

Chapter 151 - A Little Imp Out Of Nowhere

Li Lanni spent her days routinely attending the institute and working on her assignments. But fortunately, these days were not without any entertainment for her. Li Lanni amused herself as she watched Cheng Yu and Cedric bantering with each other. The young man seemed to be addicted to angering Cheng Yu. He would find all sorts of ways to rile her up, making her so furious that Cheng Yu had to scold him for hours before her anger could calm down.

Amid this drama, the next few days flashed by in a blink of an eye, and the day of the charity banquet finally arrived.

In the afternoon after their class ended, Li Lanni finally remembered something that had totally slipped her mind. She stopped Cheng Yu, who was about to go her way. "What's your choice of dress for tonight?"

Cheng Yu rubbed her neck nervously. "I haven't decided yet."

She did have a nice dress that could suit the occasion, but it was outdated and slightly worn out after undergoing several washes. She did not want to embarrass her best friend and her mentor even though she knew neither of them would mind whatever she wore. She was even considering borrowing a dress from Xia Luna.

But Li Lanni's next sentence saved her the trouble. "I have a dress that I bought for you a few weeks ago, but I kept forgetting to give it to you. Maybe you could try it out?"

Cheng Yu felt embarrassed, but she knew that Li Lanni was not just finding an excuse to give her one of her own dresses. From her expression, she must have really bought it for her. "Then, I will not stand on ceremony."

Hence the girls made their way to Li's villa.

Li Yuming was in her room, probably getting ready for the banquet, so Li Lanni did not bother her. She brought Cheng Yu into her room directly. "Here we go. I'll show you the dress."

Cheng Yu was one part nervous and one part excited, making Li Lanni laugh at her. "Why are you so tensed up? It's a dress I'm going to show you. Not an atomic bomb."

"Do I look tensed up to you?" Cheng Yu denied even though she was obviously on edge. She had seen Li Lanni's walk-in closet the last time she spent the night here, and any random one of those dresses could cost a dime. She was just scared that whatever Li Lanni was going to show her was some exorbitant dress that might be more expensive than her life.

Li Lanni finally opened the closet and took out the first dress in sight. "Here it is. I put it here so I would remember it, but I still ended up forgetting.

Quick, try it on."

Cheng Yu was dazed for a moment. What a magnificent dress! It was a strapless cream floor-length gown with tiny gems embedded on its waistline. Although its design was quite simple, it looked elegant from every angle and would definitely look good on her. Li Lanni sure knew how to pick them. She didn't reach out to take it, afraid she would ruin it with a touch.

Li Lanni laughed at her antics. "Go on. The make-up artist should be here soon. She can do your make-up first."

"I get to wear make-up too?" Cheng Yu gasped in surprise.

"Of course. You should look dashing tonight. Who knows? You might meet your prince charming tonight." Li Lanni winked at her mischievously.

"Like they exist." Cheng Yu shrugged it off with a chuckle and went ahead to change into the gown. Not wanting to waste time, Li Lanni changed into her dress as well. She chose a black backless gown for herself. Coincidentally both of them came out at the same time dressed in their gowns looking stunning in their attire. The cream colour of the dress highlighted Cheng Yu's skin colour and accentuated her looks. Li Lanni sighed in admiration when she saw her, sure enough, she chose the right dress.

"Cheng Yu, my darling, you look absolutely gorgeous in the dress. I am sure by the end of the banquet tonight, men admiring could queue up to thousands of miles." Li Lanni exclaimed in awe, as she playfully winked at her.

Cheng Yu was embarrassed by her words, but when she saw how stunning Li Lanni was looking, her eyes brightened, and she playfully retorted, "Look who is speaking. Just look at yourself in the mirror." Saying, so she dragged her to the full-length mirror. "Oh, my pure maiden heart. Li Lanni, you look beautiful and stunning. You are a natural coat hanger." Cheng Yu was not exaggerating it, just a simple black dress, but Li Lanni was able to look elegant and graceful.

Li Lanni's face turned red from embarrassment, but Cheng Yu looked like she had activated her fan-girl mode and continued to praise her with all the known words in the dictionary. It was only when the make-up artist arrived, both the friends stopped their playful bantering. The make-up artist did her magic fast enough. Dressed to the nines, the girls left for the venue and arrived just at the right time.

Most of the guests had already arrived. As the main host, Li Yuming was greeting and having small chats with them.

Li Lanni briefly swept her gaze in the hall and held back a gasp. She already knew that her mother knew some influential figures, but she did not expect such a sight. Most of the infamous businessmen were here tonight, not to mention some unexpected political figures. Most importantly, the head of the National Charity Fund Organization was present too!

Li Lanni even thought that she had seen the president's daughter playing with another kid somewhere. Even the president was here?! What a fantastic line-up!

Cheng Yu was shocked too. Most of these figures rarely appeared at art exhibitions. They must be here because it was a charity, and she felt it was a nice thing. This meant more lives could be saved.

The girls split up and started greeting some of the guests.

As soon as Madam Jiang saw Li Lanni, she rushed over like she had seen her daughter after many years. "Lanni!"

Li Lanni smiled back at her. "Madam Jiang, you are here too. Thank you for attending."

"Oh, it's nothing. I like Li Yuming's paintings and hope to get at least one tonight. And I told you not to be so formal with me. Just call me auntie."

"A-auntie." Li Lanni called out in a tiny voice.

"Good girl." Madam Jiang was pleased. This pair of sisters was just so loveable. She was suddenly jealous of Li Yuming for having both of them but thinking about how she would soon have Xia Luna as her daughter-in-law, she was no longer jealous. She took Li Lanni's hand and patted it. "My dear, you..."

"Lanni." At this moment, Madam Ji hurried over like her house was on fire. She shot a glare at Madam Jiang, thinking, 'I just looked aside for a while, and she is already trying to steal my daughter-in-law?'

The latter was speechless at Wen Lin's childishness and excused herself. "See you around, Lanni."

"Okay, auntie. I'll look for you later."

As soon as she left, Madam Ji was happier. "It's nice seeing you again."

She looked somewhat troubled. "I may have to explain something to you."

"What is it?" Li Lanni had a bad feeling about whatever it was.

Before Madam Ji could find the right words, a beautiful young woman made her way over and flashed a smile at Madam Ji. "Aunty, you're here too."

Li Lanni cast a quick glance at the newcomer. She knew this woman. This was Feng Ci from the Feng family, the one that was said to have co-founded Feng Ji International with the Ji family. Rumor had it that the two families were very close, so it shouldn't be surprising that the young woman was acting all clingy with Madam Ji.

Madam Ji had never felt this awkward. This just had to happen before she could explain the matter to Li Lanni.

"It's been so long. Aunty, do you think Xiehan is coming too? He doesn't usually attend such events but I still hope he makes an exception. After all, I'm here."

"Well..." madam Ji did not know what to say.

"Hello." Li Lanni said curtly. Although Feng Ci had ignored her, she should greet her as a good host. She then walked away to give them space after that.

Alas, Feng Ci's aim wasn't to speak to Madam Ji but to piss Li Lanni off and probably also stake her claim.. Of course, she knew who Li Lanni was: that little girl that had been on the rumor mill with Ji Xiehan about an engagement she thought was too unrealistic. How could she let a little imp out of nowhere steal away her Xiehan?

Hence, Feng Ci sauntered over to Li Lanni. "So you are Li Lanni, huh. Everyone overrated you."

Li Lanni had seen Ji Xiehan enter the hall and was trying to smile at him when she was interrupted by Feng Ci's mocking voice. She turned to look at the woman who was deliberately trying to cause trouble. "I could say the same about you." She calmly replied.

Feng Ci was annoyed. What did she mean by that?

Even so, she could not let herself be angered by a little girl. In her skyscraper high heels, she appeared taller than Li Lanni whose heels weren't that tall. She stood in front of Li Lanni, trying to intimidate her with her height. "If you think you are worthy of Xiehan, you should go take a look at yourself in the mirror. Which part of you do you think deserves a man like him?"

Li Lanni crossed her arms over her chest with a snicker. "I don't need the mirror to know that I am worthy of him. His love is enough proof.

While you, Miss Feng, might need the mirror more than anyone." She sized the other woman up like she was an ant. "Even after plastering yourself to him all your childhood, and almost throwing yourself onto him, he didn't spare you a glance. Is it because you are too ugly?" Li Lanni left without waiting for an answer to that.

As a survival tactic, she liked to know about her friends, her enemies and her friends' friends and foes. Naturally, she knew a little more than the surface information about the Feng family in general and Feng Ci in particular.

She knew that although Feng Ci was undeniably beautiful, she was so obsessed with her own beauty that she couldn't stand anyone ridiculing her. She had done it on purpose because, seriously, what era was this? Were there still women who fought over men who didn't even love them? How pathetic.

Madam Ji saw that the two did not start a visible fight and was relieved. She had known Feng Ci for years and she knew how possessive she could be at times. Earlier before Feng Ci interrupted, she had wanted to tell Li Lanni about the deal she had with Feng Ci's mother in the past, and that she had changed her mind. However, there was no longer any need to tell her that. The girls had already clashed.

Luckily, the banquet officially begun before any blood could be shed.

After the guests ate and drank a little, it was finally time for the main agenda: the auction. Everyone took a bidding paddle and went to their seats.

The auctioneer went up to the stage and took the microphone. "On behalf of Li Yuming, I would like to thank all the guests for attending this banquet despite such short notice.

This charity auction is in association with the National Chronic Illness Association. All the funds obtained tonight will be donated to help pay hospital bills for as many patients with chronic illnesses as possible; as well as provide for their daily necessities while in hospital."

Everyone cheered for Li Yuming. How noble of her.

Although no one usually talked about it, Li Yuming had contributed to many charity organisations, hospitals, orphanages and elderly nursing homes over the years.

Rumor had it that it was because her own life had been tragic and that her parents had passed away because of lack of hospital fees.

No matter her reason, she was doing a good deed. This time, she had actually decided to auction every single one of her paintings that had yet to be sold, including the new ones that she had recently painted and the old ones that she had decided to keep for herself!

"Although this is Li Yuming's charity banquet, a few other painters decided to auction off their paintings as well." The auctioneer continued.

"That being said, I will introduce the first item."

The first painting was brought to the stage.

"The first item is Cedric Han's 'Prison'. The starting price is 500,000."

In the audience, Cheng Yu was startled. Cedric submitted his painting for auctioning? Then why did he steal her invitation letter? He didn't even need it! That harbinger of trouble!

"550 thousand." The bidding started.

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"720 thousand."

"720 going once, twice, closed!"

Because most of the people had their eyes on Li Yuming's paintings, the others were completed very fast.

When Li Yuming's paintings started being auctioned, they went by very fast too. Li Lanni even bought two of them because she loved them too much to let them be sold to other people.

Several paintings later, it was finally the climax of the auction. The last item was usually the most valuable and this time was no different.

"The climax of tonight is Li Yuming's earliest painting, caged." The auctioneer went ahead to briefly gush about how this particular painting had garnered so much value because Li Yuming wouldn't sell it no matter what price anyone offered. That, and the fact that it was her earliest painting that she had created about two decades ago, made it more valuable than all the others.

"Because of the reasons stated, I will not give any rule. Bid at your free will."

As soon as he was done, a man in black raised his paddle. "One dollar."



A voice in the crowd giggled for a second.

Li Lanni instinctively turned to see who the bidder was, as did everyone else. From his dress code, he must be a bodyguard.

Li Lanni's eyes narrowed. She raised her own paddle. "Thirty million."

That was a huge price range, but it was still way below the highest price ever offered for the painting so no one minded it.

They all started bidding seriously.

"Fifty million."

"Seventy million."

A short silence followed.

"Seventy million going once,"

At this moment, Cedric raised his paddle. "One hundred and fifty!"

Li Lanni's eyes went wide. That's not how bidding is done!

Jiang Xingyu glared at Cedric and raised his paddle. "Three hundred."

Ji Xiehan gave him a dirty look. "Four hundred."

Cedric did not give up. "Four hundred and fifty."

Ji Xiehan shot him a look. He wanted this painting and he was going to get it. "Five hundred and fifty."

What was more surprising was that many people were still bidding. One even offered six hundred and eighty million.

"Seven hundred!" Jiang Xingyu said calmly.

Li Lanni kept looking at them back and forth in shock. Did they really know that was money they were shouting out and not just random figures?

By this time, most people had stopped bidding. It was a valuable painting alright, but not many people were willing to offer such astronomical amounts of money. Even Cedric had given up. Now it was just Ji Xiehan versus Jiang Xingyu, yelling out figures like money meant nothing to them.

When the bid reached nine hundred million, Ji Xiehan started wondering why his friend so badly wanted the painting.

It was not like Jiang Xingyu was a fan of Li Yuming's. He had initially thought that the idiot was only shouting figures to oppose him but now Jiang Xingyu's determination was apparent. A thought crossed his mind. There was something about this painting that had made him want to bid for it with the intention of gifting it to Li Lanni. Perhaps Jiang Xingyu wanted to gift it to his Xia? It was highly likely. Since that was the case then...

Ji Xiehan forfeited the bid, earning a look of sincere gratefulness from Jiang Xingyu.

He smiled back to express that he didn't mind. After all, Li Lanni had always been close to her mother. She might not even value the painting as much as Xia Luna would.

Hence in the end, Jiang Xingyu bought the painting at the insane price of nine hundred million! That was the craziest price one had ever heard being so readily offered for a painting.

It made one wonder what was so special about it.

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Since the charity bid was the climax of the banquet, most banquet started dispersing once it was over.

Li Lanni took the chance to send a text to Ji Xiehan then happily went to wait for him behind the hotel.

## Chapter 153 - Intoxicated

While she waited, she felt a burning gaze on her and she could swear that whoever it was meant harm. She turned to the source and saw the silhouette of a woman disappear into the night. Just as she was wondering whether to follow the woman and find out who she was, she felt a pair of warm hands wrap around her.

She turned in shock and stared at Ji Xiehan who had just arrived, forgetting all about the woman. The man looked at her with a gentle smile. It had been a few days since they last saw and he had missed her terribly. He had been looking at her for the most part of the banquet, wishing to rush over to her and embrace her. When he finally saw her just now, he couldn't control himself from hugging her.

Seeing her reaction, he coughed up an excuse. "Darling, there are people around. Do you forget that we still need to act like an engaged couple?" Right. The engagement. She had almost forgotten it existed. Li Lanni pulled away from him and burst into laughter. She looked at him dazedly as she admonished. "At this point, do you still need to use that worn out excuse? You have a brain, come up with something newer and more creative." Ji Xiehan coughed at her words but he didn't say anything to refute them. Indeed, he had used this excuse so many times that she must already know he was only using the whole engagement thing to get closer to her. "You know, you are too handsome to be using worn out pick-up lines and excuses." She continued with a slur then reached for his face to touch it. "Beside, do you even need an excuse? You can just use your face. Don't you think it's attractive enough?" Ji Xiehan was

shocked. Since when did Li Lanni say such words? This was so unlike her! He didn't accidentally meet Xia Luna, right? Even then, her words made him overjoyed. So she found him attractive. His lips uncontrollably curled into a smile.

"Smile more. You are even more handsome when you smile. How charming!" She gushed and touched his lips, trying to pry them into a wider smile.

Ji Xiehan finally felt something was off. "Are you drunk?"

Looking at her properly, her gaze was a little unfocused. Now that he thought about it, she had drunk quite a bit when greeting the guests earlier. Perhaps the alcohol had kicked in slowly? That, or she had been holding up during the bid and couldn't hold it anymore.

"Who organized this banquet?" Ji Xiehan wondered. How could they make the bid happen after letting the guests drink?

"I don't... ah-cho!" She sneezed before she could complete her statement.

Ji Xiehan took off his coat immediately and placed it on her shoulders. "We should leave now or you will catch a cold."

"No." She shrugged his hands off and pleaded coyly. "I don't want to go home. It's so boring there. Let's stay here for a while, please... pretty please..."

Ji Xiehan rubbed his forehead helplessly. "Okay. Just for a few minutes then we will go home." He knew she would become sleepy anyway. Then he would carry her to his car and drive her home. There was no use arguing with a drunk.

Hearing that they didn't have to go home, Li Lanni was overjoyed. She threw herself into his embrace, letting the coat fall off her shoulders in the process.

Ji Xiehan froze. What was this?

Li Lanni was saddened that he did not make a move to hug her.

"Hug me." She slurred.

Ji Xiehan swallowed and wrapped his arms around her. Happy now, Li Lanni nestled in his embrace like a clingy kitten.

Unbeknownst to the two of them, Feng Ci just happened to see this scene. She had looked for Ji Xiehan for a while after the guests started dispersing. After searching for a while, someone said to have seen him heading to the back of the hotel. She had hurriedly gone over hoping to have a word with him but what kind of scene was this? How could Ji Xiehan not see her ethereal beauty and intelligence? How could he fall for some little barbie instead? Just because she was younger? She frowned and went her way. She would make that little brat pay!

Neither Li Lanni nor Ji Xiehan saw the angry Feng Ci. They went ahead hugging like there was only the two of them in the world. Li Lanni was about to drift into sleep on his comfortable chest but just when he moved to check on her, she was startled and grabbed onto his shirt. "Don't go..."

Her pitiful voice tugged at Ji Xiehan's heartstrings. "Okay. I won't leave."

Li Lanni smiled and held his neck possessively, as though she was protecting her treasure from being snatched away. She felt his neck and poked at it curiously. As though she had made a discovery, she poked again.

"What are you doing?" Ji Xiehan couldn't understand her antics.

"So... soft." She poked his neck again. As though for confirmation, she trailed her finger lower and poked his collarbone through his shirt. Feeling the fabric, she frowned, finding his shirt annoying. So she grabbed his tie and yanked it off.

Ji Xiehan was startled by her actions. Did this girl know what she was doing? He grabbed her hand and pulled it away from his neck. "Stop it."

Li Lanni looked up at him pitifully. "Why can't I touch your skin?"

Ji Xiehan almost relented and let her do anything she wanted but his rationality yelled at him. "You are drunk, Lanni. Let's go home."

"I'm not drunk." She retorted.

"Hm. You're not drunk. Can we go home now?"

"I'm really not drunk." She was not an idiot. She knew that he didn't believe her.

"Okay." He agreed with her and took her hand, intending to lead her away.

She shoved his hand away with a huff. "You don't believe me! I'll prove to you that I'm not drunk." She created a short distance between them and crossed her arms. "The banquet just ended. We are behind the hotel and the moon is bright. Which is a coincidence because..."

She inched closer to him. "Because we are just about to have our second official kiss." She pulled him by his collar and pressed her lips onto his.

That took him by surprise. Before he could do anything, she deepened the kiss and tried to pry his lips apart. The girl seemed to know what she was doing, and it set his belly on fire. He held the small of her waist to support her and responded to her kiss by slipping his tongue into her mouth, which she gladly allowed him to. They only paused a little to breath.

Li Lanni gasped as she looked at him. "I've been wanting to do this since we last kissed."

"What?"

She answered by crashing her lips back to his, using her kiss to express all her need and desire for him. Ji Xiehan was still a little surprised. This was so unlike her. Even then, he immersed himself in the moment.

It was only when he felt her uncontrollably reach for the buttons on his shirt that he reluctantly broke the kiss. It wouldn't end decently if they kept kissing here.

"What is it? You don't want to kiss me?" With her cheeks flushed, Li Lanni complained.

"It's not decent of us to keep kissing here." He explained.

"So what? This is a hotel. One can do anything here, why can't we?" She harrumphed. "If you don't like the moonlight, we can just get a room here."

Ji Xiehan chuckled. Just what kind of wine did she drink? Before she could actually drag him to a hotel room, he dragged her to his car and shoved her in before she could protest.

"Be good." He admonished when she looked like she wanted to get out.

"Oh." Li Lanni looked sad.

Ji Xiehan chuckled and kissed her cheek.. Her eyes brightened up, making him want to tease her a little more. Why was she so cute when she was slightly drunk?

## Chapter 154 - Intoxicated 2

Ji Xiehan fastened her seat belt while she was still being obedient then hurriedly went over to the driver's seat and started the car. He only hoped she wouldn't do anything silly while he drove.

When they arrived at Li Yuming's villa, he was relieved. The stubborn little thing had been quite good. She had even closed her eyes, probably asleep. With a smile and a small sigh, he pulled up and left the car. Then he circled over to the passenger side and opened the door for her.

Seeing that she was asleep, he didn't want to wake her up. He unfastened the seat belt and gently carried her out of the car, intending to take her into the house. Alas, the little devil chose this moment to wake up.

When Li Lanni saw the familiar building, she clung to his shirt as though he was dragging her to hell. "Where are we going?"

"I'm taking you home." He patiently explained. He thought that she would calm down but she tried to leap off his arms. "I don't want to go!"

Ji Xiehan pressed a kiss on her forehead to pacify her. "You should rest. I'll pick you up tomorrow and take you to a place of your choice, okay?"

Li Lanni was not even listening. She clutched his clothes tightly like her life depended on it and kept shaking her head vigorously. "I don't want to! Don't want to, don't want to..."

When he ignored her pleas and went ahead towards the villa, she sniffled and looked so pitiful that he could swear she was going to cry.

Ji Xiehan was helpless. Did girls usually turn into babies when they were drunk? Since he had been turned into a 'baby'-sitter, he could only accept his fate and patiently ask. "Where do you want to go?"

"To your house!"

"..."

Where did she just say she wanted to go?



Seeing that he was not saying anything, she blinked her eyes and urged. "I want to go your house. Can we, can we?"

Ji Xiehan was at a loss for words. What exactly had Li Lanni drunk tonight? It was already shocking enough that she had been clingy earlier. Now she even wanted to spend the night at his house?

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Upstairs.

A while ago, Li Yuming was wondering what was taking Li Lanni so long and whether she was coming back home. Earlier when the banquet ended, she had wanted to call her and return home together.

But when she finally found her, she was greeted with the scene of her and Ji Xiehan kissing passionately. Her daughter even looked like she wanted to strip Ji Xiehan right there and have her way with him.

She blushed and hurried away. Never mind. Ji Xiehan would drop her off.

After waiting for a while and seeing no sign of them, she concluded that they were probably going to spend the night together. Just the thought of it made her smile. Her baby was finally willing to trust someone!

But thinking about it, Li Lanni had once said that she couldn't afford to get pregnant now. And the last time she saw her, the latter seemed to be a bit drunk. She might forget this. Perhaps she should remind them to use protection? Morning after pills could affect a woman's body. It would be better if Lanni didn't use those. Since Lanni was drunk, she might as well send the message to Ji Xiehan. It wouldn't be awkward. After all, it would just be like reminding her own son.

While she still wondered how to compose the message, she heard a car pull in. She peeked outside through her window and indeed, it was the intoxicated pair. Perhaps she didn't need to send the message anymore.

She was still thinking this way when she witnessed the mini drama of her daughter refusing to go home. She let out her chuckle. What kind of situation was that? Then Ji Xiehan simply took her back to the car and drove off. Li Yuming didn't know whether to laugh or cry. So she should really send the message, right?

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Ji Xiehan's Highbridge Mansion.

One hour later.

After bringing the troublemaking drunk to his house, she was calm once again. She definitely was not the same little devil that had made him almost lose his mind just because she didn't want to go to her own home because she thought it was boring.

Munching on a bar of chocolate she had insisted on making him buy on their way here, she had on a satisfied expression as she watched him change the sheets. If she was sober, he would have let her stay in his room. However, there was no way he was going to take advantage of her drunken state. That was why he was changing the beddings to let her sleep in the guest room.

After getting the bed ready, he ran a bath and waited for her to finish her chocolate bar. When she was done, he had to laugh. She had some of the chocolate stuck onto her face and hands. He shook his head.

And yet earlier she was claiming to be sober.

He led her to the bathroom. But the little devil adamantly refused to take a bath unless he was going to bathe with her. How could he do that?! She was drunk!

Thus he led her back to the bed and let her sit on it, then he went back to the bathroom and returned with a damp towel which he used to wipe her face and hands.

Then he let a maid change her out of her clothes into the sleepwear he had bought along with the chocolate earlier. She pouted in disappointment about not being able to bathe with him but when he tucked her in and kissed her face, she was happier.

"Go to sleep. Goodnight." He said, to which she nodded. He sighed in relief. That was a huge test of his patience.

"Where are you going?" She asked when she saw him leave the room.

"To sleep." Ji Xiehan really wanted to run away. She was not going to protest against this, right? Well, he was right. The girl moved to one side, patting the huge space she had left for him.

"There is enough space. Just sleep here."

Ji Xiehan scratched his head. Where exactly was this headed? This time, he couldn't accommodate her no matter what. "Lanni, you are drunk and... you definitely don't know what you are saying. Go to sleep, okay? Let's talk more when you wake up."

She covered her head to ignore him, then a few seconds later, sulkily peeked out from the covers and looked at him. "Why do you have to make a big deal out of everything? You meanie... I only want you to hold me... like you did that night. Is that too selfish of me?"

Once again, he lost to her words. He could only hope that he would be able to control himself.

To her delight, he lifted the covers and lay beside her. She snuggled up to him and took a sniff. "You smell nice."

Ji Xiehan didn't know what to say to that. "Mmh. Let's go to sleep."

"Mmh. Goodnight, I love you." She mumbled.

!!

What did she just say?!

Chapter 155 - She Kissed Him!

The next morning.

"Aaah--!" Li Lanni pulled at her hair.

How.could.she?!

She really wanted to slap herself when she recalled all the things she had done the previous night.

She had kissed Ji Xiehan. On the lips! She had even told him that she had wanted to do it since their last kiss by the fountain. Aah!

That was not even the end of it. It was just the start. She had also refused to go home and insisted on going to his mansion instead. As if that was not embarrassing enough, she had literally pleaded with him to sleep on the same bed with her?!

Could it get any more absurd?

Hearing her scream, Ji Xiehan rushed from the kitchen to check on her. "What's wrong?"

Li Lanni didn't have the courage to face him. She had caused so much trouble last night, how embarrassing! "I... I..."

She didn't know the right words to say. "L... about last night..."

Ji Xiehan stifled a laugh. So she was worried about what had unfolded the previous night.

Actually, he hadn't been troubled by any of the things she did. She had not caused any significant trouble or broken anything.

Except the words she had mindlessly mumbled before falling into a deep slumber. Those had made his heart race so fast that he was unable to sleep. He had been scared that if he slept, he would wake up to find that it had been a dream and she had said no such thing.

After staying up for the better part of the night, he had scolded himself for being silly. How could he believe the words of a drunk? Wouldn't that be absurd?

Seeing her look at him so apologetically, he was even more sure that those were nothing but drunken words. "It was nothing. Freshen up, I'll go back to continue preparing breakfast." He left the room after saying this.

When Li Lanni saw him leave the room like that, she had a feeling she had forgotten something. Why did it feel like he wanted to ask her something but changed his mind in the last minute?

What was she forgetting?

After racking her brains for a while, she couldn't remember anything. So she took a bath.

When she was done, there was a dress and everything else she needed on the bed. That included underwear and it made her blush. Surely Ji Xiehan wasn't the one who bought these, right? She didn't want to ask. It was probably him. That made her wonder, who changed her clothes last night? Her cheeks burned. Just how much trouble had he gone through for her?

When she was done changing, she made her way downstairs. Ji Xiehan was done cooking breakfast and called her to eat.

Li Lanni chewed on a slice of ham. Ji Xiehan's skill in the kitchen was just as good as his skill in business. That, and the fact that he had put in a lot of effort, made it more delicious than those delicacies made by experienced chefs. She almost ate too much without realizing it.

Only when they were done did she remember the matter at hand and looked at him awkwardly. "Thank you for taking care of me last night..." and for not taking advantage of her. She knew that a woman causing such trouble and being clingy was tempting to a man. The fact that he did not take the chance to have her way with her proved just how much respect he had for himself and for her.

Besides, she did not wake up with a headache as many people would after drinking a little too much. He must have given her hangover soup and she must have been too drunk or sleepy to remember it.

Ji Xiehan's response was detached. "Mmh."

Li Lanni glanced at him and studied his expressionless face. Was he mad at her? Did she do something to upset him?

"Did I... do something wrong?" She hesitantly asked.

Ji Xiehan looked at her seriously. "Do you have something to tell me?"

Li Lanni thought hard about it. Did she have something to tell him?

Her mind suddenly darted to the fact that she had wanted to tell him about her feelings. She opened her mouth but before the words came out, she held back. It was definitely not the right time for that.

So she shook her head and shot the question back at him. "Do you have something to tell me?" Seeing that he wasn't speaking, she nervously clenched her lips. "If I caused too much trouble last night or said anything I shouldn't, I'm sorry. Please don't take it to heart."

Her words pulled him out of this thoughts. He looked at her with a frown. Even though he already knew that she had said what she did the previous night as a result of her drunken stupor, he had still hoped that she meant it when she said that she loved him. Now she was apologising for it? It would be a lie if he said that he was not disappointed. However, asking her about it right now might just make her uncomfortable. "Nothing happened last night. Let's not talk about it anymore."

Seeing that he no longer wanted to talk about the previous night, she nodded and sunk into her own thoughts.

She remembered that before Ji Xiehan appeared, she had seen someone. That woman made her heart shiver. She must be a dangerous person. Li Lanni trusted her instinct and this time was no different. Just who was that woman?

Who could she ask? Xia Luna?

Now that she thought about it, she still had something that she had forgotten to ask Xia Luna. She had meant to ask about that boy from before, the one who had claimed to know her. She could ask about both. Besides, there were still matters that they needed to discuss together.

After calling and explaining to her mother that she would only go home later, she wanted to hail a cab.

However, Ji Xiehan frowned at her. "I'll drop you off wherever you want to go."

"Oh..." she could only agree.

Though she had to say, she was used to the cheerful Ji Xiehan.. This cold version of him was novel and not in a good way.

## Chapter 156 - How?!

XX Hotel.

Room 1204

"Madam, I got the information you asked for. Li Lanni was discharged from hospital in January after being in a long coma. The woman from last night's banquet must be her. Miss Xia Luna's whereabouts are still unknown." Li Xiyang's assistant

"What did you just say?!" Li Xiyang flung the files at her assistant angrily.

The assistant who had been shouted at for doing nothing wrong was on the verge of tears. She trembled as she repeated the message. "That woman is indeed Li Lanni."

"That bitch!" Li Xiyang grabbed everything that was movable in sight and threw it to the floor.

Why was she alive?! How could it be...

Why?

She thought she had gotten rid of both of the troublesome twin flies. She had used up so much effort. Now Li Lanni was suddenly alive? Why was everything going wrong?

The previous day, she had gone to Li Yuming's charity banquet to see it fail and watch Li Yuming become a laughing stock. After all, Li Yuming was a loser no matter how many years passed.



Of course, the banquet was a huge success and that was one huge wound to Li Xiyan's heart. Her attempts to embarrass Li Yuming failed miserably too. Never mind that there were even people willing to give hundreds of millions for that woman's lousy paintings! It was for charity but it was still a huge deal.

She had been sulky until she suddenly saw the girl she thought was Xia Luna.

What huge news!

When she heard people calling her Li Lanni, she thought that Xia Luna was impersonating her sister. Her assumption was that Li Yuming had been saddened by the death of her precious daughter, and since her other daughter was a wanted criminal, she had made the latter impersonate the former in public. So she sent her assistant to investigate and find clues of Li Lanni being a fake. As long as there was the slightest piece of evidence, she would report both of them and have them rot in jail; one for her crimes and the other for hiding a criminal. What a happy ending, right?

And now, this dumb assistant was saying that not only had Li Lanni survived, she had even been discharged from hospital many months ago?!

"You dumb woman! Get out of my sight!" She hollered.

"Yes." The assistant scurried away.

—

At the same time, Goldenwing Apartments.

"Wait, what?" Xia Luna was shocked as she looked at Cheng Yu.

Cheng Yu relaxed her shoulders. "I swear Luna, it had to be her."

Xia Luna held her chin in doubt. Cheng Yu had just said that she seemed to have seen Li Xiyan at Li Yuming's charity banquet the previous night. But... why would Li Xiyan be there? Wasn't she in a different city?

Even if she had coincidentally come to B City, why would she attend Li Yuming's banquet? She hated Li Yuming to the core! "You don't know her that well. Perhaps you saw the wrong person? Maybe there's someone who looks so much like her."

Cheng Yu saw the doubt in Xia Luna's eyes and slapped her forehead. "No way. I don't need to know a venomous snake that well to be able to recognize it. I will surely know to cower away when I see one. That woman is definitely the most venomous kind.

No one hates Aunty Li as much as that woman does. Even when she greeted Aunty Li like the other guests did, there was malice hidden in the depth of her eyes."

Cheng Yu hated the fact that Li Yuming didn't seem to care about Li Xiyan. Shouldn't she be guarded at the very least? That woman was evil!

"Not just that. When she turned away from Aunty Li, she let out this weird smile. You know, the kind that villains usually reveal when they are just about to start scheming." [1]

Xia Luna had been with Li Xiyan for long enough to know what Cheng Yu was talking about. Something in her eyes dimmed. She was about to speak when Cheng Yu recalled something with a start.

"Right. I saw how strangely she reacted when she saw Lanni too. It was as though she had seen a ghost with her own eyes! She was so shocked that she almost stumbled to the floor in those high heels -- how I wish she did but oh well, villains never suffer much. It was not sure what she thought about but after a while, she suddenly snickered and flipped her hair."

"You must have studied her all night to know everything she did. You have worked so hard." Xia Luna laughed.

Cheng Yu couldn't believe Xia Luna was in the mood to laugh. This was a serious matter they were talking about, and it might even involve life and death!

Xia Luna stared into space, finally thinking things through. "I didn't foresee this. That woman must know Lanni's whereabouts now."

"What... what will we do? We definitely cannot let her hurt Lanni."

Xia Luna relaxed back onto her backrest. "What are you talking about? Of course no one's going to get hurt."

Scratch that. Someone is going to get hurt. But that person is not Lanni. Neither is it going to be anyone else on our side. It is going to be that woman."

She was just about to come up with a strategy with Cheng Yu when the doorbell rang.

Xia Luna and Cheng Yu exchanged puzzled looks.

"Did you order anything?" Xia Luna asked in a hushed tone.

"No. Did you?"

"No."

Since it was not a delivery, who could it be? No one knew their address. Could someone have found out? Xia Luna hurriedly disappeared into her bedroom as Cheng Yu went to check who the newcomer was.

"Lanni, it's you! Come on in." Cheng Yu was relieved when she opened the door.

"Did you just say Lanni?" Xia Luna came back in relief. The news of Li Xiyan had spooked her so much that the first thing she thought was that someone had found out her whereabouts. They had even been too shocked to think of checking the monitor.

"You girls don't look happy." Li Lanni commented after some small talk. The atmosphere was evidently tense.

"It's nothing. We were just talking about some random gloomy things. Xiao Yu was telling me about a dog she kept when she was a kid, but the dog suddenly disappeared and she never saw it again."

Cheng Yu raised an eyebrow. Just how good was Xia Luna at making up stories?

Li Lanni smiled with an "oh", making herself comfortable before shrugging. "If both of you don't want to tell me what's going on, you can just say so..." she then looked at her puzzled sister. "That's obviously a lie?"

Xia Luna couldn't deny it. But she couldn't help asking, "How is it obvious?" Her statement was flawless, right? She had also made it up on the spot without even batting an eyelid. Besides, if she was not able to lie so effortlessly, she would long be dead. How could Li Lanni discern it so easily?

Apparently, Li Lanni knew what she was thinking so she laughed. "I don't know either. It just felt like you were lying."

Xia Luna shrugged while Cheng Yu giggled. Was telepathy starting to happen again?

## Chapter 157 - I'm Not, You Are

Li Lanni did not force Xia Luna to speak up. However, this matter concerned her too; and if Li Lanni knew what was going on, she would be on the look out and would not fall prey for whatever Li Xiyan was surely going to do once she knew Li Lanni's whereabouts.

"Have I told you about my... our stepmother?" She asked.

"No." Li Lanni shook her head. Forget the stepmother. Xia Luna had not told her much about herself. Li Lanni had numerous questions to ask, but this was not the right time to ask them so she could only let Xia Luna speak about the details she was comfortable divulging.

For the whole matter to make sense, Xia Luna briefly explained everything from where it started, as explained to her by her paternal aunt.

"Actually, you knew about this before but because you have forgotten, I guess I will just start over. Our grandmother didn't like our mother. I don't know what business they have against each other but that's their business. For whatever reason she hated our mother, grandmother tried every means to get father to leave her and be with another woman instead."

Xia Luna paused, disgusted by what she was going to say next. "When father showed no interest in other women no matter who they were, grandmother found one who is somewhat similar in appearance to our mother. Getting her own son drunk to the point of blacking out, she sent Li Xiyang to his bed."

Li Lanni frowned. What kind of mother does that? To her own son?!

That was not the end of it. Xia Luna continued.

"Our mother was heavily pregnant at the time. Once she found out what had happened, she was angry at grandmother and suggested moving out with father. However, grandmother adamantly refused to let that happen. She even threatened to commit suicide if father really moved out.

Mother had no choice but to bear with it. All was going well until we were a few months old. Li Xiyang showed up with a little baby younger than us, our step brother."

"What?" Li Lanni was shocked. There was a brother?

Hold on. Li Xiyan actually got pregnant after climbing onto their father's bed when he was drunk? "Why then did she not reveal that she was pregnant? Was it because she was afraid our father would make her have an abortion?"

"Yeah. It gets even more interesting." Xia Luna practically sneered. "Grandmother forced father to marry Li Xiyan because of the boy. That, and some other reasons that Aunty refused to tell me, caused our parents to divorce."

Li Lanni felt bad on her parents' behalf. They must have been tortured a lot.

"Well, that's how Li Xiyan came into the picture. But once she appeared, she didn't seem to want to leave any time soon.

As far as I remember, father has never acknowledged her. He hates her for ruining his marriage. All I ever felt for her was fear and disgust. She would spend all the time that father was away to vent her frustration on me.

However, she did nothing entirely life-threatening until I was of legal age."

Because Cheng Yu already knew, Xia Luna mentioned the part about Li Xiyan trying to stab her and ending up being stabbed herself. However, because it would be too much for Li Lanni to take in at the same time, she left out the reason why that happened.

By the time Xia Luna was done, Li Lanni's expression had experienced several changes. "That must be a psychopath."

"Trust me, she is. She's not just a psychopath, she is a crazy one at that." Xia Luna was disgusted just thinking about it.

"So this was what the two of you were talking about?" Li Lanni still felt there was more to it.

Xia Luna looked more solemn. "The thing is... Xiao Yu seems to have seen her at the banquet last night." She paused to study Li Lanni's expression. Seeing that she was expressionless, she continued. "She might

go after you and mother... Lanni, I'm not trying to scare you. But she is an evil witch. You must be careful, okay?"

Li Lanni suddenly recalled why she was here. She was going to ask about that woman that she saw the previous night. Her intention was to ask Xia Luna to check the surveillance and find out who that woman was. But now that they were talking about this, she had a thought. Could the woman she had seen be this Li Xiyan? She seemed to emit so much hatred that Li Lanni could swear she would be dead if aura could kill.

She didn't have to ask anymore. It must have been her. "I think I saw her too. It was just vague and I didn't see her face... but everything about her spoke of malice."

Xia Luna was now sure that Cheng Yu had seen right. "I will check the surveillance just to be sure. Meanwhile, you and... uhm... mother... have to be careful." Xia Luna was still uncomfortable addressing Li Yuming as her mother since the latter hated her so much. Luckily, Li Lanni nodded and didn't dwell on it.

Now that she had solved the mystery about that woman, Li Lanni went ahead to ask about the other question she wanted. "Do you have any other alias?"

Xia Luna didn't know how to answer that. "Why do you ask?"

"I told you before that my date with Ji Xiehan got interrupted, right?"

That's because there was this young man that bumped into us. Then he said something about me appearing again and even called me Phoenix.

I don't know him. I have never seen him at all. I thought maybe... he mistook me for you and that's another one of your aliases?

... what's going on? Why are the both of you suddenly so pale..."

Li Lanni realized that the more she spoke, the paler her sister and friend got. It was as though they were hearing something more shocking than the fact that Li Xiyan had seen Li Lanni.

Xia Luna balled her fists to calm down. "Well, the guy didn't get the wrong person. I'm not Phoenix. You are."

"What?" It was Li Lanni's turn to be shocked. She was? And was that worry she thought she saw in her sister's eyes?

"Why do I need an alias?" She asked, not thinking it made any sense.

Xia Luna looked defeated. "I seriously don't know. No matter how many times I asked you, you said I didn't need to know."

She instinctively turned to Cheng Yu.

"You didn't ever tell me either. You said it was a secret." Cheng Yu shrugged.

Just great. Li Lanni sighed.

She had come here seeking answers. How did it end up with her getting more questions instead?

That young man had said something about her going back to the team. What team?

Most importantly, why did she even need to use an alias? This was so unlike her. And why would she keep it a secret from Xia Luna and Cheng Yu?

"You are sure you don't know? You cannot even think of anything?" She pressed Xia Luna, who didn't meet her gaze. "Lanni, you were so mysterious. You did things only you could understand."

"What things?"



"Like..." Hold on. Investigating Li Xiyan, Ji Feifei and Yang Su? Did that count?

Thinking about it, she shook her head. "I tried to find clues but I found nothing.. Not even in the slightest bit."

## Chapter 158 - I Thought You Moved In

Leaving Goldenwing Apartments, Li Lanni didn't know whether she was confused or scared. Why did it seem like Xia Luna was trying to hide something? It was as though there was something that she knew and was scared of saying.

Xia Luna's response was probably supposed to make her give up but on the contrary, it only made her more determined to know the answers. So as soon as she was home, she made her way to her mother's studio.

"There you are! I almost thought you had decided to move in with Xiehan. Not that I would mind if that happened, but you should at least inform me." Li Yuming was so excited that she stood up immediately, dropping her painting brush in the process, and pulled her daughter into a hug,

Li Lanni pulled away with flushed cheeks. "Mom, what have you been thinking about all day?"

How could she move in with Ji Xiehan? They were not married. They were not even dating yet! Last night was just...

Wait. Her mother knew that she had spent the night at Ji Xiehan's? How embarrassing...

After the initial embarrassment, Li Lanni calmed down and thought of why she was here.

"Is something the matter?" Li Yuming asked after a few seconds. She noticed that Li Lanni did not seem happy.

"Mom, can I ask you something?"

Li Yuming had a feeling it was not one of those things she was willing to answer but she nodded anyway. "Ask away."

"Mom, is there..." Li Lanni thought about how to phrase her question in a way that would not make it sound like she was accusing her mother. At the same time, she carefully studied Li Yuming as she asked. "Is there something you have not told me about my past?"

As expected, something dimmed in Li Yuming's eyes. She had tried to hide it as fast as possible but Li Lanni was alert enough to notice the slightest change.

A few seconds later came Li Yuming's expressionless question. "If you have something to ask, go right ahead."

Li Lanni then explained the same thing she had told Xia Luna. This time, she clearly saw Li Yuming's hands tremble slightly. Why was everyone so scared of that Phoenix name? What exactly was it?

"Pfft. You think too much about trivial things. That was just your username on your school forum. That guy might have been from B City University."

Li Lanni nodded. Xia Luna was hiding something and her mother was lying to hide something – probably the same thing. They also seemed confident that she would not see through them. They did know that she would still get answers once she recovered her memory, right?

It was already bad enough that in all these months, she had not recovered her memory and had only remembered tiny details that didn't help in the slightest bit. And the two people she had been considering her closest family were hiding things from her. If only she didn't have to rely on them...

Right. She shouldn't rely on anyone to tell her everything. She already knew from the start that she should find answers on her own. When did she forget this? When did she slack off? That did not matter anymore. She was going to search every nook and cranny of the earth if she had to, and she knew that the answer lay somewhere for sure. And that was what she did. She went to her room first. If there was any place one could find any clue, bedrooms were usually the most obvious.

Once in her room, she searched through her books even though she had already searched twice.

Finding nothing new, she checked through the closet, drawers, under the bed and, probably as an effect of reading too many mystery novels, scrutinized the wall inch by inch for any trace of a hidden door or vault. Of course, she found none.

She sighed and reorganised everything into perfect order. Maybe she was overthinking things. Now that she thought about it, why was it that whenever anything little happened, she would get this anxious and start reading too much into things? A cluster of recent memories flooded into her mind.

First, she had suspected that Ji Xiehan had ill intentions towards her, then she had had some trouble trusting her own mother for a while, then there was the fact that she trusted almost no one. She was so wary of people that she ended up wanting to look into everyone that smiled at her more than once or tried to befriend her.... and now this.

Was she having a paranoid personality disorder?

Her head started hurting slightly. Only then did she realize that she was over exerting her brain by thinking too much.

She needed to calm down.

"Calm down, Lanni. Calm down." She mumbled repeatedly.

But that didn't do anything to calm her nerves. Trying to sleep didn't help either. She grabbed a pillow and screamed into it. Even that did nothing to help aside from exhaust her throat.

Before her brain could process it, she tidied her hair and left the house. She only realized what she was doing when she arrived at Highbridge Mansion.

'Lanni, you are silly.' She scolded herself. How could she simply make her way to Ji Xiehan's house without informing him? What if he was not even home?

But he didn't seem to want to go anywhere earlier. He must still be home, right? And considering how friendly they were to each other, he wouldn't mind keeping her company for a few hours, right?

Li Lanni took a deep breath and proceeded to enter the mansion. The butler had seen her earlier this morning with Ji Xiehan. Besides, practically everyone knew about their 'engagement', so he simply let her in, even telling her that Ji Xiehan was in the study and giving her directions.

But as soon as he had let her in, he seemed to remember something with a start.

It was too late. Li Lanni had already made her way to the study and stopping her would only make it suspicious.

Li Lanni hesitated slightly, thinking about why she would say she was here. In the end, she decided to simply go with the flow. Then she knocked on the door. The door was slightly open, swinging wider open when she knocked...

To reveal the sight of Ji Xiehan and Feng Ci.... kissing across the desk."

Li Lanni stared at the two figures, frozen in place.

The kissing pair heard the door open and were startled too. Feng Ci, who was facing away from the door, turned and was shocked that the newcomer was Li Lanni. Why did it have to be that little bîtch?

"Eer..." Li Lanni snapped out of it awkwardly. "The door was open... sorry. Please continue." She said and left the room, gently closing the door on her way out.

—

A while ago.

When Li Lanni left this morning, Ji Xiehan was still in a bad mood. He still couldn't get over the fact that Li Lanni simply forgot the most important thing that happened the previous night.

After sulking for a while, he finally stopped to think. When people got drunk, they usually did things they usually couldn't do, or were afraid of doing. That was why many people drunk a little wine to 'borrow courage' and say things they couldn't say in their completely sober state.

Could it be that Li Lanni actually wanted to confess to him but didn't have the courage but suddenly blurted it out in her drunken state?

Now that he thought about it, it seemed to be the case. After all, she had been getting closer to him lately, not to mention her clingy character last night.

Even though he knew that was an effect of her drunkenness, he couldn't rule out the possibility - the fact- that she could only do such things if she liked him, or loved him.

Another possibility flashed his mind. What if she thought she was dreaming when she said those words or she had forgotten that such a thing happened?

No matter what the possibility was, one thing was for sure. Li Lanni must be in love with him.

A smile gradually brightened up his facial features. Since she was in love and was scared to say so, he should help her out, right?

Hence Ji Xiehan happily started planning out a confession. He was going to do it as soon as possible.

The morrow would be Sunday. She probably wouldn't have much to do.

He could also help her take a day off from her art classes. If she didn't agree to that, it was good too. He could just make the best out of twenty four hours.

He searched online for the best local destination for a vacation. Finding none that could satisfy all his requirements, he frowned. This wouldn't do. He finally launched the notepad application on his phone that he hadn't ever thought of using before.

After thinking for a while, he decided to go to a picnic with her instead. He would make arrangements to make it as perfect as possible. He would arrange for food, snacks and fruits, bake some pastries for her and get a nice bottle of wine.

Then he would confess. If she rejected him,... nope. She loved him. She wouldn't reject him.

If she agreed to be his girlfriend, he would propose going on a vacation together. She would definitely also want to go somewhere relaxing with her boyfriend, right? Since that was the case then...

He was still lost in thought, writing his plans down on the notepad application when someone walked in, no, barged in. Because she had not been invited. Not only that, Ji Xiehan could also hear her picking a fight with the butler.

"How dare you try to stop me?! Do you know who I am? I will get Xiehan to fire you later."

Of course the butler knew who she was. He had served the Ji family since Ji Xiehan was little so he knew that Feng Ci was Ji Xiehan's childhood friend. Even so, he was not trying to stop her. He had only greeted her! He could only apologize to prevent the matter from escalating, to which Feng Ci huffed and walked on with her nose in the air.

He was displeased in his heart. Feng Ci was such a nice girl when she was little. How could she grow into an arrogant and temperamental woman? Luckily the young master had gotten engaged with a kind, young lady.

"Xiehan..." After finding her way in, Feng Ci coyly called out the man who was suddenly looking at her with displeasure.

"Why are you here?" Ji Xiehan asked coldly. "Why are you picking unnecessary fights with my butler?"

"He was trying to stop me from coming in. He is so disrespectful, you must fire him!"

Ji Xiehan couldn't mask his displeasure. "Does your business here include nitpicking on my employees? If so, you are done. You may leave."

"Xiehan..." Feng Ci felt wronged. "How could you be so mean? I came here to discuss with you..."

Ji Xiehan frowned. After a few seconds, he pinched the space between his eyes. "Fine. Let's talk in the study."

Feng Ci gladly followed him.

Once they were seated, Ji Xiehan once again glanced at her coldly. "Speak."

He was not trying to be rude, but she had interrupted him from planning out his confession. How could he be happy about it?

As expected, Feng Ci whined in displeasure. "Xiehan, you have changed. You were not like this in the past at all. You were so friendly and kind. We were even best friends. Do you remember how, when I was five, the other boys kept pulling at my hair? You would fight them off for me every time. When I asked you why you were so kind, you said that you were a superhero and your role was to protect me from being bullied." Feng Ci's eyes slightly teared up as she reminisced the protective Ji Xiehan.

That year, my parents were so busy that they forgot all about my birthday. When you found me crying by myself, you brought me to play at your home. Learning that it was my birthday, you had your helpers bake a cake and even brought your friends so we could celebrate it together. Do you know, that was my best birthday ever?"

Ji Xiehan tapped a finger on the desk.. Of course he remembered the past.

Chapter 160 - He Should Be Hers!

However, this was not the time to start reminiscing about things he did when he was a child. Was there any little boy who didn't do the things he did when he was little? Why was Feng Ci making such a big deal out of it? He was irritated. "Go straight to the point."

"Xiehan..." Feng Ci didn't understand why he was so hostile to her. Or rather, she knew fully well why he was being this way. She just didn't want to believe it. It must be because of that little girl. Yes, it must be her! She was just a good-for-nothing brat who knew nothing but think the world revolved around her. What made her think she could be with Ji Xiehan?!



With a hint of annoyance, Feng Ci stood and leaned across the desk a little, glad that she was wearing a low-cut dress today. Of course she had deliberately worn it knowing she was going to meet Ji Xiehan. The black fabric clung to her body tightly, especially around the chest area. At the angle she was leaning right now, she was giving Ji Xiehan the kind of view no sane man would be able to resist.

Seeing that he was not reaching out to touch her, she inched even closer. "I miss you, Xiehan – I miss us. We should have been together. Can't you see how perfect we look together? We were definitely meant to be."

At this point, Ji Xiehan knew that this matter would cause him trouble if he did not handle it right away. He pushed his feet against the floor and used the momentum to create a distance between them.

Then he met the woman's gaze with his icy one. "Feng Ci, we were friends. That's the only reason why I respect you. However, if you do not conduct yourself with dignity, don't blame me for throwing you out. You already know that I'm an engaged man."

"But Xiehan, I know it's a lie. You cannot be engaged. That is impossible. You loved me back then and I know you still do..." Feng Ci was literally blabbering, knowing that Ji Xiehan really meant it when he threatened to throw her out.

"Feng Ci, please leave." Ji Xiehan said dismissively and took out his phone to continue planning out his date.

Feng Ci cursed under her breath and straightened up. She glanced at the man who was now tapping on his phone. He looked so handsome... his finely carved features, his thin, seductive lips and his serious expression when doing whatever he was that he was doing were enough to send any woman's heart fluttering.

No way! This should be her man! She was not going to give up on him no matter what – especially not after carrying a torch for him for all these years.

Ji Xiehan paused what he was doing when he suddenly felt a strong perfume scent attack his nostrils and a hand on his shoulder. He looked up in surprise and before he could push her away, he felt her lips crash on his.

He was shocked for half a second. What did this woman think he was doing?

As though she had made arrangements with the devil, the door had to open in that instant. Feng Ci turned, and Ji Xiehan froze when he saw who was at the door. What was Lanni doing here?

It was not that she couldn't be here but why are such a time? Why did she have to witness such a disgusting moment?

"Sorry...please continue!" She said and rushed out.

Her words snapped Ji Xiehan back.

Damn it! She must have misunderstood him!

Without thinking, he pushed Feng Ci away – not caring that she stumbled on her heels – and rushed after Li Lanni.

Feng Ci hit the floor with a thud, sprawling in the least dignified position with her clingy dress even sustaining a small tear due to the force. She scowled in embarrassment. How could he?

But who cared about a dress anyway? She was blissful! That stupid girl had seen them kiss! They were definitely going to break up. See, even the heavens were helping her.

–

Outside.

"Lanni!" Ji Xiehan called out.

Li Lanni ignored him and continued walking towards her car.

Ji Xiehan ran and held her hand that was reaching to open the car door. "Lanni, please listen to me."

Li Lanni stopped but did not turn to look at him – too angry to do so or afraid that she would meet his lying eyes, the kind that cheating men usually had when they were caught in the act.

"Lanni, you have misunderstood the situation. There is nothing going on between Feng Ci and me." He desperately explained. Realizing that their position earlier stated the exact opposite of what he was saying, he gripped her small hand a little tightly, knowing that what he was about to say was obviously going to sound like a lie. What hurt was that it was the truth! "Lanni, she..."

Li Lanni cut him off. "Ji Xiehan, I don't know how to explain our current relationship but I don't think we are close enough for me to question your personal life. It's alright. You don't have to explain to me what you were doing. You may only have to explain to your parents later..."

Li Lanni stopped speaking. She didn't know what she was saying either. She felt that she was lying to him about her thoughts but she was lying to herself too in the process. Of course she cared! She minded that they were in that position! But what right did she have to mind? They were not in any kind of relationship. Although it hurts, he does have the right to kiss and make out with whoever he wants.

Her words sliced into Ji Xiehan's heart like a sharp blade. "Lanni, we..." That's right. What was he to say?

"I was going to talk to you later." He sighed.

When Li Lanni heard his words, her heart trembled. He was going to cancel their fake engagement?

"I think we should talk now..." Or else it would escalate into a misunderstanding.

"I was going to tell you that..."

"No!" Li Lanni couldn't hear any more of it. She didn't want to hear it. She knew it was going to hurt her. She would rather not hear it at all. When she saw that he was going to speak again, she placed her hand on his lips, shutting him up.

Ji Xiehan was taken aback by her reaction.

Then his brain finally processed it and he was amused. He wanted to talk about his feelings so she would understand why he couldn't have anything to do with any other woman. That way, she might understand him more when he told her what exactly had transpired.

Why did she stop him? Was it because of this sequence that she thought he was going to say that he was in a relationship with Feng Ci, so she was stopping him from saying it?

He chuckled a little and took her hand that was covering his mouth and kissed the back of it. "It's not..."

This time, Li Lanni shut him up using her lips, taking Ji Xiehan completely by surprise.