

Chapter 251 - How Sly

Li Xiyan knew that Lanni was dead serious about her threat so she acted faster than expected. Within a day, someone stepped out to turn himself in. He admitted to having murdered the detective.

He also proved that he had framed Xia Luna for his own crime and blackmailed her into deleting the evidence that would have proven her innocence, and pleading guilty.

Naturally, the court had to investigate the credibility of his words. It took one week and once Luna was proven innocent, she was released from prison.

On Wednesday morning, Jiang Xingyu went to pick her up along with Madam Jiang and Li Yuming. Meanwhile, Lanni stayed with Lin Jian and Xiehan, plotting the next step so they would strike at the best timing.

Lanni glanced at the news article that had been published right after Luna was proven innocent.

"Tsk, such insanity." Lanni shoved the newspaper at Lin Jian who was playing with his phone. "Oracle Daily, a magazine under Lin Media Group, published such a piece of news and you didn't know it beforehand? What kind of CEO are you, does Lin Media Group even need you?"

Lin Jian managed to catch the newspaper before it fell over the table and put his phone aside to respond to the uncalled for scolding. "I'm the most competent CEO, okay? The most talented CEO that Lin Media Group has ever had—and of course, my gossipy nature comes in handy."

Lanni rolled her eyes at him.

"I knew this piece of news was going to be published. It was submitted by one of the best reporters of Oracle Daily so how would I not know?"

Lanni raised an eyebrow. "And you didn't stop it or at least tell us about it?"

"No one asked me. Naturally, I couldn't just start blabbering on my own, right?" Lin Jian ran a hand through his hair.

Lanni took in a deep breath to suppress her anger. She turned to Xiehan who was typing on his laptop. "Can I beat him up?"

Xiehan didn't look up from his laptop as he responded, "Don't waste your energy on such a person. I'll get the bodyguards to beat him up for you."

"Hey! Are you really my friend?" Lin Jian complained. What kind of friend offered to have him beaten up instead of helping him out?

Lanni huffed and sat back down. The news was nothing. It must have been meant to inform her anyway. Xiyan was a harder task. Because this was such a serious matter, the court did not give them many details and they only knew what had happened exactly when the news was published. She grabbed back the newspaper and looked through the article once again, reading every single word of it.

It turned out that the man who turned himself in was the same one who had been hired by Li Xiyan to murder the detective. His name had not been published and his face had been pixelated but from his frame, Lanni could recognise him.

The reason he had provided was that the detective had found dirt on him so he got rid of him. He never once mentioned Li Xiyan, taking all the blame instead.

"How sly." Lanni let out another scoff. This must be Li Xiyan's doing. She did prove Luna innocent, but she did not turn herself in. Of course, Lanni had not expected her to turn herself in. But one matter still bothered her. Luna had been exposed publicly and ridiculed by the whole nation for a crime she had not committed, yet the real culprit was being protected and reported anonymously. Just how unfair could society get? Wait, that wasn't right. It was because both pieces of news were reported with Li Xiyan's instructions.

"I will make her pay tenfold."

Lanni's phone rang. She picked it emotionlessly.

"You have read the news, haven't you? I have done my part, now it's time for you to do yours." Li Xiyan did not waste a single word.

"Yeah, I've read the news just now."

"Who is bringing back the items?" Li Xiyan was impatient.

"Someone will, as soon as I see my sister with my own eyes and verify that she has not suffered any form of abuse. If she is missing even a single strand of hair on her head, you can forget about your items."

"Li Lanni! Don't get ahead of yourself!" Li Xiyan threatened, and Lanni hung up with a smug expression.

"If Luna is alright, will you really give her back those items?" Lin Jian asked curiously.

"What do you think?" Lanni grinned evilly.

"You wouldn't be that kind, right?" Lin Jian was uncertain.

Lanni relaxed back in the chair. "If I was going to be that kind, I wouldn't need you here."

Lin Jian finally understood. "You are going to go against your agreement!"

"People like her don't play by the rules, so neither will I." Lanni said solemnly. If she was going to go easy on Li Xiyan, that woman would continue to cause trouble. The best method was to end her once and for all.

"I'm done." Xiehan finally looked up from his laptop.

When he showed Lanni what he had been doing, she smiled and hugged him. "Honey, I love you!"

Lin Jian couldn't help peeking over and was astonished too. "I thought you were doing your work. You're so reliable! No wonder you managed to get such a beauty as your girlfriend."

While Lin Jian was endlessly fawning over Xiehan, the doorbell rang.

Lanni excitedly went to answer and as expected, it was Jiang Xingyu and Li Yuming, and in their company was Luna.

"Luna!" Lanni threw her arms around her sister.

"Lanni." Luna returned the hug warmly, all four of their eyes tearing up.

Lanni broke the hug anxiously and checked Luna all over. "Are you alright? Were you bullied? You lost weight!"

"Lanni, I'm fine now." Luna hugged her sister once more.

"While the sisters cry in each other's arms, why don't you tell us what's the progress of things? Has the case been permanently closed now?" Lin Jian inched closer to Jiang Xingyu to ask.

"Luna will not be bothered anymore." Jiang Xingyu was relieved as well. If he had not hugged Luna and felt her warm body against his earlier, he would have thought that it was a dream.

"We should go home now. Luna needs to have a nice meal and rest." Said Li Yuming who had been silent the entire time.

"Sure. I'll grab my laptop." Lanni rushed to grab her laptop and after promising to give Lin Jian and Xiehan a call, she joined her mother and sister. "Let's go."

Seeing Jiang Xingyu's displeased look, Lin Jian couldn't help but tease him. "Are you jealous of your in-laws now? Relax, she is back now. You will be able to spend more time with her later."

Jiang Xingyu scoffed in response.

"Anyway, where is aunty? Didn't the three of you go together earlier?"

"Something came up so she had to rush back."

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As soon as Luna got back home with Lanni and Li Yuming, Li Yuming went to the kitchen to start preparing several dishes to celebrate her return.

Meanwhile, Lanni accompanied Luna back to her room so she would take a bath and change her clothes.

Luna left the bathroom in a few minutes and sat on the bed next to Lanni.

"It must have been hard on you." Lanni checked her over again, afraid that she had missed something.

"It wasn't hard." Luna smiled.

"How come? That was a prison, not a vacation of sorts." She knew that Luna was trying not to make her worry. "You don't have to pretend to be alright to make me less worried."

"It was alright, really. No one could bully me." Luna sounded serious about it.

Lanni didn't know what to ask anymore. She didn't know whether to feel relieved that Luna was alright or worried that Luna might be hiding the actual situation from her.

"Li Xiyan didn't really care about me when I was convicted. She made a few attempts to get rid of me but when they failed, she stopped for some reason. But ever since that man turned himself in, one of the wardens tried to get rid of me several times."

Lanni knew that it was obviously Li Xiyan's doing. She must have been scared that Luna's release would cause her trouble so she wanted to kill her. A glint flickered in her eyes.

"Why did you plead guilty?" Lanni asked after a while. She had wanted to know this for ages. "What was she holding against you?"

"Lanni, it doesn't matter anymore, right? I'm alright now after all." Luna wanted to forget about it.

"It matters, Luna. It still matters. I want to know just what she said to you that made you play her tune."

Knowing that Lanni wouldn't let it go, Luna took in a deep breath and answered, "She poisoned our dad."

"What did you say?" Lanni was taken aback. "Dad was... poisoned?"

A murderous glint flickered in Luna's eyes as she balled her fair hands into fists at her sides to control her urge to murder someone. "Yeah."

"When did this happen?"

"On the night before the hearing."

"How?" Lanni was confused. On that night, they had saved Cheng Yu and brought her back to their home. After that, they went to sleep normally. When did Luna have the chance to interact with Li Xiyan?

"Actually on that night..." Luna started, the expression on her face turning more fierce by the second.

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On the night that they rescued Cheng Yu.

After returning to Lanni's home, Lanni and Luna took care of Cheng Yu's wounds. They were not too serious but to avoid any surprises, they decided to send her to hospital early in the morning.

When that was settled, they all went to sleep. However, Luna couldn't sleep no matter how hard she tried. It must be because she was excited about the next day. She was finally going to stop living in hiding and walking around in disguises and aliases. Honestly, she was getting tired of them. How could she not be excited?

Hence to calm her nerves, she took her phone and quietly went to the balcony for a breather. The night was not too cold and the moon was bright, the perfect night to spend out with friends or a lover. Not to mention, the morning would bring even better news.

Luna looked out and saw the chef down below, flirting with a maid. Her lips curled into a smile. It was also a romantic night. Love was in the air.

At the thought of love, a tiny flush crept onto her face. "Perhaps... after tomorrow, I should really give Xingyu a chance." She mumbled.

Previously, she had used the current circumstances as an excuse to make him stop clinging onto her. But when she thought about it clearly, Xingyu was such a nice man.

She couldn't open up his mind and check what he was thinking but it was sure that he truly loved her. She had seen how hard he had worked in the past few days to help her prove her innocence.

Not to mention, his family liked her too. They were honest people and would not hide their true feelings only to reveal them later. This point was enough to assure her that she would never be entangled in those marriage scandals where the in-laws were all against the wife and the husband was caught in between the two parties.

"Why am I even thinking of him as a husband?" Luna scoffed at her own train of thought. She should go slow with such matters. Of course they would date first and only proceed to the next step if they were truly compatible with each other and ready to stay together in marriage—one of the things she hated most was broken marriages.

Just when she was about to turn back and go to sleep, her phone chimed. She frowned when she saw the unknown number. Who would call her so late at night? It was either Jiang Xingyu or a nemesis out to look for trouble. She swiped her thumb across the screen to answer it.

"I wasn't sure you would answer." The female voice made Luna's lips twitch. She didn't expect that it was the latter. How did that woman get her phone number? Did she force it out of Cheng Yu's mouth before? That wasn't important at the moment.

"What do you want?" She asked impatiently.

"Do you need to sound so irritated? Luna, I'm still your mother, you know. Maybe you could be a little friendly or at least respectful to me."

Luna gritted her teeth. "Cut the crap." What mother? She would never acknowledge that woman even as her stepmother. "You wouldn't call to have a casual chat."

"You're slightly smarter than a three-year-old." Li Xiyang taunted.

"Since you have nothing to say..." Luna was ready to hang up.

"I found an old video while going through my old gallery, and I want to share it with you. Do you want to see?"

Luna's hand paused before she could tap the end call button. Just as she was about to ask what Li Xiyang meant, the call ended.

"I have a bad feeling about this." Luna muttered. In the next moment, she received a video from the same number.

As soon as she played it, Luna felt her body freeze as all her strength left her bones.

In the video, a nurse entered Xia Hanchen's old ward and took a syringe from an elastic band tied around her thigh, then pulled a bottle of medicine from the same place. She loaded the syringe and injected the content into Xia Hanchen's drip. It would still be not too big of a deal if it was a normal nurse, but the 'nurse' was Li Xiyang!

Her phone rang again and she picked it up without thinking. "Li Xiyang how dare you!"

"Oh, save it." Came the taunting chuckle. "Your dear daddy isn't dead yet. Actually, you still have time to save him."

Luna's hand trembled. Of course Li Xiyan needed something from her and she was going to use the poison as a threat. Otherwise, she would not have called her in the first place. She would have finished Xia Hanchen secretly and forgotten about it. And although she didn't want to think of that, she could somewhat guess what Li Xiyan wanted.

"I want you to plead guilty in court."

"You're crazy." Luna sighed.

"Or, you could just go ahead and prove your innocence, then your dearest daddy will be no more."

Luna remained silent for a while, so Li Xiyan kept taunting. "The poison takes effect after two months. It's been fifty nine days already so... the poison will start to take effect within twenty four hours. Make sure you are convicted within this period. If you perform well, I will give him the antidote."

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The present.

Luna's fists were clenched so hard that small red crescents formed on her palms, thanks to how hard her nails dug into flesh. "I wasn't sure whether she had actually poisoned dad, but I could not take chances. I thought that perhaps she had actually done so two months ago to kill him in a slow manner and now that things unfolded this way, she changed her mind and decided to use it to get rid of me instead. So I agreed to do it. Even so, that woman didn't let me off. She also had me promise to delete the evidence as well."

"That woman is the devil." Lanni hissed. "And how sure were you that she would actually give the antidote? He hates dad, after all."

"I was not sure." Luna sighed. Heaven knew what a difficult decision that had been. "I took the risk nonetheless. If I did what she wanted, there was a slim chance that she would let dad live. But if I didn't, I was sure that she would have let him die."

Lanni could not blame her for the choice she made. If she were in her place, she would have done the same thing. "We will make her pay."

"Obviously." Luna scoffed.

"You mentioned she said that the poison would start to take effect on the sixtieth day? Does such a poison even exist?" Lanni had never heard of one whose effect was so slow.

"This is Li Xiyun we are talking about. She creates them." Luna scoffed. "Speaking of which, I have a feeling that this is not the first time. Dad might have been drugged before."

"What are you saying?" Lanni was in fact again shocked.

"The doctors kept estimating the time it would take for him to wake up but each time, he wouldn't even get better. This time too, they said that he would wake up within a month after his condition got better. However, he only woke up two months later, which—according to what mother and Xingyu said—is also coincidentally soon after I pleaded guilty. I'm starting to think that the antidote might have expelled all the previous drugs and poisons."

"We should make Dad's security stricter." Lanni couldn't hide her shock. That woman was something else. They needed to be more careful if they wanted to get rid of her.

Lanni's phone rang. She picked it up and trying not to sound fazed, she said, "Why are you so impatient? Are you scared I will go back on my own word?"

"Of course not. I believe you are not so dumb as to go back on your word." Li Xiyun said meaningfully.

Lanni smiled when she heard the threat and hung up. She stood up and headed for the door.

"Where are you going?" Luna quickly asked.

"Sending the items back to her."

"Are you crazy?" Luna scolded.

"Of course not. Didn't I promise to give them back to her? Of course I have to keep my promise.." Lanni said matter-of-factly.

Chapter 253 - We Have Nothing To Do With Each Other Now

Lanni rushed to a restaurant that was close to her home and chose a seat. She shoved the USB into the file and placed it on the table, then went to the washroom.

After checking that no one else was in, she took out her phone and dialled Li Xiyan's number. "The items are on table 2C, Plum Restaurant. Have someone pick it up as soon as you can, or do not blame me if someone else sees it." She hung up immediately after finishing her statement.

"I should have video called so I would see Li Xiyan's face." She chuckled.

Knowing that Li Xiyan had people who were currently in B City and may be close by, she hurried out of the restaurant and back home in the shortest time she could.

When she got back home, Luna was still in the same position she had left her in, still puzzled by her decision to return their hard-earned evidence to Li Xiyan.

"You really gave it to her?" Luna asked.

"Yes. Now she and I have nothing to do with each other."

"What's your plan?" Luna asked, knowing that Lanni wouldn't be so irrational.

"Watch it." Lanni smirked playfully and sat on Luna's bed. She took out her phone and called Lin Jian.

"If you and your man keep calling me at times you shouldn't, you will owe me." Came the ramble of dissatisfaction.

"Oh? And when exactly shouldn't I call you?" Lanni laughed, guessing what he meant. She must have interrupted his 'fun'.

Lin Jian complained for two whole minutes before Lanni interrupted with a taunt. "The more you talk, the longer you keep your beauty waiting. Do you know that?"

"Fine. What do you want? It better be something important."

"Since you are so busy having fun, let's meet up tomorrow at 12pm. I will send you the location."

"Sure." Lin Jian hung up.

Because Lanni called Lin Jian, Luna somewhat understood what they were planning. "You want to use the media to expose her crimes? Don't you think that move is a little...shallow?"

Lanni sat back next to her and patted her back. "Relax, I will never let Li Xiyan go after what she did to our family. We have plans that will ensure nothing goes wrong."

"Okay." Luna smiled. Since they had planned it out, it had to be good enough.

"You should rest for a while. I will have a chat with Xiehan." Lanni stood to leave.

"But you haven't eaten yet. We spared some food for you." Luna reminded.

"I'll grab something to eat. You need to rest, okay?"

Luna furrowed her brows. "Is there something you want to tell me?"

Lanni bit her lower lip slightly. "There is indeed something..."

"I'm all ears." Luna sat up straight.

"Don't be so serious. It's not like some bombshell or something." Lanni laughed at how tensed her sister suddenly looked. "It's just that before we take the final step of dealing with Li Xiyan, there is something we should do."

"And what is that?"

"Have some rest first. We can do it tomorrow in the morning before we go to meet the others."

Because Luna was indeed tired, she took a nap for the rest of the afternoon.

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The next morning, outside the hospital.

"Lanni, are you out of your mind? Why are we at the hospital?"

Luna didn't even need to wait for an answer from Lanni. The latter must have brought her to visit their dad.

Who would have thought that the so called thing they were yet to do involved their father? "I will go and talk to him when Li Xiyan is taken care of. Otherwise, I don't know how to face him now. I might end up letting the truth slip out of my mouth."

"That is exactly why we should go to see him today." Lanni unfastened her seatbelt and opened the car door. She stepped out and waited for Luna, who reluctantly followed her out. "Luna, our dad is Li Xiyan's husband after all. Even if they don't love each other, they are still a married couple. Don't you think we should let him know what his wife did that is making us go against her? We hope that she doesn't ever regain freedom after all."

Luna took in a deep breath. "You do have a point. Besides, I missed him too much so let's go and see him."

Lanni patted her back to reassure her when she understood why Luna still seemed to be scared. "We will prepare him psychologically before breaking the news so he doesn't suffer a shock. Besides, if we don't tell him and he watches the news later when Lin Media Group exposes her, he would be even more shocked."

"Then you break the news to him." Luna threw the ball back to Lanni. She couldn't trust her own ability to tell such news to anyone—and the last thing she wanted was to send Xia Hanchen back to coma.

"Sure, I will."

Hence, they made their way to Xia Hanchen's ward.

The doctor was just done with his daily check and Xia Hanchen had slept throughout the previous night, so he let them go in to see her.

Lanni walked in first with a bright smile. "Dad."

Xia Hanchen looked up and when he saw his little cupcake, he brightened up. "You finally missed your daddy. I thought you wouldn't come to see me anymore."

Lanni walked over to his side and hugged him. "I'm sorry dad. I had a lot going on these few days. But here I am now, and Luna here too!"

"Luna?" Xia Hanchen was so excited that he would have leapt off the bed if Lanni didn't quickly stop him.

Luna walked over, still smiling from the sweet scene she had just witnessed. This was what she had been dreaming off ever since she met Lanni again—a family reunion. She almost couldn't stop her eyes from tearing up as she walked over to Xia Hanchen's side.

"My little muffin." Xia Hanchen pulled Luna in for a hug.

"Pfft. Does dad have a thing for desserts?" Lanni chuckled lightly when she realized that his nicknames for them were both desserts.

When Luna broke the hug, she whispered at her side, "You have no idea. I asked Aunty why dad keeps calling me 'muffin' and she said that our mum used to make him such delicious desserts. When he missed her in the past, he would bake some for himself and eat with a forlorn expression."

"Oh..." Lanni felt bad. He obviously loved Li Yuming so much. However, it was too bad that Li Yuming obviously hated him.

"What are the two of you whispering there? Don't think I can't see you." Xia Hanchen was curious when he saw Lanni's expression suddenly change.

"Uh..." Luna didn't know what to say.

Xia Hanchen looked at her and recalled something. "You came back from Germany already? Don't tell me you quit your class."

"Germany... uh..." Luna scratched her head. The night before, Lanni had casually mentioned how, for the sake of buying time, Flynn had told Xia Hanchen that she had enrolled into a school in Germany, one that did not allow any contact with the outside world until one completed their course.

She had even shown her the fake student ID and Luna knew that there couldn't be any slip ups. However, if she went along with the lie, the matter they were about to tell him regarding Li Xiyan would not make sense. She peeked at Lanni and when she saw the latter giving her a go-ahead nod, she tried decided to come out with it. "Dad, the truth is that I was not... I was not in Germany."

Silence befell the room. Xia Hanchen did not utter a word for a long time. Just when the girls were starting to worry that he was mad at them, he finally spoke. "I know."

"You knew?" They were both surprised.

Xia Hanchen looked at them smugly. "I am your father, both of you. Did you really think you could fool me?" He looked at Lanni and reminded, "When you first came to see me, you were wearing your sister's clothes. Wasn't it so I would think that you were her?"

Lanni hugged him emotionally. Indeed, he was their real father. He recognized them accurately when even their boyfriends could mistake them for each other.

"Is there something you need to explain?" Xia Hanchen finally asked.

Because it was easier now, Luna told him everything that had happened recently. Of course, she made it sound milder than the situation actually was. But that did not change the gravity of what Li Xiyan had done.

When he was done hearing, Xia Hanchen's eyes darkened. "I agree. It's about the right time for her to be taught a lesson. I will come with you."

"Huh? Dad what are you saying? You still need to recover." Lanni quickly tried to talk him out of it.

"Lanni and I can handle it. Besides, our friends have teamed up with us." Luna seconded.

Even so, Xia Hanchen did not change his mind, becoming more set on it instead.. "That woman put me in this state. How can I not be there when she is taught a lesson?"

Chapter 254 - Happy As A Ghost

"What do you mean?" Lanni asked in shock.

"She drugged me. I found out about it but it was too late." Xia Hanchen explained. "All my health problems are caused by her."

Luna was confused. "What about the tumor?"

"I doubt there was any tumor. I wouldn't be surprised if she bribed the doctors to lie about there being one. Screening results can be faked using someone else's after all." Xia Hanchen laughed in self-ridicule. He should never have allowed that snake into his house.

"The thought of it is scary." Lanni sighed. How could such an evil person exist? Was she even a person to begin with?

"She will not hurt us anymore." Lanni said. They were going to destroy her and make her pay for everything she had done.

After chatting with their father for a while longer, the girls left the hospital. They were going to meet up with Lin Jian and the others.

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Plum restaurant, at lunch hour.

As soon as everyone arrived, they ordered their food and discussed as they planned out the next moves.

"Why do I think this would be going too easy on her?" Lanni massaged her temples.

"Haven't you always wanted to do things in a legal way?" Xiehan held her hand and rubbed it under the table.

"Yeah, but I still think that there is no legal way of giving her the kind of ending she deserves."

"I also think we are going too easy on her." Luna seconded.

"I will make sure the police don't give her an easy time. How about that?" Jiang Xingyu suggested, reaching under the table to hold Luna's hand. When she swatted his hand away, he retreated as though nothing had happened.

"That would not be enough." Luna clenched her fist.

"Then what do you want to do to her?" Jiang Xingyu asked.

"I want to peel her skin off inch by inch." Luna's expression was serious, she really meant what she was saying.

"I want to chop off all the parts of her body one by one." Lanni spoke up. "Or we could peel off her skin then chop her body parts."

"Uh..." Jiang Xingyu no longer knew what to say.

Xiehan was even more speechless.

It took a while for Lin Jian to pick up his dropped jaw and when he did, his face was filled with horror as he looked at his friends. "I didn't know your tastes were so... horrifying. By dating such scary women, aren't you scared they may get mad at you one day and chop you to death?"

"My Lanni wouldn't do that." Xiehan quickly defended.

"Luna wouldn't harm a single hair on my head. Besides, even if I were to die under her knife, I would still be happy as a ghost." Jiang Xingyu retorted at the same time.

Lin Jian quickly shuffled away from him. This guy's taste was scary.

When they were done coming up with a strategy, which was the unsatisfactory legal way, they all left the restaurant so everyone could go about with his business.

Just as Luna stepped out of the door, Jiang Xingyu grabbed her hand and pulled her away.

Luna was taken aback. But when she looked into Jiang Xingyu's eyes, she was no longer as irritable as she usually was. Instead, she willingly held his hand, making Jiang Xingyu look at her in a mixture of shock and ecstasy. "I've been meaning to thank you properly."

A smile crept onto Jiang Xingyu's lips. A single 'thank you' from her was enough to make up for all his effort and erase all the agony he felt while she was away. "How about you thank me by having dinner with me tonight?" He boldly tried his luck.

To his surprise, she agreed readily, and that too with a sweet smile on her face.

Luna rarely smiled and when she did, it always made his heart race. He couldn't resist planting a kiss on her cheek when she was least expecting it.

"Those two will be an item in the blink of an eye." Lanni, who was watching them from some distance, couldn't help commenting. They had made so much progress already. All that was left was taking the bold step and they would be a couple.

"Ow!" Lanni felt a sting on her waist at the same time that a palm hovered over her eyes.

"Why did you pinch me?" She glared at the culprit who was currently towering in front of her and blocking her view.

"You are not allowed to look at other couples." Xiehan grinned mischievously.

"Can you not be so childish?" Lanni chuckled. "What are you still doing here anyway? Shouldn't you go back to work?"

"I will in a second. Are you free tonight? Let's have dinner together. We can also spend some time together tonight. I miss you these past days."

Lanni frowned as she looked at him. "You miss me?" Was he being serious? Even so, she agreed to have dinner with him.

—

While the guys went back to work, Lanni and Luna went to Stat Art International then informed Cheng Yu that they were waiting for her.

When Cheng Yu received the message, she dashed over, almost tripping a few times.

"Luna! You are really back." She hugged Luna as soon as she saw her, her eyes tearing up.

"There there, don't cry. I'm really back."

"You are so mean." Cheng Yu complained as she broke the hug. "How could you reject visits from everyone? I wanted to visit you on several occasions but I couldn't even see you from afar. I didn't even know how you were doing."

"I didn't want everyone to drown me with questions. But am I not here now?"

"You're the worst friend in the world." Cheng Yu accused.

Because they were in a public place, Lanni and Luna did not explain what exactly had happened. They left after having some small talk and promising to see her again.

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The next morning.

Since she woke up, Lanni couldn't tear her eyes off her phone. She kept refreshing the feed impatiently, her stomach a pit of nervousness.

"It's finally here!" She exclaimed when she saw the headline she had been waiting for.

Chapter 255 - You Are Under Arrest

"What's here?" Xiehan asked from behind her, wrapping an arm around her waist.

Lanni turned and planted a kiss on his cheek. "Honey, you're awake. Did I wake you up?"

"I was awake the whole time." Xiehan pulled her closer to his body, and Lanni didn't push him away. She happily showed him the headline on her phone. "Honey, look."

On her screen, a bold headline in large font read, [LI XIYAN'S CRIMES EXPOSED]

Xiehan took a look at the headline and a smile formed on his lips. When he read the entire article, his smile deepened further.

The article had gone ahead to expose every single one of Li Xiyan's crimes, including her involvement with Zeus and the fact that she had been the mastermind who framed Luna and had her imprisoned. She had even tried to murder her own husband! Just how horrible was she? The crimes had been outlined in order from what could be considered as minor crimes to the most heinous, making the readers' jaws drop.

Xia Hanchen was among the country's most famous businessmen, so his wife, Li Xiyan was well known to the public too. Now that she had been exposed, countless blogs were talking about it. Even the television news that was broadcast that morning had Li Xiyan's crimes as one of the major headlines.

"Lin Jian isn't so useless after all." Xiehan praised.

"Of course he isn't useless. Or else I wouldn't have trusted him with this important task. We should thank him." Lanni smiled from ear to ear.

Just as she was about to leave the bed, Xiehan pulled her hand so she landed right smack on his chest. He held her in place using his hand. "Why don't we celebrate a little first?"

"But I'm too tired from last night." Lanni tried to get up again.

"Too tired? But you can still jump around so early in the morning." Xiehan gazed at her dangerously. Before she could react, he switched their positions so she was underneath his body.

His hand snaked around her body and under her nightgown, tracing her warm skin. Just as his fingers reached her breasts, her phone rang.

Lanni started and reached to answer it, with Xiehan still hovering over her.

"Why are you calling?" She asked impatiently when she realized that the caller was Li Xiyan.

"It was you, wasn't it? Heh. I didn't know that you wouldn't keep your promises." Li Xiyan growled.

Lanni knew she was talking about the news. She must have seen the headlines. She snickered. "Li Xiyan, which promise of mine did I break? I promised to return the file and the USB to you and didn't I?"

"You gave the content to the media before giving them back to me." Li Xiyan's tone was affirmative, knowing fully well that it had to be Lanni and her group. No one else would dare to go against her.

"Yeah..." Lanni drawled out the syllable tauntingly. "But I don't remember promising you that I wouldn't disclose the content. Did I?"

"You little—!" Li Xiyan cursed and she could hear the sound of something breaking before Li Xiyan's voice was heard again. "I didn't call to ask you about it. I called to warn you. Watch your back, little girl, because I'm going to kill you!"

Lanni hung up the call, then replayed the voice recording.

"What was that for?" Xiehan chuckled. He had known that no one in their right mind would willingly listen to someone threaten them but now it seemed like Lanni had been planning something all along.

"Isn't Li Xiyan fond of claiming that evidence is fabricated? She can go ahead and claim that the content of the USB was fake. Then, she would have to explain why she wanted it so badly." Lanni grinned.

—

Meanwhile, Xia Hanchen's mansion was on the verge of exploding from Li Xiyan's anger.

"That little bîtch! How dare she?" The glass in her hand shattered, piercing her palm but she was so angry that she didn't feel the pain. "I will make her pay!" She swore.

"Ma'am, the flight has been booked." Her assistant reported.

Li Xiyan stood up and went to her room. As soon as she saw the headline, she had asked her assistant to book the earliest flight out of the country. Of course she was going to flee! Who would stay back and wait for the police to find them?

She changed her clothes at record speed, making sure to wear a scarf a wig and a pair of huge goggles. When she was done, she grabbed a few random clothes and shoved them into a suitcase then dragged it out.

"Ma'am, I'll help you." The assistant hurried over and lugged the suitcase.

Li Xiyan hurried out of the house.

"You stay here." She ordered her assistant, who frowned but remained behind anyway. How could she not know Li Xiyan's intention? She was obviously sacrificing her. If the police came and didn't find Li Xiyan, they would arrest her instead. After all, she had been Li Xiyan's accomplice in most of the crimes. Perhaps she was also supposed to take the blame upon herself. However, there was nothing she could do about it. She could only sigh and accept her fate.

Meanwhile, the chauffeur floored the accelerator and sped to the airport. They arrived just a few minutes before it was time to board the flight. However, just as she got off the car, two policemen suddenly blocked her way.

"W-what are you doing?" She was startled.

"Li Xiyan, you are under arrest. You have the right to remain silent."

"Did you get the wrong person? Get out of my way." She waved her hand in annoyance.

"Show me your ID." One of the policemen demanded.

"Of course. But you will have to apologize for wasting my time." She took out an ID card from her purse and shoved it at the policeman.

When he took a good look at it, he pulled out a pair of handcuffs and cuffed her hands. "You are under arrest for one more crime. This is a fake ID."

"What? You... how dare you!"

Chapter 256 - Birds Of A Feather

Lanni waited with bated breath and when Xiehan finally received a message notification, she quickly asked what had happened.

"The police have her now." Xiehan announced happily.

Lanni threw herself into his arms and wrapped her hands around his body. "Finally. She is finally in the hands of the police."

"She will not be able to bother us anymore." Xiehan cupped her face, pressing a light kiss onto her forehead.

"Although I still think this is going too easy on her, it is much better than having her continue to walk around as a free woman and cause more trouble." Lanni cheerfully grabbed her phone. "I think we should really celebrate this. Once she is sentenced, we will celebrate again."

Her phone rang just as she was about to make a call.

"I'll take this." She smiled at him and answered the call.

"Did you see the news? Did I do well?" Lin Jian quickly asked for praise, and Lanni could as well imagine his excited expression like a kid asking for candy.

A chuckle escaped her lips as she praised. "You did well."

However, the guy was not satisfied. Instead, he complained. "That's not fair at all! Are you only going to thank me verbally?"

Lanni laughed when she heard the familiar words. Birds of a feather do flock together, don't they? Before they started dating, those were the same words Xiehan would use every time he did her the tiniest favor.

Treating Lin Jian as the child he was trying to act like, Lanni asked what he wanted as thanks.

Lin Jian pretended to think hard before demanding, "How about we have a few drinks together tonight? We can also spend the night together."

"Are you crazy?" Lanni was taken aback by the request.

"Haha, I'm just kidding. Why are you so worked up?" Came the laugh from the other side.

"That's not a good joke." Lanni was annoyed. Who would make such a joke? Those who didn't know would think that he was trying to flirt with his friend's girlfriend.

Just as she was about to hang up, the guy made a more reasonable request. "Since you cannot have drinks with me, how about you help me find a pretty girl to drink with? You can introduce me to one of your friends. You can help me find one that's outgoing, has a beautiful figure, is elegant and beautiful."

Lanni was speechless. That did sound like something a guy like him would request. But where the hell was she supposed to get a friend to introduce to him? Even if she had a friend that fit his criteria, there was no way she would let any of her friends get together with a womanizer.

"Why are you silent? Are you going to say that you don't have such a friend?" Lin Jian probed.

"I indeed don't." Said Lanni.

"Liar! You have one. You just don't want to introduce her to me." Lin Jian accused.

Lanni massaged her temples. "There is no way I'm introducing Cheng Yu to you. Go and find her if you have the manly guts."

"Eh? Cheng Yu?" Lin Jian seemed slightly surprised. "Who is... oh, she is the girl who was with you at aunty's banquet, right? She's beautiful but I'm not talking about her."

"Who are you talking about then?" Lanni was getting tired of this conversation and wanted it to end as soon as possible.

"The other one who is slightly taller than you, has a pair of lovely eyes and long, red hair."

"Ruby?" Lanni was surprised.

"Yeah, that's the one." Lin Jian sounded like he was about to pass out from the imagination of he and Ruby together. "She is as beautiful as a fine piece of ruby. Lanni, introduce me to her."

Lanni was about to say no when he interrupted. "If you don't, I will bug you about it every day."

Knowing his personality, he would really bug her every hour. Lanni could only sigh. What was she thinking when she asked Lin Jian for a favor? "I can only give you her contact details. If you don't manage to convince her to go on a date with you, don't you come back crying to me." She warned.

"Are you kidding me? Which woman can reject me? Unless she is not straight, she will surely agree to go on a date with me." Lin Jian basked in his own praise as he gladly asked for Ruby's contact number.

While in Star Art International, Lanni and Ruby had exchanged numbers so she directly sent it to Lin Jian before going back to Xiehan.

Xiehan pulled her to sit on the couch next to him. "Who was it? You took long and you look drained."

"Your dear friend, Lin Jian." Lanni exhaled a sigh.

"Did he bother you?" asked Xiehan.

"You have no idea. That man wanted me to thank him for helping us out. In the end, he asked for Ruby's contact details."

Xiehan silently took out his phone and composed a text message.

—

Lin Jian's phone chimed. Having just sent a text message to Ruby, he was expecting her reply. So when his phone chimed, he hurriedly checked and frowned in the next second. The sender was not Ruby but Xiehan instead.

[If you ever bother my wife again!]

The message sounded like a genuine threat and there was even a bomb emoji next to the words.

"Hey! What kind of friend is this?" Lin Jian complained.

—

When Lanni saw the message that Xiehan had just sent, along with the bomb emoji, she laughed and hugged him. "Honey, you are the best."

Xiehan wrapped his arms around her. "I'm serious about it. If he bothers you, I will not be so kind to him."

Lanni pecked his cheek then his lips. "I will not let him bother me. Anyway, what about the party?"

"I'll ask Xingyu whether he is available tonight. You should ask aunty too."

Lanni nodded. "Right. I haven't told dad the good news yet.. I'll go to the hospital now."

Chapter 257 - She Is Avoiding Me

Meanwhile, in Li Yuming's villa.

Li Yuming dragged her feet around the kitchen as she prepared breakfast. Although she was cooking, her attention was elsewhere, so she ended up burning most of what she was cooking.

She sighed as she disposed of the burnt sunny side up eggs.

"I'll help you with that." A familiar voice suddenly interrupted her as a pair of hands reached to take the pan from her hand.

Li Yuming looked up happily then saw Luna. She smiled as she let her take the pan. "Luna, you're awake."

"I woke up a while ago. Good morning, Mum."

"Good morning my dear."

Luna felt a wave of happiness from what Li Yuming had just called her. So this was what children felt when their mothers called them honey, sweetheart and other sweet names for their children.

Her stomach grumbled so she took the ingredients and started cooking. She had woken up quite early today and started programming.

A short while later, Jiang Xingyu called. The man didn't have much to talk about; he only wanted to thank her for having dinner with him the previous evening. Then he spent almost a whole hour just teasing her and flirting with her. By the time the call ended, she was mentally exhausted and famished so she went downstairs to find something to eat. That was when she saw Li Yuming cooking in slow, absent minded movements as though all the life had been drained from her body.

She wondered what was on her mind. When she took the pan from her, Li Yuming looked happy but Luna could have sworn that she saw a hint of disappointment flash in Li Yuming's eyes. Even so, it didn't seem like she was disappointed because of her so Luna did not ask about it.

After cooking breakfast and sitting with Li Yuming at the kitchen island, she finally asked. "Mum, are you feeling unwell? What's going on?"

Li Yuming's hand that was holding a fork stopped. This was the first time in her life that Luna was showing concern for her. Even so, she shook her head to express that she was alright and nothing was wrong.

"Mum, you don't have to lie to me. I know what I saw and that was definitely not what people look like when they are alright." Luna was not going to let it slide. She was worried that whatever it was might affect Li Yuming's health and that was the last thing she wanted to happen.

Seeing that Luna wouldn't let it slide, she thought she might as well share her feelings with someone. "It's your sister."

"What about Lanni?" Luna gripped her fork tightly in nervousness.

"You must have realized it too. She is rarely home nowadays and when she is, she stays in her room unless she is eating." Li Yuming smiled bitterly. "She is avoiding me."

Luna thought about it and that did seem to be the case. In fact, she knew why exactly Lanni was acting the way she was. She was afraid that if she stayed near Li Yuming too often, they might have to talk about Xia Hanchen again—which would obviously lead to the argument she was so desperately avoiding. That was why when she was not with Xiehan, she would spend most of the time in her room.

Although Luna knew this, that was not what she said. Instead, she laughed at what Li Yuming had just said. "Why on earth would Lanni avoid you? She loves you more than anything."—the second part was true, but that was beside the point.

Luna took a bite of her fried egg and chewed it slowly as she found the right words to say. When she swallowed it, she took Li Yuming's hand from across the kitchen island. "Lanni is an adult, mum. Don't worry about her. She will be alright and besides, she and Xiehan are in the honeymoon phase of their relationship. They can barely keep their hands off each other."

"That's true." Li Yuming said in realization. Indeed, she must have been thinking too much. Lanni must be spending more days at Xiehan's mansion because they wanted to spend more time together.

'Those two should get married already.' She thought with a chuckle.

Obviously, Lanni and Xiehan had not been together for that long. She wouldn't have such thoughts if the man was not Xiehan. She could only want to see them married as soon as possible because she knew what kind of person Xiehan was. He would never do anything to wrong Lanni.

Luna finished up her breakfast at about the same time as Li Yuming.

"I will do the dishes." She stood up.

Li Yuming stopped her. "Just let the help do it, don't tire yourself out."

"Okay mum."

Li Yuming thought for a moment before asking, "Luna, are you too busy today?"

"Aside from visiting dad for a moment, I don't have much to do. Why, is something up?"

Li Yuming's eyes darkened slightly but she swallowed the mean statement that she almost said. Instead, she requested, "I wanted to go and shop for some clothes for myself and I don't like shopping alone. If you are free later, you can join me. You need to shop for clothes too."

Because her own clothes were mostly male clothes and only a tiny number of women's clothes, Lanni had given some of her new dresses and skirts. Even so, she still needed to buy her own clothes so she thought it was a good idea and agreed to go.

"Then, I will head off. Can I take some fruits for dad? I may not have enough time to go and buy some." She asked with a cute pleading look on her face.

Li Yuming couldn't possibly resist those eyes. "Go ahead. You can take as many as you want."

Luna happily grabbed a fruit basket and arranged in some of the fruits that Xia Hanchen liked. When she was done, she peeked at Li Yuming with mischief hidden behind her cutesy expression.

Li Yuming chuckled. That was the same expression Lanni usually had when she was about to ask for something that she knew she might not get. These two were indeed twins. "Mh?" She looked at the girl and raised an eyebrow to probe.

"Mum," Luna started nervously. She was about to speak then she stopped, looking disappointed. "Never mind. You will obviously say no to it."

Li Yuming was confused, heartache filling her chest. "Luna, how could you say that? You haven't even asked for what you want yet. How could you conclude that I will say no to it?"

Luna played with the handle of the fruit basket, looking down sadly. "I just know you will."

Li Yuming felt as though her heart had been crushed. She reached to hold Luna's hand. "Luna, you are my daughter. How could I say no to you?"

"Really? You will not say no?" She looked up with a ray of hope.

"No, Luna. As long as it is not something that will hurt you, I will agree to it." Li Yuming promised, much to Luna's delight.

"In that case, then come with me to visit dad, please?"

"What did you just say?" The request shocked Li Yuming and, even without waiting to hear Luna repeat her words, she looked at her in disbelief before shaking her head. "I'm sorry. I cannot do that. Anything but this."

"Please mum, come with me this once? I promise I will not bother you about it anymore." Luna pleaded.

"I said I can't." Li Yuming decided to be stern about it or she wouldn't be able to say no.

Just before she could turn and rush away to avoid being pleaded anymore, Luna held her wrist. Li Yuming looked back to see the corners of Luna's eyes glistening with moisture.

"You said you wouldn't say no to whatever I ask. But when I ask, you say no without batting an eyelid..."

"Luna..." Li Yuming was at a loss. Before she could say anything, Luna turned and left, holding onto her fruit basket tightly.

She sneaked a peek at Li Yuming and bit her lips as she blinked away the fake tears that she had managed to gather. It would probably require some time to get Li Yuming to meet Xia Hanchen and even more time for then to get closer. At this rate, their family would probably reunite when she and Lanni already have husbands and kids.

Even so, it was already good enough that Li Yuming didn't snap at her when she made the request and that was progress.

When she arrived at the hospital, Lanni was just done feeding Xia Hanchen the congee that she had brought. Luna walked over and placed the fruit basket on the table. "Hello dad. Lanni, you're here too."

"I wanted to tell you that I would come but your phone wasn't going through." Lanni looked at her questioningly.

Luna massaged her temples as she remembered the torture she had gone through earlier this morning. "It must be because you called when that idiot was endlessly talking to me."

"What idiot?" Lanni asked then found the answer immediately. It must be Jiang Xingyu. Who else could call Luna and talk to her endlessly?

"Xingyu. He is such a piece of work." Luna answered with a sigh.

When Xia Hanchen heard the name that Luna stated, his face was filled with excitement. "A man? My Luna has a boyfriend?"

Luna coughed from awkwardness. "Dad, he is not my boyfriend."

"He isn't? But you flirt with each other endlessly. He even called you this morning and who is to say that you were not talking and flirting on phone all night?" Lanni raised an eyebrow.

Luna frowned at her sister. "Flirt all night...we don't flirt that much, okay? Besides, he is the one who flirts with me."

Lanni and Xia Hanchen exchanged a look and laughed. These two would make a fun couple.

"May I know what the two of you are laughing at?" Luna glared at them and received peals of laughter as a response. She ignored them and went to the table then took an apple. "Dad, do you want some?"

"No, my dear. I'm really full now. I can eat some later." Xia Hanchen replied, rubbing his stomach.

Luna gave him a meaningful look and said in a sing-song tone, "Are you sure you don't want them? I got them from mum's kitchen..."

"What did you say?" Xia Hanchen sat up in shock.

Luna slumped back onto the chair, throwing the apple into the air then catching it before it fell. A grin was plastered across her lips as she tauntingly repeated. "I got them from mum's kitchen. But since you don't want them..."

"Who said I don't want them? Of course I want them!" Xia Hanchen even looked like he wanted to pounce on Luna and grab the apple from her.

Lanni burst into laughter. If anyone were to tell her that her father could act like a young man in love at the mention of her mother, she would call that person out for lying. But now that she was witnessing it with her own eyes, she found it sweet.

Luna peeled the apple and gave it to Xia Hanchen, who savored it slowly like he was eating food prepared by gods. "Are fruits from Yuming's house so tasty? You should bring me some more tomorrow."

Luna laughed but promised to bring more nonetheless.

It was only when Xia Hanchen finished the fruit that he felt something was off. "How come you got fruits from her kitchen? You are allowed to go there now?"

Luna recalled what she had forgotten all along. "We forgot to tell you! Actually, I'm staying at mum's house now."

"That's good, that's good." Xia Hanchen was overjoyed. But in the next second, he looked like he wanted to ask something. However, he didn't ask in the end. Something dimmed in his initially cheerful eyes.

Luna had lived long enough to understand him, so she could guess at one glance what he was thinking about. She helplessly let out a breath. "I tried to convince her to come with me but she didn't." She was not going to use that 'she is busy' excuse because she knew that Xia Hanchen would not buy it. She explained the exact situation. "I even attempted to emotionally blackmail her but oh well... I guess we may need more time before we make progress."

"I understand, Luna. You don't need to feel bad about it." Xia Hanchen patted her head, afraid that she would blame herself for failing. "As long as she is alright."

"Actually, mom is just too stubborn. I'm sure she also wants to know how you are doing." Lanni said with a smile, remembering how on many occasions, Li Yuming had looked like she wanted to ask something.

If her assumption was right, then she had wanted to ask about Xia Hanchen but she was too proud to actually ask.

Xia Hanchen didn't want to get too ahead of himself but he was hopeful. "Once I get out of here, I will pursue her myself."

Luna shot him a look. "Are you seriously telling your daughters that you are going to pursue their mother?"

"What's wrong with that? Don't you already know?" Xia Hanchen retorted.

"Fine, fine, we know. But tell me, what strategy are you going to use that you haven't used in all these years?" She taunted.

"You bad child. How dare you say that to your dad?" Xia Hanchen huffed.

"But I'm telling the truth. Right, Lanni?"

Lanni thought about it and nodded. "Indeed. We are already twenty years old but you have not been able to get her back yet. Let us girls get it done for you."

"You might as well become a pair of identical cupids." Xia Hanchen humphed, but he was happy in actual sense. He was glad that their daughters were supporting their reunion.

After spending a few more minutes with Xia Hanchen, he needed to rest so they decided to leave. Lanni reached for the doorknob but just as her hand connected with it, the knob turned and the door was pushed open from outside.

She thought it was the nurse and stepped aside to excuse her but when she saw who the incomer was, she froze in shock. "Mom?"

Chapter 259 - You Have No Right To Stop Her

Luna was also shocked when she saw Li Yuming. She subconsciously glanced at Xia Hanchen, whose cheerful mood faded in a puff. Was Li Yuming here to grab Lanni and drag her away?

If this was in the past, he would have let her do as she pleased because back then, Lanni was a minor in her custody and he did not have any visitation rights. But now, there was no way he was going to let that happen.

He sat up, glaring at Li Yuming fiercely. "Lanni is an adult now, and she is my daughter too. You have no right to stop her from seeing me if she wants to."

Li Yuming frowned and walked in, brushing past Lanni and Luna who then exchanged looks. Lanni hurriedly turned and grabbed Li Yuming's hand. "Mom, the doctor said we cannot agitate him."

Luna stepped in too. "Yeah. If there's anything to discuss, please let's do it at home."

Li Yuming's gaze shifted between the two of them before she glared at Luna. "What's wrong with you? You wanted me to come here and now that I'm here, you don't trust me?"

Lanni looked at her sister quizzically, and Luna shrugged to express that she didn't know what was going on either.

Li Yuming went to Xia Hanchen's side and looked down at him. "How are you feeling?"

Lanni and Luna's jaws dropped and before they could pick them up, they heard Xia Hanchen's response, in the most gentle tone they had ever heard. "Yuming... are you worried about me?"

"Ahem..." Lanni coughed lightly then grabbed Luna's hand and pulled her out with her, pulling the door closed while at it.

"What's this weird scene?" Luna was almost scared by what she had just witnessed.

"Can't you tell? Our mother just visited dad willingly. She even showed her concern for him! If I wasn't sure that I'm awake, I would think I'm dreaming!" Lanni was caught in between shock and excitement.

"Well, I think I'm dreaming. Pinch me!" Luna was in disbelief. As soon as her words were out, Lanni launched a small kick and landed it on Luna's leg.

"Ouch! I said pinch me, not kick me!" Luna glared at her.

"As long as it wakes you up. Tell me, what did mom mean when she said that you asked her to come here?"

"How am I supposed to know?" Luna was shocked witless too. "I did try to convince her to come but she heartlessly said no. Didn't I say this already? I even tried to emotionally blackmail her."

Lanni found it interesting. "And how exactly did you emotionally blackmail her?"

"By acting cute." Luna replied with a shrug.

"Just this?" Lanni didn't think it was possible. From the pieces of memory that she remembered, she had tried to act cute with Li Yuming many times in the past but the latter would not bat an eyelid.

When she voiced this out, Luna raised an eyebrow. "You have tried acting cute, but how adorably sad did you look? Did you cry?"

It was Lanni's turn to be surprised. "You cried?"

Luna crossed her arms mischievously. "I didn't cry. But my eyes did get wet and I blinked my tears away and ran off in heartbreak."

Lanni's jaw found its way towards the floor once again. Luna acting cute? Why did the thought of that seem so wrong? "No wonder mom couldn't bear to disappoint you." She laughed.

"As long as it works. I wonder what they're doing right now." Luna thought aloud. "I don't think they would act all shy around one another so they should have probably made up already. Maybe they're kissing?"

Lanni glared at Luna. "You perverted girl! Why would you even think about such things regarding your parents? Come on, let's get out of here. We have a party to plan."

The two of them left the hospital and entered the store across the street to buy snacks before going. Just as they exited the store, they saw Li Yuming leave the hospital, sauntering in her high heeled shoes and entering her car with a spiteful grin on her face.

"This doesn't look like the kind of expression one has after making up with her ex-husband." Lanni remarked.

"You can see her expression from such a distance?" Luna munched on her chips as she looked at Li Yuming's car.

"Maybe not. But her disdain is so obvious that I can feel it from such a distance." Lanni stole a piece of chips from Luna's packet and shoved it into her mouth before Luna could react.

"Stop with your nonsense. You're thinking too much...why would mum be disdainful after seeing dad? And, stop stealing my chips." Luna slapped away Lanni's hand that was reaching to steal more chips.

"You meanie. It's only a piece of chips." Lanni complained.

Luna couldn't get her train of thoughts. "Aren't you eating chips too? They are from the same brand and the same flavor. Why can't you eat your own?"

Lanni took the opportunity when Luna was talking and grabbed one, quickly shoving it into her mouth. "I don't know... it just feels like yours are yummiier."

Luna laughed and started walking. "Let's go. You said we should plan the party."

"Yes, about that. I'll get a new dress. There is a nice store close to our home and all the clothes there are beautiful and of high quality material. You can buy one too." Lanni suggested.

Luna remembered what Li Yuming had said earlier. "Right. Mum and I are going to shop for clothes this afternoon. You can join us but... don't you have many new clothes already?"

Lanni swallowed what she was eating then grinned. "What do you know? I'm going to dress up for my Xiehan. Of course I should wear a suitable dress."

"You and your Xiehan." Luna was stuffed from all their displays of affection.

The girls entered the car and went home. When they arrived, Li Yuming was resting on the couch in the living room.

"Mom, we're back." Lanni announced then slumped next to her.

Li Yuming pulled her legs off the couch to make space for both of them. When Luna went over to sit next to her as well, all of Li Yuming's worries faded. This was the kind of life she had always wished for. She had always wished to have both of her daughters beside her. Even though she never admitted it in the past, she knew that the empty feeling she had always felt was due to the fact that Luna was away from her.

She smiled and gave them a peck on the cheek each.

Luna was not used to it so she was shocked for a moment before a smile filled her face.

Lanni's heart warmed from the scene. Luna looked even more beautiful when she smiled so happily. Who on earth said that Luna was cold? She was just lacking a mother's love.

"Mum, you said that we would go shopping together this afternoon. At what time will we go? Also, Lanni wants to buy a dress too so we can go together."

"What? I..." Li Yuming stuttered then reached to tousle Luna's hair with a smile. "I'm sorry, something came up so I can't go shopping anymore. How about you go with your sister this time?"

"No problem." Luna smiled.

However, Lanni had a complicated feeling about Li Yuming's change of plans.

Chapter 260 - Instinct

Even so, Lanni didn't want to create a fuss over a trivial matter so she didn't say anything about it. In the end, it was decided that she and Luna would go shopping on their own.

—

That afternoon, Lanni dragged Luna to one of the stores she frequented.

As soon as they entered, Lanni saw a gorgeous blue dress by the window. She hopped over to it in excitement. "I told you this store was full of beautiful clothes. Even a simple scarf here is exquisite." She chirped and called over a salesgirl. "Please help her try it on."

"Me?" Luna was taken aback by Lanni's request.

"Yes! Isn't it pretty?" Lanni held up its hem for Luna to touch.

"But it's too colorful." Luna felt uncomfortable just imagining such a dress on her body. The top half of the dress was a royal blue color. However, the skirt was a lighter shade of blue and had uncountable realistic-looking lilies stitched closely together around the hem.

Seeing her reluctant stare, Lanni shook her head. "Are you chroma phobic? This dress isn't too colorful, and I'm sure it would look great on you."

"Then why don't you try it?" Luna dismissed.

"Fine. We would look the same way in it anyway. I'm sure you will love it when you see it on me." Lanni chuckled and went to try it on.

Just as she left, Luna's phone chimed with a text message. Her eyebrows furrowed when she read it then she tilted her head to look outside. When she saw the familiar long ponytail, she breathed out a sigh and glanced in the direction of the dressing room. Hoping that the dress was complicated and Lanni would take long changing into it, she dashed out of the store and walked to the man waiting for her. "What's this about?" She asked in annoyance.

"Oh...you really are twins. You even show your claws the same way." Flynn grinned, deliberately trying to set her off the same way he liked to annoy Lanni.

"I'll punch you if you dare to waste my time." Luna threatened in response, and Flynn knew that she would really do it. This was the difference between her and Lanni. While Lanni preferred to solve things with as little violence as possible, Luna wouldn't hesitate to swipe a dagger across one's neck if things didn't go her way.

"What do you want? I thought you were in Germany already." Luna crossed her arms, her expression looking like she ready to attack if the man said anything he shouldn't.

"Yeah, I really wanted to go." Flynn scratched his neck in what looked like nervousness for a second. "But it's such a pity if I don't take Lanni back with me."

"We already talked about this." Luna glared at him dangerously. Her fists were even slowly clenching and this amused Flynn.

"Yeah. And that's why I have not knocked Lanni out and shoved her into the plane with me." He peered towards the store with a hint of longing in his eyes. When he didn't see the person he was hoping to see, he coughed and looked back at Luna. "You know what I think? The organization would really use your help. After all, you're terrifyingly good at hacking. You may even be better than the best programmer on our team. Paired with Lanni's intelligence, the two of you would make an excellent pair. Unfortunately..."

"If there's nothing else, I'll be leaving." Luna was not interested in joining any teams and neither was she interested in hearing anyone talk about them.

"Help me pass a message to Lanni." Flynn implored, taking a small envelope from his pocket. Luna gave him an obviously fake smile as she wondered what the hell was in the envelope. He had not written a love letter to Lanni, right? Who still does that? Nonetheless, she reached for it and secured it in the pocket of her jeans.

She walked forward then stopped and turned with a crease on her brows after just two steps.

Flynn was still standing in the same spot and when he saw her turn, he raised an eyebrow to ask if anything was wrong. Luna smiled as she shook her head then proceeded back into the store.

She took a long glance outside. That moment when she turned, she thought she saw a flash of light flicker somewhere. But thinking about it, she must be thinking too much into such tiny details.

"There you are. Where did you run off to?" Lanni asked as soon as she saw Luna. She was sitting on a chair, waiting for Luna and she was wearing the blue dress.

Luna came up with an excuse on the spot. "I went to the bathroom."

"But the bathrooms are this way." Lanni pointed in the opposite direction from the door.

Luna shrugged. "There were many people queued there and I couldn't wait, so I went to the ones outside."

Even she couldn't believe her own ability to lie so effortlessly—not that she was proud of it.

Lanni stood up to give her a full view of the dress. "What do you think? Is this beautiful?"

Only then was Luna able to take a good look at the dress. She nodded in approval but before she could speak, her phone rang.

"It's mum." Luna said before answering the call. Li Yuming only wanted to know how they were doing so the call ended pretty fast.

When Luna hung up, Lanni was staring at her weirdly. "What's wrong?" She couldn't help asking.

Lanni looked around to make sure there was no one within earshot before answering. "I think mom is acting strange."

Luna kept her phone in the front pocket of her jeans and shook her head at Lanni's speculation. "You're thinking too much."

Lanni nodded even though she didn't agree. Her instincts had never been wrong and she knew that this time was no different. There had to be something wrong with Li Yuming.