni and asked. The girl's face was horribly pale.

"A jailbreak happened. Ji Feifei escaped." Li Lanni mumbled.

"What?"

—

While everyone else was in shock, Xia Luna was having a blast.

An hour ago.

It had been long since she had such a rush of uncontrollable emotions. She had to let it out.

She took her laptop and typed some codes at record speed. When she was done, she printed out a few papers, and before her brain could function properly, she had gone to the jail where Ji Feifei was detained.

She looked at the building for a while.

The paper she had printed out earlier was a blueprint she had obtained using all the security cameras in the building.

Switching off her phone, she pulled the mask over her face and grinned mischievously. 'Let's attempt a jailbreak.'

Then she went to the small lane next to the building, and after some searching, she found a small opening. She entered the building through a small opening. She was sure not many people knew it existed. Because if they did, there would be at least twenty jailbreaks every day.

She was out in less than five minutes, with a 'human punching bag' with her.

"That was faster than I thought. I deserve a pat on my back." She rattled and drove off swiftly, taking her punching bag with her. Earlier, she didn't knock Ji Feifei out because it would be harder to get her out through the small opening. Hence she had only threatened her.

But now that they were out, she knocked her out and drove to what looked like an abandoned building.

She surveyed her surroundings to ensure they were not being followed before she entered the building, dragging her knocked out human punching bag with her.

The building they had entered was where Xia Luna had lived before. It was not abandoned, but it had few inhabitants because of its current condition- it was old and looked like it would collapse if a slight thunderstorm happened. In fact, the building was now completely deserted. Xia Luna tied Ji Feifei onto a chair and played with her phone, waiting for her to regain her consciousness.

That didn't take long. Ji Feifei fluttered her eyelids only a few minutes later, groaning from the pain at the back of her head.

"You finally woke up. That took you long enough, sleeping beauty." Xia Luna mocked.

"Li Lanni! What do you want from me?" Ji Feifei growled. "My family will find you. They will not let you off!"

"Oh, is that so? I'm so scared..." Xia Luna guffawed.

Ji Feifei finally felt something was eerily off. "You... you are not Li Lanni. Xia Luna?!"

Xia Luna looked unfazed, pacing around Ji Feifei like a beast around its prey. After scaring the latter almost to death, she paused and closed in. "You know me. Impressive.... But do you know what happens to everyone who knows me?"

Chapter 137 - Psycho

"What can you do? I swear my family will not let you off!" Although she was frightened, Ji Feifei was determined not to show her weakness. So what if she was Xia Luna? She was just like her sister - a fly that could easily be swatted.

Xia Luna leisurely scrutinized Ji Feifei, making the latter wonder whether she was really going to die.

With a hum, she walked to a drawer and opened it, taking out a knife than she started playing with it while glaring at Ji Feifei. Several thoughts ran through her mind. 'You really think I wouldn't hurt you? You are not dealing with Lanni, you know.'

It was not that she thought of Li Lanni as an easy target, but unlike her sister, Xia Luna didn't have a conscience. Her hands were already stained with blood. What difference did it make if she killed one more? And for her sister, she would do anything.

Ji Feifei freaked out when she saw Xia Luna play with the knife as though it was a toy. Who plays with knives like that? Was she a psycho? Why didn't those people tell her that Xia Luna was so scary? For a second, she imagined that knife piercing through her chest or stomach or... no! She didn't want to die!

Even then, she didn't want to show that she was scared. "Do you think just holding a knife would scare me? Anyone could do it."

All of a sudden, she saw the knife fly towards her, narrowly missing her head.

"Ahhhh!" Ji Feifei trembled in shock. She looked like she would pass out any second.

Xia Luna rolled her eyes and took out another one - but this was one was a scarier double-edged fighting knife with a central spine and edges sharpened the full length. Ji Feifei felt chill on her back when she saw that dagger in her hand, "What are you screaming so loudly about. I just felt that your hair is repulsive to my eyes, so I was trying to shave your head from a distance. Don't worry; I'm very good with my aim... However, sometimes I miss it when I'm angry."

She walked over and grabbed a fistful of Ji Feifei's detainee T-shirt. "So, you better start talking, young woman."

"T-talk about what?" Ji Feifei tried to break off the rope tying her wrists, but that only hurt her armpits and wrists. She could only look back at Xia Luna, who mocked at her. "You would have to try harder than that. Talk!"

Talk about what? Would it hurt to be a little more specific? Ji Feifei was on the verge of breaking down.

"You know what I want to hear, Feifei. I'll give you one minute to prepare yourself."

The so-called preparation meant to let Ji Feifei think with a knife held dangerously against her neck. The knife was so close to her neck that if Xia Luna's hand skipped a little, she could 'accidentally' kill her. Ji Feifei almost peed her pants in fear.

"Your time is up! So start speaking. You know what I am asking about, right" When Xia Luna saw that one minute was completed, she reminded her with a devilish grin.

" I...I...that..." In fear, words didn't come out of her mouth and could only stutter.

Xia Luna was losing her patience, so she hit her in a stomach with her knees.

That one-hit caused Ji Feifei to soak with sweat in pain.

She gulped in horror and stammered, "I'll talk... ah!"

"Then speak, what are you stammering for? And remember, don't even think of lying with me." Xia Luna growled.

"N-no! I wouldn't dare -I ... I will tell you the truth. Everything!"

"Then tell me honestly, who are you working for? Don't try to weasel out of this." Xia Luna warned her with a smirk in her face.

Ji Feifei bit her lips so hard they could tear. Sweat had already formed on her forehead, but even then, she stammered. "I... I don't know what you're talking about... ah!"

Xia Luna simply punched her in the stomach. Ji Feifei coughed up blood; she could literally see stars in the daylight. She coughed up

"Who are you working for?" She asked her again.

"No..." Before she could finish her sentence, another punch landed in the same spot.

Ji Feifei thought she was going to die. Wasn't Xia Luna Li Lanni's twin? Weren't they, in fact, a few months younger than her? How could Xia Luna be so vicious?

Her eyes were dazed; she was starting to see two of everything.

"Look into my eyes and listen carefully, my patience is thinning, and I'm asking it for the last time. Who are you working for?"

Seeing the murderous intent in Xia Luna's eyes, Ji Feifei knew she would really die if she didn't answer her.

"My boss's name is P..."

Before she could say the full name, an alarm beeped on Xia Luna's phone.

"Damn it." Xia Luna cursed. "The black cats found out you are missing. How troublesome."

In an instant, she picked up the knife that had fallen earlier, shoved them back to the drawer, and cleared all the traces of her.

Then she untied the rope off Ji Feifei. She only needed to pull one end of it, making Ji Feifei scold herself in humiliation. It was that easy?

As soon as the rope was off, she applied something on Ji Feifei's wrists, tied the rope into a noose and threw it onto the floor, then dashed into another room.

By this time, a police siren could be heard outside the building.

Ji Feifei was still wondering what Xia Luna's theatrics meant when she heard a loud booming voice. "Fugitive Ji Feifei, this building is now surrounded. So come out, hands in the air."

Ji Feifei was too stunned to know what to do. Xia Luna must have beaten her into a stupor.

She heard heavy, rushed footsteps, and knew that the police were here.

But then she thought of something and relaxed. That was right. She had been kidnapped. She was a victim, and Xia Luna was only hiding away in a room. "How naive Xia Luna! You are going to get arrested." She cursed. Xia Luna must have wanted to get them both out, but the building was already surrounded. SHE couldn't SLIP AWAY. Anyway, Xia Luna was the true criminal here, so Ji Feifei wasn't really scared.

The door banged open.

"There she is."

Ji Feifei burst into tears. "You finally came to rescue me. One minute more, and I would have died."

The two police officers exchanged looks.

One of them looked around when he set his eyes on the rope and the chair, his eyes gleamed with viciousness. "Yeah. One more minute, and you would have committed suicide. Do you think you can escape charges by killing yourself? We gotta teach this one a tough lesson."

"What? Sui... no, no! I was kidnapped. That woman tried to kill me. The ropes were used to tie my wrists. Look. They are sw...." Swollen.

Ji Feifei stared at her hands in disbelief. They were not swollen! But she had been tied up so tightly!

Now that she looked around, the set up did look like she was going to take her life.

An abandoned building, a rope tied into a noose and a chair. What would anyone think?

"I'm telling the truth! She did this on purpose."

"So, where's the kidnapper then?"

"In that room." She pointed to the room where Xia Luna had dashed.

The officers called for back up to search the room while two of them cuffed her and took her to their car. She was still a criminal, nonetheless.

But it was even worse when the search team came back out of the building. "There is no one else in the house. Not even a trace. The windows were too small for a human to get out. However, we found these." The man was referring to knives and two guns."

"Those are not mine!" Ji Feifei protested.

"Shut up," one of the officers backhanded her. This girl was little, but her crimes were terrifying. Now she even possessed guns illegally?"

Ji Feifei didn't realize she had been trapped until now.

Meanwhile, Xia Luna waited until there was absolutely no activity before she came out of the woods.

'Plan B -successful thank goodness that she had Plan B for an emergency.. That was close.'

Chapter 138 - Why Does This Not Feel Real?

When Ji Feifei was charged with illegal possession of weapons and jailbreak out of nowhere, she was in disbelief. Both of those were Xia Luna's crimes! How did it end up being on her head instead? How could Xia Luna trick her?

She didn't know it, but as soon as Xia Luna entered the other room, right before the police arrived, she slipped out of the house through an exit only she knew existed.

In the past, when Xia Luna was living in the building, she had created a secret passage for emergency purposes. The passage was hidden deep inside, so even if police searched every nook and cranny of the house, it was practically impossible for them to find the secret passage. It directly led to the exit on the opposite side; thus, she was able to escape stealthily.

...

On the other side, Li Lanni was relieved when the police informed them that Ji Feifei had been caught again.

As soon as Ji Xiehan informed her of what had happened, she had called him back so they could sit together and analyze what was happening.

This matter was suspicious, to begin with. How could Ji Feifei attempt jailbreak without any outside help? So, both of them firmly believed that someone must have helped Ji Feifei out. But, when the police reported that there was only Ji Feifei in that abandoned house, they were puzzled.

It was even more surprising that the particular house had no records of someone living in it. But here and there, the police found the traces of someone living in the house. Thus, they believed that it was a hiding place for some fugitive.

Xia Luna was fond of erasing all traces of her wherever she went. It proved to be helpful because, according to the police investigation, Ji Feifei was the only one who had ever been seen entering that house. So police concluded that the house was Ji Feifei's secret hideout.

But Li Lanni couldn't believe any of that. "Why does this feel so far from being real to me?"

"What are you implying?" Ji Xiehan asked.

"I don't know... there's just this feeling that we are missing something. It's as though the police have been deceived." She knew she sounded silly, but that was just how she felt about it.

"The police have been deceived? Don't be silly." Ji Xiehan chuckled. "How can the police be deceived?"

"They can." Li Lanni shrugged. "If not, why are there certain criminals that have always been on the run, and even years later, the police haven't ever caught them? Isn't that because they often deceive the police?"

Ji Xiehan took her phone from her hand and locked it. "You are reading too many detective novels. First of all, using the phone screen too much is harmful to your eyes.

Secondly, I can see that these novels have started having side-effects on your brain. Are you trying to imagine that someone helped Ji Feifei out then deliberately let the police catch her and escaped on his own?

Obviously, if someone can break a person out of jail with all that security, then it could only mean that they are good at it. It wouldn't be hard to take Ji Feifei with them."

Li Lanni felt stupid thinking about it too. "I don't know... maybe they are Ji Feifei's enemy and wanted to teach her a lesson?..."

Ji Xiehan raised an eyebrow, starting to feel that her imagination was affecting his brain too. "Ji Feifei has so many enemies... Could it be someone on our side?" He thought of a person then shook his head. If it was really that person, then that was too idle of them.

Whatever it was, they had nothing to worry about. The police would be more careful with Ji Feifei now. It would be impossible to attempt jailbreak again. But just to make sure such a thing didn't happen again, he decided to put his security team on a lookout.

"What are you thinking about?" Li Lanni questioned when she saw him contemplating something.

Ji Xiehan pulled out of his thoughts and gazed at her face. "Nothing in particular... now that Ji Feifei is caught and is behind bars again, can I think about you instead?"

"Eer..."

Was he asking for permission to think about her? Can the pervert not be so crazy?

At this moment, Li Yuming returned from the kitchen. She had gone to whip up something for them to eat.

"What's the current situation? Did the police catch her?" Li Yuming sat across from them, letting the maids help her set the table.

"They did. But I'm starting to think we should have just skinned her alive instead. It's too troublesome to keep thinking of the possibility that she might break out." Li Lanni said thoughtlessly.

"Well..." Li Yuming coughed. She was entirely shocked to hear Li Lanni suddenly utter such words too. But then again, the Xias were heartless, and their blood was flowing in Lanni, so there was no need for her to be shocked by her words.

Although she knew this, she was determined to make sure Li Lanni was different. She would never let her daughter be like them. "Just a few days ago, you were on the right track, deciding to do things in a lawful way. Now just a few days later, you are starting to divert your thoughts?"

Li Lanni knew it was no laughing matter, but she found her mother's serious glare funny. "Relax, mom. I was just kidding."

It was really just a joke... well, at the wrong time, it seems.

After having their meal, Li Lanni walked Ji Xiehan out.

They strolled in leisure, not in a bit hurry, both of them secretly not wanting to part ways. However, Ji Xiehan was silent the entire time.

"What are you thinking about?" Li Lanni nudged his arm and asked.

The entire walk, Ji Xiehan had been thinking about her.

To be specific, he was wondering what kind of person Li Lanni was before. Was this little damsel just an illusion?

He already had questions about her, but what she blurted out before dinner got to his mind.

She had said it without thinking. Literally, but he was looking at her at the time and could have sworn that he saw her eyes flash with bloodlust. It was as though she really meant what she said.

It would not be shocking coming from another person, but Li Lanni? The little beauty who couldn't even kill an ant? Now that was shocking in a way that reminded him of something, but he just couldn't wrap his brains around it.

He was still thinking about it when he felt a nudge on his arm, followed by her cheerful voice, asking what he was thinking.

"I think I'll go back to my room now." She looked embarrassed for a reason he only understood a while later. He thought she probably wanted to spend more time with him.

His lips threatened to curl into a smile, and he had to cough to swallow it back. "You should sleep early. Goodnight."

"Goodnight." She said but remained standing there with no intention to go back to the house.

'Is she waiting for something?' He wondered.

"Why don't we catch a movie tomorrow in the evening?" He tried pushing his luck a little.

"Eer.. okay!"

Ji Xiehan's eyes brightened; this time, she didn't even come up with an excuse. It was as though she was looking forward to it. Did she start accepting him?

"Then... then I'll go now." She stammered.

"Okay." He replied with a playful smirk on his face.

"Don't overthink about the case and have a good sleep." She added, thinking that he was still worried about Ji Feifei's jailbreak.

"I will." He replied happily when he observed care for him in her tone.

When she saw that smile, her heartbeat quickened, so she quickly said bye to him and ran off into the house.

Ji Xiehan couldn't help but break into a peal of laughter when he saw her running in embarrassment.

Li Lanni scowled when she was back in her room. That idiotic pervert! He was a pervert when it was least needed, but when she somehow anticipated him to act like a pervert, he became a gentleman. And what was he laughing so loudly for, hmph...

Why the hell did he not kiss her?

Whatever. She was not disappointed.

Maybe just a little...?

Chapter 139 - Date

Monday.

Li Lanni's class had successfully completed the first volume of the comic they were drawing.

Today, they started the second volume.

As usual, after the lecture was done, the professor asked them to draw the comics for the second volume based on the story they were asked to read. While they were doing so, the professor walked around the classroom, silently assessing the comics made by the students.

'This batch of students have improved a lot' the professor was delighted when he saw the paintings. Each one of them was unique and creative.

But then he stopped next to Li Lanni with a frown when he saw her painting. This girl...

To avoid making her feel humiliated, he waited until the class ended, then called her to his office and questioned her. "Have you really read the novel and understood it?"

Li Lanni nodded, wondering why he would ask such a question. They were in the second volume already. Wasn't that a given?

"Really? I don't think you have really understood it enough. Because if you had, you would know that the novel is quite a happy one. Your comic wouldn't hold such darkness."

Darkness? Li Lanni thought back to her comic.

"It is easier for people who have read the original novel to overlook such a plot error. However, new readers will misunderstand it. As I said before, you should put yourself into character every time you make a sketch. Also, this is not the only problem I have noticed in your drafts. I am disappointed to say this, but your performance has significantly deteriorated since you first joined the class. While the others are improving, you are seriously lagging behind. Are you experiencing some problems? If you have some problems, you can share it with me." Though his words were condemning, his voice was gentle.

"No..." Li Lanni frowned, all this seeming new to her. When had she not put herself into character?

"I will not take up too much of your time, but I haven't expected this results from you, who hwas the grand winner in the previous painting contest. Go on and think about it." The tutor said with a gentle smile. He hesitantly added, "You should know that no matter how much effort you put in something if you are being forced into it, all your efforts will be futile."

"Thank you, sir. However, I'm not being forced into anything. I willingly joined this class."

When Li Lanni left his office, the first thing she did was open her locker and take out all the drafts to take a look. These were just copies, she kept the originals at home but had copies in the studio locker for reference.

More importantly, it looked like the story had strayed from the original. If the dialogue were to be added, it was sure that it would look misplaced.

But hadn't she been working hard?

What went wrong?

—

Later in the afternoon,

Ji Xiehan completed his work earlier, pushed the less urgent documents aside before leaving his office. He would work on them later at night.

After asking Lin Jian and being laughed at for half an hour, he finally got his way around finding the least frequented movie theater. He had selected a popular movie more suitable for female audiences and booked tickets.

All the previous times, he had got her to go out with him using schemes and tricks. This was the first time she had willingly agreed to go somewhere with him. This should be considered their first official date, right?

So he followed Lin Jian's advice and found a present. He already had one; the bracelet he had bought her when they went shopping but didn't have the chance to give it to her.

He wore the watch that was a match with it and took the bracelet with him.

Feeling more confident, he let out the breath he didn't realize he was holding and went to pick Li Lanni up.

The girl didn't make him wait too long. Two minutes after he sent her a text, he saw her exit the villa, wearing a blue dress that matched the color of his tie.

He couldn't help smiling. What a sweet coincidence.

"Did I keep you waiting?" She asked, her eyes staying on his tie for a few seconds.

"No. I just arrived. You look beautiful."

She blushed and unknowingly tightened her fists. "T-thank you." She had dressed up for him. It would be disappointing if she didn't look beautiful. She was happy that he liked it, and was even more pleased that their clothes were a complementing match. They looked just like a couple in love. Though she refused to accept it, she was delighted inside.

Once they were at the movies, he went ahead to buy snacks as she waited for him. "I booked tickets for a teenage drama 'Our Youthful Love.' I didn't know what kind of movies you liked, so I asked some of my female colleagues, and everyone said this was a nice one." He informed.

"Haha..." When Li Lanni heard him say, she broke into a peal of laughter.

"What's so funny?" he was puzzled by her sudden laughter.

Li Lanni burst into another round of laughter. "Haha..oh my god...haha..I can't control myself ..haha..Your face when you said the name of the movie was amusing."

Ji Xiehan laughed at himself too. It was just that he was a little unsure. After buying the tickets for the teenage drama, he only later realized that it was full of fluffy romance. Then he remembered that when they talked about online novels, she mentioned a few that she liked. Those were all detective novels, and even if there were some romance ones, the main theme was a crime.

Most people liked the same genre of movies and novels, so she should like detective and mystery, right?

But then again, she played otome games once in a while. So he didn't know whether to change the tickets or not.

Li Lanni figured out why he was confused. She felt happy that he prioritized her choice. "I'm not really picky with what I read or watch. I only do it to pass the time, so you should have chosen what you like instead."

"Then let's watch the teenage drama. I've never watched one before." He happily led the way, and she instinctively clung to his arm because he had popcorn and coke in both hands.

They took a seat close to the front.. They were quite early, so there were only a handful of people aside from them.

Chapter 140 - Date 2

Soon the movie began.

Ji Xiehan and Li Lanni were sitting together with a huge bucket of popcorn between them.

It wasn't even after 15 minutes of the film's start that Ji Xiehan lost interest in watching the movie, and started staring at the beauty beside him in a daze. Li Lanni was completely immersed in watching the movie. Ji Xiehan only kept his gaze fixated on her, while occasionally taking popcorn and shoving it into his mouth.

He didn't understand why girls liked going to the movies, but for guys, it must be because they enjoyed seeing their girlfriends happy. Seeing how happy Li Lanni was, he felt their date was well spent.

In a daze, he reached to take more popcorn, and coincidentally Li Lanni also reached at the same time. Their hands brushed against each other.

She felt a rush of what felt like an electric current right through her veins and became conscious of his gaze.

She flashed a smile at him. "Are you enjoying the movie? If not, it's not too late to switch to another."

"I like it." Ji Xiehan said smiled charmingly. He really did like it. Only, he liked the person next to him, not the movie. He didn't even know what the movie was all about.

The scene currently playing on the screen was of the young couple eating ice cream and feeding each other.

That gave Ji Xiehan an idea. He reached to take some of the popcorn and put his hand near Li Lanni's mouth. The girl was a little surprised and chuckled, then she took the popcorn into her mouth, obediently eating from his hand.

Ji Xiehan felt happier than he would if he was the one eating. He grabbed it a few more times to feed her. Even though they were not talking, this silent interaction was so sweet that Ji Xiehan did not want the movie to end soon.

Li Lanni didn't want it to end either. She was not sure whether she was enjoying the movie or the company of the man next to her more.

Ji Xiehan got even naughtier, taking more popcorn by his hand then teasing her with it before shoving it into his own mouth. He burst into laughter when he saw how silly she looked with a cute pout due to disappointment.

Li Lanni glared at him in anger when she saw him laughing at her expense. She then thought of something, and a glint flashed across her eyes. With a playful smirk, she inched closer towards him and pulled his tie suggestively.

Ji Xiehan's heart started beating loudly when he saw her closing in and suggestively pulling his tie. His eyes sparkled with anticipation, and shameful thoughts flooded his mind when he suddenly felt a cluster of popcorn tickle his neck then roll all the way to his stomach.

Li Lanni held a hand over her mouth and laughed heartily after shoving a handful of popcorn down his shirt.

Ji Xiehan was helpless when he saw a heap of popcorn underneath the shirt. Never mind, as long as she was happy.

By the time the movie was done, Ji Xiehan had a bellyful of popcorn. Literally. And the culprit in all this was having a blast laughing while he felt ticklish. 'You will pay for this.' He swore inwardly.

Such a grand opportunity to make her compensate him for physical and emotional damage had just presented itself. How could he not grab it? After the movie ended, he went to the washroom and cleaned all the popcorn on him before taking her back home.

On the way back home, Li Lanni felt a chill on her back, and when she saw the smirk on his face, she thought he was up to no good. Thus, as soon as they arrived at Li Yuming's villa, she quickly got off the car. But he was quicker than her and grabbed her hand, suddenly yanking her into his embrace.

Li Lanni was shocked by the sudden move, but she remained silent without having any intention to push him away.

Ji Xiehan lowered his head, and daringly kissed her forehead and cheeks.

She blushed from the sweet sensation and pulled away from him, not daring to look up into his eyes. "I... I'll go now. T-thanks for the movie and... dropping me off!"

"Wait." He grabbed her hand again before she could flee.

"W-what is it?" Even she couldn't believe just how broken her voice sounded. What was wrong with her? Had Ji Xiehan eaten away all her confidence?

Ji Xiehan took a nicely packed box from his pants pocket and gave it to her. "It is for you."

Li Lanni looked at him, then took the box before opening it right there. A shimmering blue bracelet greeted her. "It's beautiful... thank you. Help me put it on." She was not just saying it to humor him. It was indeed, one of the most beautiful bracelets she had ever seen. Of course, the fact that Ji Xiehan was the one to gift it just added to its beauty.

Pleased, Ji Xiehan took it and helped her put it around her wrist. Now he felt that her hands looked even more beautiful. He couldn't resist taking her hand and placing a soft kiss on it.

Li Lanni closed in on him, and before he could register anything, a kiss landed on his cheek. Then she fled all the way to her room, blushing furiously.

Unlike Li Lanni, who was having the time of her life and falling in love so sweetly, Xia Luna was currently the epitome of annoyance.

Even after beating Ji Feifei up, the frustration within her didn't subside. So she disguised as a male, went into the bar, and caused trouble by unreasonably beating a few teenagers up simply for being there.

When she still didn't feel relieved, she went on to ride a bike at full speed, making the traffic police chase after her and then swiftly evading them, among other forms of trouble she had caused in the last sixteen hours. She wreaked havoc wherever she went, but not only the uneasiness and frustration within her not subside, but it increased even more.

It was not just the usual uneasiness that one could sleep or cry off. It was... the most overwhelming feeling of sadness she had ever had.

She had the urge to break everything in her line of sight. Even though she controlled herself and didn't actually break anything - aside from a few bones at the bar - she emitted a scary and chilly aura akin to the cold beast all the time that even Cheng Yu dared not go anywhere near her.

But after seeing that she didn't leave her room all day, Cheng Yu got worried. She knew that Xia Luna would never think of killing herself, but what if she got gastritis from not eating all day?

Hence she cooked a few dishes and a bowl of soup and daringly went into her room.

"Do you need anything?" Xia Luna had tried not to sound rude, but her husky voice sounded so scary that Cheng Yu almost fled.

But she still went ahead. "Luna, you have not eaten anything. Here, have some food to eat."

Xia Luna was indeed hungry, so she thanked her and accepted the food.

She had a taste of the braised beef that Cheng Yu had cooked, then stopped and scrutinized the latter.

"What's up?" Cheng Yu felt nervous.

"I'm just surprised. You're the only one who still treats me so kindly even after knowing my true colors. And to think I ever imagined..."

Cheng Yu could fill up the cut-out words, but she knew it would hurt her friend, so she didn't say it out. "Luna, you have never been on your own. I care about you and... you do know that Lanni would also care about you even if she found out, right?"

Xia Luna scoffed. "Right. I should be thinking about people who still accept me. Why would I even be thinking of some man?" When she said the last part of the sentence, Xia Luna's voice was so scary that Cheng Yu felt her knees weakening.

Cheng Yu didn't know what to say. By listening to her words, she could tell that cause of Xia Luan's predicament was Jiang Xingyu. She had always believed that Jiang Xingyu loved Xia Luna and that it was she who didn't reciprocate the feelings.

However, the situation right now seemed contrary to what she thought. It was as though Xia Luna was the one who loved relentlessly, and her heart had been broken by the heartless Jiang Xingyu. And well...why was she so sad over a man she didn't have feelings for anyway?

Because she didn't want to antagonize Xia Luna any further, she kept her curious thoughts to herself and did not ask.

Once Xia Luna was done eating, she took her laptop and grinned mischievously. Heh. She was done taking out her bad mood on innocent people.. Then she started typing codes.