

Chapter 271 - Two-faced Hypocrite(2)

"What nonsense are you spouting?" Li Yuming was flabbergasted when she heard the words that came from her own daughter's mouth.

Luna snickered, as though calling her out for putting on a barely believable act. "My dad has very few enemies. Although Li Xiyan is top on the list, she is not the only one who would benefit if anything happened to him.

Don't think I have forgotten how much you hate him. A few days ago, I thought you no longer hated him so much. You even put on such a beautiful act that I almost believed you but on that very day... tch..." Some words were too hateful for her to utter, and she was enraged that Li Yuming could even ask her such a question. "You hate him, especially since you know that he and Lanni are getting closer. You don't even care about her feelings, sigh. Tell me, did you do this? Is it to get back at him for trying to reunite the family? Where are you hiding him?"

Li Yuming swung her fist and was about to land a slap on Luna's face but stopped at the last moment. She laughed bitterly. "You don't trust me. I'm your own mother-I gave birth to you, yet you do not trust me?"

Luna laughed as though she had just heard the most insane joke. "Trust you? You have your guard around me so much that you would send people to tail me and take photos of everyone I interact with. Don't tell me I should trust someone who thinks I'm a potential cause of danger?"

Li Yuming sat back down as she glanced at her daughter with a lazy smile. "Aren't you a potential cause of danger, though? If you didn't portray yourself that way, why would I think so?"

Do you know what the laughable fact is?"

Luna listened curiously to know what nonsense Li Yuming was going to say this time.

"That you don't trust me, yet you are living under my roof." Li Yuming continued. "Aren't you scared I might have intentions to hurt you? I mean, since according to your own words, being your mother doesn't matter."

"Heh." Luna laughed then enunciated her reason, syllable by syllable. "I'm only here because of her. Did you really think I was here because of you?" she chuckled mockingly as she shook her head. "No, Miss Li. I'm here to protect my sister."

Seeing Li Yuning frown, she crossed her arms languidly. "Clearly, you are unable to do that despite being her biological mother. First you stopped her from doing what she wants, then you forced her to do things she doesn't want in the name of protecting her and right now... you are standing in the way of her happiness simply because of your own grudges. If you simply respected her decisions..."

"Enough!" Li Yuming couldn't bear to hear anymore.

Luna's lips twitched. "What is it, Miss Li? You did all those things, yet you can't bear to hear the truth?" Since she no longer had time to bicker with her, she turned to leave but before she walked away, she peeked at Li Yuming from over her shoulder. "By the way, that was beside the point. The main point is... you better have nothing to do with this, mother."

Li Yuming's mouth gaped as she stared at her retreating back. She hated it when Luna distantly called her "Ms. Li." But right now when she called her mother, the word seemed to slice into her heart like a sharp dagger.

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Lanni furrowed her brows after witnessing that fight. No wonder these two didn't truly get along. They didn't trust each other and each thought that the other would hurt her. How insane.

She walked in and when Li Yuming saw her, she quickly pushed her thoughts to the back of her mind and plastered a smile onto her face. "Lanni, you're finally here."

Seeing that she was acting like nothing had happened, Lanni smiled and played along. "Yes. Is Luna home yet?"

Li Yuming's face paled at the mention of Luna. The name was almost like a jinx to her ears. Avoiding the question, she took the invitation cards from the table and showed them to Lanni. "I have been invited to an art gala and I have an extra invitation card. Do you want to come with me?"

"When will it be?" Lanni felt her head hurt. She was worrying about her father right now and didn't think she would be in the mood to attend any event in the next few days.

"It's in a week. If you won't have anything to do then, we can go together."

Lanni forced a smile and accepted the invitation card then went upstairs and headed straight for Luna's room.

The latter was tapping furiously on the keys of her laptop and Lanni almost didn't want to be anywhere within her radius. However, this was crucial and Xia Hanchen's life depended on it so she made her way over to her and sat on the bed. "Why do you suspect her?"

"Who?" Luna asked but her fingers neither paused nor slowed down.

Lanni scoffed when she heard that question she had expected to hear. "You know what I'm talking about, Luna. You were arguing with her just a moment ago."

Luna paused and looked at her. "How much did you hear?"

"You warned her, saying she better have nothing to do with this."

Luna was slightly relieved. It was great that she didn't hear anything. This meant she could bluff her way out of this. Although she did not trust Li Yuming, she didn't want to directly sow discord between her and Lanni, especially since she didn't have any proof yet.

Alas, she was just about to open her mouth to speak when Lanni saw through her. "You better not think of lying to me."

Luna was at a loss. Left with no choice, she could only tell the truth.. "She is a two-faced hypocrite."

Chapter 272 - Used Up All Effort For Nothing

Lanni took a moment to process what Luna had just said and frowned. How could Luna say such words? "You do know that she is our mother, right?"

"Yes. Which is why I didn't want to point this out before. I didn't want to create friction between you two."

Lanni still found it unbelievable. Although she knew that her mother made some ruthless decisions sometimes, it was all with a good reason. "What made you think that way of her?" She asked gently.

"Can we not talk about it anymore?" Luna knew what her sister wanted. She was probably trying to understand both sides so she would come up with a solution that would make she and Li Yuming understand each other more. But the problem was that between her and Li Yuming, there was really no solution unless time could be reversed.

Lanni sighed and stood up. "If you ever want to talk about it, you know where to find me."

Luna nodded and resumed to what she was doing, casting Lanni a sidelong glance. "I think we should contact Lin Jian as soon as possible and discuss the details with him."

"The guys already did. They should give us an update soon." Lanni responded.

"They are more reliable than I thought." Luna laughed slightly.

While they were still chatting, Luna received an incoming video call request on her laptop. Because of the speed at which she was typing, she answered it without intending to and the screen turned dark.

"A hacker?" Lanni asked in alarm when she saw the black screen.

"Shouldn't be." Luna was at ease, knowing that the caller had to be someone who was actually interested in speaking to her.

The screen remained black for a while and if it wasn't for the green button that indicated that the video call was on, she would have thought that her laptop had crashed.

"Who could this be?" Lanni was curious and started to speculate. Cheng Yu? That was the only person who was close to Luna but she couldn't come up with such nonsense. Jiang Xingyu wouldn't do something so pointless either.

She was just about to suggest hanging up when the display on the screen shifted and a handsome face appeared. What shocked Lanni was that this face was quite familiar...

"You..."

"Hello princess!" The man's tone was jovial even though his face remained cool and indifferent. When he realized who the person closest to the screen was, he corrected his statement. "Hello Luna! Have you been well since we last met?"

Lanni was infuriated merely by the sight of this man. "First you were making life difficult for me, and now you are torturing my sister. What exactly do you want?"

"I just want to say hi. Can't I?" he ruffled his already messy hair with a languid expression.

Lanni gnashed her teeth. If only slaps could be sent over video calls...

"Anyway, princess, I have a piece of news for you. Should I say?"

Lanni hated the way he called her but what she hated more was his silly way of beating around the bush and making her anxious. "Speak if you want to or click the red button if you don't want to."

"Heh." The man let out a chuckle. "You look so cute when you are angry. All I wanted to break is... Li Xiyuan escaped from prison. Congratulations, you used up all that effort to achieve nothing."

Seeing Lanni on the verge of exploding from his taunting, he decided to cut it short. "Since I have already broken the news, I will hang up now. See you soon, princess!"

Lanni remained silent. See you never!

A moment before he hung up, he grinned at the screen. "By the way, your dad is here with me."

"What did you say?"

Alas, the call had already been hung up.

"Call him back. What does he mean?!" Lanni was on the verge of losing her mind as she urged Luna.
"Call him back!"

Luna who had been silent all this while finally had a reaction. "I can't."

"What do you mean? Why can't you?"

"He called me by hacking into my laptop. How am I supposed to call him back?"

"By hacking into his laptop," Lanni said matter-of-factly. Wasn't that obvious?

Luna heaved helplessly. "Lanni, I can hack into anyone's computer but this is Flynn we are talking about. I wouldn't even be able to start before he counterattacks."

"What nonsense are you saying? How can you make a conclusion without trying? You are the best hacker and..." she no longer knew what to say and the person she was speaking to was merely staring at her like she was an alien.

"Nevermind." She took her phone out of her purse and gave Xiehan a call. "Honey, are you busy right now?"

"Of course not." He answered instantly although she could hear the sound of paper being flipped on the other side. He was obviously working but his meaning was clear—he could never be too busy for her.

Lanni felt a flood of warmth fill her heart. If it was not urgent, she would not bother him at such a time.

She took a deep breath then explained the situation to him. When she was done, even he was surprised that there was someone whose hacking skills intimidated Luna.

"But how exactly did she know what he was capable of, and whether or not she could beat him?" Xiehan questioned.

Lanni thought about it and glanced at Luna. the latter had heard Xiehan's question through the phone so she answered, looking dejected, "I tried to hack into his phone before."

Hearing this reason, Lanni was almost on the verge of giving up. Just how good was he?

Xiehan went over to Li Yuming's villa immediately and met the girls on the terrace. They led her to Luna's room and he turned on his laptop as soon as he sat down and used the details from Luna's laptop. Surprisingly, he was able to use the same method to video call Flynn in less than two minutes. He glanced at Luna in surprise.

At that moment, Flynn's face appeared on the screen so he decided to deal with the scumbag first.

When the man saw Xiehan's face, he broke into a smile as he peeked at Lanni who was behind Xiehan. "Tsk, tsk, you have become even more princess-like. You actually need a man to save you. How useless."

"Do you have my dad or not?" Lanni was pissed off.

"Hahaha" the man suddenly laughed.. "That was just a joke I made up. You actually believed it?"

Chapter 273 - Girlfriend?

Lanni glared at the screen. Can I beat this man up?

"You shameless man! How dare you joke around about such a matter?" She leaned over Xiehan's shoulder and was about to end the call when she felt that something wasn't right. "How did you know that my dad is missing?"

Flynn chuckled aloud. "Don't give me that suspicious look, okay? I just received intel and wanted to confirm it. It seems like the rumor was true after all."

Lanni no longer knew what to do with him. Xiehan, on the other hand, was staring at the man as though his eyes could pierce through the screen and right into the man's body. "Since you have nothing to say, quit bothering my girlfriend."

Flynn laughed even louder when he heard the warning. "Ha, girlfriend? My princess will never have a boyfriend and even if she does..."

To stop him from speaking any more nonsense, Lanni leaned over again and was going to slam the laptop shut.

"Actually, princess, I really have your dad." The man suddenly spoke again. This time, he sounded like he had stopped fooling around and was more serious.

"What did you say?" Lanni felt a chill down her spine.

"Please don't blame me, okay? I didn't want to kidnap him either. It's just... orders from above."

"You're kidding." She said sternly.

But this time, Flynn was no longer laughing and making fun of her. "I'll send a video to your phone. Once you watch it, you can decide whether I'm joking or not."

Just as he finished speaking, Lanni's phone chimed and she took it out with trembling hands.

A few seconds into watching the video, she looked pale with shock.

Xiehan and Luna rushed to her side to watch the video and were even more confused. How could such a thing happen without anyone noticing?

In the video, Flynn walked into the ward boldly like it was part of his own territory. He chatted with Xia Hanchen casually for a moment then suddenly injected with with a liquid and the latter passed out.

After that, he wheeled Xia Hanchen out of the room so openly that it was hard to believe that no one saw them.

"What's all this? What do you want?" Luna was the first to snap out of the shock and ask. "No matter how much you ask for, we will give it to you. Just return our dad to us."

Flynn clicked his tongue in disdain. "If I wanted money, why would I get the old man? I would kidnap the princess, okay? She is more valuable."

"What do you want then?" Tears glistened at the corners of Lanni's eyes.

Flynn focused on her and then glanced at Luna and Xiehan. "Excuse us."

"We are not going anywhere." Luna blurted.

Flynn huffed and focused on Xiehan instead. "If something happened to your future father-in-law because you are being stubborn, I'm afraid the beauty will no longer want you."

Xiehan was about to retort when Lanni held his hand and squeezed it. "It's alright." It was a video call anyway.

Luna and Xiehan had no choice but to go out.

As soon as they were out of the room, Luna let out a string of curses. "That despicable monster! I can't believe I once thought he was a good match for my sister."

She shut her mouth when she realized that Xiehan was right beside her. Luckily, he was not paying attention to her and was busy on his phone instead.

He made a string of phone calls and when he was done, he glanced at the shut door. 'That idiot better not have any intentions towards my woman.' He thought.

As a man himself, he knew that Flynn's gaze towards Lanni was complicated. It was as though he missed her, longed to meet her again and the thought of it was driving Xiehan crazy.

He was done gathering his special team and was about to start giving them instructions when Lanni left the room looking dejected.

"What's going on? What did he ask for?" Luna rushed over worriedly.

Lanni stumbled into Xiehan's embrace, looking like her whole life had been sucked out of her. "He wants me to go back to Germany."

"Go to Germany..." Xiehan repeated the words he had been dreading to hear the most. From the moment that man asked him and Luna to leave the room, he guessed that it would involve such a request but even then, he was still shocked to actually hear it.

"G-go to Germany?" Luna was stunned too but she reacted faster. "Then let's go. We will go together and bring several trained men with us. He will not be able to hurt a strand of hair on your head."

"You don't understand." Lanni was so confused that her head hurt. "He didn't ask me to go to Germany to bring him back. He wants me back in the organization. He wants me to take back my identity as Phoenix."

"That's not going to happen." An icy glint flashed past Xiehan's eyes. He didn't know much about the said organization but one thing was for sure. Being a member of that organization was the reason why Lanni's life was sought in the past.

She had recovered more of her memory in recent days so she had told him about it. Before her accident, she had offended several powerful figures by exposing their dirty deeds. If she went back to that sort of lifestyle...

Lanni knew what he was thinking and sighed. "What else can we do? Send your special team to Germany to bring him back? I'm afraid that's not possible."

"What's impossible about it?" Xiehan frowned.

"That organization..." Lanni didn't know what words to use. "They are all sly foxes and are hard to deal with. If they were not sure that nothing would go wrong, they wouldn't have used this method."

Xiehan knew that hard-to-deal-with sly foxes was an understatement but even then, he was not willing to let Lanni go to that place. "Why don't we at least try? If we fail, I will go with you."

"I have an idea." Luna spoke up before Lanni could answer. "I will go on your behalf."


"What are you saying?" Lanni was stunned.

"Aren't we identical? We are in fact, so identical that even Xingyu and Xiehan couldn't tell us apart." She laughed, referring to how the two men had both thought that they had fallen for the same woman.. "If I go in your place, no one will ever suspect a thing."

"How could you even think of such an idea?" Lanni scolded when she recovered from her shock.

Luna looked helpless. "What else am I supposed to do, send you to that place? You haven't even completely recovered your memory yet!" Even with her memory of the past, it was dangerous to be there. With the current circumstances, it was several times more dangerous. But for Luna, it was slightly less dangerous since she was skilled in combat and would be able to protect herself more than Lanni could.

Lanni massaged her temples when she heard that explanation. "I don't want to go either." But this was about her father's life—she would go to hell if she had to. Besides, "Perhaps there are not many people who know about us being twins, but Flynn does. What if he discovers that you are impersonating me?"

"He wouldn't find out but even if he did, he would be on our side." Luna was firm. Everything he had done so far was to help them  except this.

"Why would he be on our side? Are you listening to yourself?" Lanni was on the verge of breaking down.

Luna finally shut up and started thinking of another solution.

As Lanni's boyfriend, Xiehan felt useless for not being able to do much to help his own girlfriend. However, there was no way he was going to give up without trying. He didn't believe that the organization was as invincible as they made it sound. "What's this organization anyway? You have never mentioned its name before." He probed.

Lanni contemplated for a moment before mumbling as though she didn't believe it herself. "Galaxis..."

"Huh?" Xiehan was taken aback. This name... "Isn't that a news outlet?"

"Yes." Lanni was in disbelief too, as she remembered the details. "It's just a normal news outlet on the surface but in real sense, it's a secret organization of undercover journalists and underground investigators. Galaxis Academy... that school actually exists."

"The one where Flynn got a fake student identity card for Luna? I thought it was a nonexistent school that Flynn made up to deceive your father." No matter how he searched he had not found anything related to the school.

"That's where I was being trained to become an undercover journalist. Flynn was my trainer and all those missions were merely assessment tests, most of which I failed." Lanni explained.

"If an assessment test puts your life in danger, what will happen when you undertake real missions?" Luna shook her head at the thought of it. Why did they want her back if she failed her assessment tests and was even in danger? Logically, they should think of her as weak and incompetent, right?"

Lanni naturally knew what her sister was thinking and could not blame her for that. She was wondering about the same thing too. Was it perhaps...because the big boss had found out that she failed all those tests because Flynn deliberately sabotaged her?

She thought back to what Flynn said and decided not to mention it. If she did, Luna would surely insist on going with her. She would rather be in danger alone—if there was any danger awaiting her—that drag her sister along with her.

She sighed and speculated, "Perhaps they don't need me to complete actual missions. Maybe it's some other reason."

"Flynn said they wanted you to restore your identity as Phoenix." Luna reminded.

"She will not go." Xiehan said for the umpteenth time. This time, he was sure of what to do.

"What do you have in mind?" Lanni asked curiously.

He stretched his hand to pat her head. "Go and take a nap while I make arrangements. I will explain everything once I'm done."

Since he said so with so much certainty, Lanni trusted him and nodded.

"You should rest too. I will call you once I've handled everything." He said to Luna, and she nodded and went downstairs.

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Li Yuming was curious when she saw Xiehan enter the house anxiously a while ago. She wanted to ask what was going on but didn't want to bother him at the moment. Hence, she sat in the living room and waited.

A long while later, she finally heard footsteps heading downstairs but when she lifted her head, she saw that it was Luna instead. As soon as their gazes collided, all those words from earlier flooded back into her mind and her lips twitched.

Luna walked over to her and sat on the couch next to her.

Li Yuming didn't know what to say. Honestly, she was tired of fighting with her daughters—especially Luna. She hoped the latter would leave her alone so they would not start arguing all over again.

"Mum," Luna started, her voice slightly nervous. Li Yuming turned to look at her in surprise and she smiled awkwardly then continued, "Regarding all those words I said earlier I would like to apologise."

Li Yuming was slightly taken aback. She smiled slightly and said, "You don't need to. I'm the one who should apologise." 'For not fighting harder in the past.' she added mentally. If she had fought harder and gotten custody of Luna, she would have brought her up. Then, she would never have to worry about her character.

Luna pursed her lips and stood up. "You are not to blame for anything. Just... try to let go of your past grudges, will you? They will not do you any good."

"Why did Xiehan come?" She tried to change the topic. Grudges? They were not merely grudges.

Luna was unsurprised by the question. "We found our dad. We know where he is now." She studied Li Yuming's expression and when she saw that it didn't change in the slightest, she smiled. "We don't have the ability to bring him back yet, but at least we are now hopeful."

"Anything I can do to help?" She offered out of the blue. When she realized how startling it was, she coughed. "For Lanni. I know how worried she can get and if he is not found soon, she might run around and cause trouble."

Luna held her chin while deep in thought. As expected. "No thanks. I'm sure Lanni, my brother-in-law and I can handle it so we do not have to trouble you. Anyways, thanks for offering to help, mum."

Li Yuming was at a loss. No matter how sincere she was in offering her help, it would sound fake as long as Xia Hanchen was involved. In truth, she would never have wanted to help him either.

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Lanni was unable to fall asleep and kept tossing in bed. After some time, she decided to get up and grabbed her phone. She made a call and just when she hung up, she got a text message from Flynn.

"Damned bastard!" She cursed when she read the content of the message.

She got out of bed and freshened up then gave Xiehan a call to ask where he was. He had already gone back to his mansion, so she decided to talk about it the following day.

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The next day.

Lanni was not the only one who went to Xiehan's mansion. Jiang Xingyu, Lin Jian and Luna were there too, and they looked like a team seated together around the table. Several bodyguards stood at the side and Xiehan was explaining their role.

"This is my special team and each one of them is highly skilled. I have divided them into three teams and given them each their roles." He stated. "We will use the same plan we used to get evidence from Li Xlyan's study, only more sophisticated this time.

The first team will get Uncle Xia's location while the second team causes a distraction. If all goes well, then these two teams will manage to get him out. If anything goes wrong, the third team will step in."

"What if there are booby traps?" Lin Jian asked.

"They are highly skilled." Xiehan restated, to assure Lin Jian and everyone else that there was nothing to worry about.

"The rest of us, together with a few investigators from Lin Jian's side, will find Li Xlyan."

Lanni had almost forgotten about that woman. Hearing Xiehan's plan, she knew that it was fool-proof. He would not have promised anything if there was less than 100 percent chance of success.

However, it only made her feel worse.

"What's wrong?" Xiehan was the first to notice that she didn't seem alright.

Lanni wanted to say that it was nothing but Xiehan was planning to send the team off as soon as possible. This was the only chance to stop them. "This... all this is not necessary."

"What are you saying? He is my future father-in-law and this is the least I can do to ensure his safety." Xiehan cupped her face, thinking that she was worried about him troubling himself.

Lanni held his wrist with her shaky hand. "It's just... not required." she stuttered.. "I want to go to Galaxis."

Chapter 275 - No Choice Left

Everyone froze when they heard Lanni's sudden declaration.

"What? You're kidding, right?" Lin Jian questioned.

"Think about what kind of situation we are dealing with. Do you think I would be in the mood to joke around?" Lanni shot a look at him.

"If you're not joking, then what's going on? Why do you suddenly want to give up when we have already come to this point?" Luna could not understand no matter how she thought about it.

Xiehan's forefinger tapped the table surface rapidly as he looked at her. "Did that man threaten you?"

"Which man?" Lanni feigned ignorance with a tiny smile.

"What did he say to you?" Xiehan's gaze narrowed. He had the urge to fling that guy away using his ponytail.

Lanni shifted her gaze on everyone before it stopped on Xiehan. "Can we talk about it in private?"

"Why? Aren't we all..." Lin Jian was about to complain when Luna stopped him.

"It might be personal. Give them a moment."

Hence, Lanni and Luna made their way to his room.

"What's wrong?" He asked as soon as they were on their own.

Lanni took out her phone and showed him the screen. It was a text message from Flynn and indeed, a threatening one.

[Princess, I will be expecting you in two days. By the way, your boyfriend better stop trying to act smart with us: or do not blame us for not being kind.]

Xiehan clenched his fists when he saw the text message.

"I made him promise to let dad come back as soon as I arrive. He is an asshole for sure but at least he doesn't break promises..." she held his hand soothingly. "It's alright. I didn't agree to do anything else so as soon as they let dad go, I will come back."

"It's not going to be that easy." Xiehan was sure of it.

"I know." Lanni sighed in exhaustion. Being forced into going to that place was one thing but being pressed for time was another matter. Why didn't they simply kidnap her then?

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Downstairs.

"You are being weird." Lin Jian suddenly stated, his scrutinizing gaze directed towards Luna.

Luna frowned but before she could react, Jiang Xingyu held her hand and glared at the blabbermouth protectively. "Don't you have anything else to blabber about? Why are you picking on my..." he was about to blurt the word 'wife' but quickly corrected himself to avoid getting scolded later, "Why are you picking on Luna?"

Lin Jian shot him a look. "Haven't you realized it yet? First, she seemed to be in good terms with Flynn and even befriended him. Then she was apparently unable to do something that is usually a piece of cake to her and now, she is saying nothing to stop Lanni from going back to that place. Instead, she seems to want her to go."

Luna cringed and slammed her hands onto the table. "So what if I said something? What would that do? She will still go anyway."

Lin Jian was shocked. He chucked like a lunatic and looked at Jiang Xingyu. "Did you hear that?"

"That's enough. I'll beat you up if you spout any more nonsense!" Jiang Xingyu threatened. As Lanni's sister, Luna was the most worried, okay? She was just as helpless as everyone else and had limited capability.

Lin Jian was about to say something else when Xiehan returned with Lanni.

Seeing their helpless faces, he was curious. "What's going on?"

"Lanni has to go." Xiehan reported. "I will accompany her for as long as I can."

Luna took a deep breath. "If that's the only choice then... I have no objections. I will take care of matters here and make sure Li Xiyan learns her lesson."

Lin Jian shot her a disdainful look and stood up. "We will all team up and find Li Xiyan. No matter where she hides, we will find her even if she goes to space. Besides, stop making it sound like they will be gone for ages, okay? You make it sound as though..."

"Stop it already, for the last time." Jiang Xingyu warned. What was wrong with this fellow? Was it because he had been dumped by Ruby that he was finding fault in everyone else?

Lanni and Xiehan noticed the tension in the room but they didn't want the matter to escalate so they didn't ask what was going on.

Lanni smiled. "I'll inform mom about it. She will be so worried..." her eyelashes suddenly drooped as her voice broke at the end of her statement.

"This is why I'm going to accompany you." Xiehan held her hand. One of the reasons was because he couldn't bear to let his girlfriend go on her own, especially when there was a possibility of unforeseen danger.

But if Xiehan was going along, Li Yuming would be less worried about it.

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"What sort of insanity is this?! No way. You are not going anywhere." As expected, Li Yuming was not agreeable.

"Mom, it's not like I have any other choice here. I..." Lanni was on the verge of passing out. She had repeated the same explanation for the past one hour but her mother was adamant.

"You have a choice. Why don't you ask me for help? I will use my connections to find someone who can locate him and bring him back. Besides, there is such a thing as the police. Why don't you inform the police?"

"If I do that, they will hurt him." She said for the umpteenth time.

"Then so be it."

"What?" Lanni couldn't believe what she had just heard. Her ears were probably playing tricks, right?

Li Yuming massaged her temples as she looked at her daughter.. "What do you want me to tell you? Don't you already know how dangerous it is to go? Even a three-year-old child knows that one must never trust a kidnapper. How can you guarantee that you will not be hurt in the process? What if you fulfill their request, but they still turn against you and hurt both of you?"

Chapter 276 - He Does Not Deserve It

Lanni could agree that she had a point but, "If I do as they say, then they may set dad free, or they may go back on their promise. But if I don't go, then they will surely hurt him. Since there is a sliver of hope, why should I give up?"

"I would agree if it was anyone else but him." Li Yuming snickered. "He is not worthy."

Lanni stood up. "He may not be worth it for you since you hate him so much anyway. But to me, he is. I'm willing to risk it all." She turned to go back to her room. If this topic continued, they would fight again.

"He is a murderer." Li Yuming suddenly spoke.

Lanni paused in her steps and turned robotically. Her face went pale in shock when she digested what her mother had just said. "You..."

She was about to ask what her mother meant when in the next second, a chuckle escaped her lips. "To make me give up, you will surely say anything, right? By claiming that he is a murderer, I will hesitate to go and start investigating whether you are telling the truth or not and because of this delay, I will be late. Even if I do go in the end, they might still hurt him.

Oh, and... when I start investigating, who is to say that you will not create some pieces of 'evidence' to make me believe it?"

Li Yuming broke into a bitter laugh. Was the father-daughter pair so formidable at convincing people, or was her Lanni just too gullible? Or could it be that her capability as a mother was so lowly that her daughter no longer trusted her? She even thought she was capable of coming up with such a meticulous scheme...

No matter what it was, she decided that she would no longer hold back. "Come here." she sat down and patted the space beside her.

Lanni thought about it briefly and walked over.

Li Yuming called the housekeeper to make sure none of the servants went to the living room for the next one hour. After making sure that they were alone, she took a deep breath. "You have always asked me what I hate so much about the Xias and why I do not trust Xia Hanchen. I did not want to give you an answer before because no matter what, they are your biological family but now... it seems like I have run out of choices.

Lanni parted her lips but no words could leave her mouth. She could only wait for Li Yuming to continue.

The latter looked reluctant to talk about it but braved it. "Before I met Xia Hanchen, I was just a slightly popular artist with no family except my brother. He was still in university so I took care of him. We were as close as siblings could possibly get."

"You have a brother?" Lanni was surprised. She had never heard of it.

"I did." Li Yuming said with a bitter sigh.

"Oh..." Lanni understood the meaning behind it instantly.

"When I got married, I paid more attention to my husband and in-laws. As for my brother, I would only keep contact with him on phone." She explained. ❖❖ But when I was expecting you and your sister, he was so worried about me that he started coming to my house frequently to check on me.

No one minded him at first since he was my brother but with time, he started getting into fights with my in-laws. This was majorly because he once said that he had suspicions about them, paired with the fact that he tried to stand up for me when Li Xiyan happened and it got so huge that he wanted Xia Hanchen and I to get a divorce. Of course, this is not the reason why we went separate ways."

"Then what is?" Lanni already knew about how her paternal grandmother set her father up with another woman just to get rid of Li Yuming so she guessed that this must be the reason behind their divorce.

However, Li Yiming's explanation was different from what she knew. "Because Xia Hanchen adamantly rejected the divorce, my brother wanted to find a way to force him to agree. Hence he started investigating your father to get a weakness. He found something... earth-shattering."

"What did he find out?" Lanni was curious.

"I don't know. When he found out the secret, he called me and said that he had discovered something shocking about my husband and was going to tell me about it at home. But he didn't return alive." Li Yuming dabbed at the corners of her eyes and blinked rapidly to stop the huge teardrop that was threatening to fall. "On his way back, he had an accident and died on the spot."

Lanni felt emotional as she asked, "If he didn't tell you anything, how did you conclude that dad is a murderer?" She had expected that the shocking secret was what made them divorce.

"It was a planned accident. There were several bullet holes on his car and he had been shot twice. My brother had no enemies except the Xias and it was just too coincidental that he died immediately after uncovering their secret."

When Lanni thought about it, it was indeed suspicious. But one couldn't draw a conclusion from a suspicion, right? "Did you investigate it?"

"I tried my best, Lanni. I couldn't get anything from it but. That's until your paternal grandmother approached me one day and asked me to take you and leave. If I didn't, my brother would not be the only person I lost."

Lanni was so shocked that she didn't know what to say anymore. She had not expected the truth to be like this.

She might have still had suspicions but she recalled a fact: Luna didn't tell her anything about Li Yuming's brother. She probably knew nothing about him, which went to say that the family might have banned everyone from talking about him.

Her head spun from the sudden info dump. So this is why her mother hated the Xias so much...

Chapter 277 - Too Much Distrust

"So, because you could not find the truth after investigating for a long time, it automatically equals to him being behind the murder?" A chilling voice suddenly interrupted their conversation from behind them.

Lanni nearly screeched in shock when Luna suddenly appeared behind her. "When did you get here?"

Luna rolled her eyes and circled the sofa so Li Yuming could see her clearly. "I've been here all along. You were just too engrossed in listening to her lies to notice me."

"Lies?" Li Yuming was perplexed and enraged. "You have gone overboard! It's alright if your mind has been poisoned since you were young and naive but calling the truth a lie is too much! Do you think I would lie about such a matter?"

Luna sat down nonchalantly. "It's clearly... just a tale with no valid proof."

"Luna!" Lanni glowered at her. Saying such words would be alright if Li Yuming was making things up but by making such a heartless comment when she was clearly still grieving over the loss of her brother, wasn't it too cruel?

However, Luna did not think it was overboard or wrong in any way. She focused on Li Yuming. "You say that your brother mentioned discovering a secret about dad, did he tell you what he discovered or at least give you a clue?"

Li Yuming was reluctant to have this conversation with Luna but for the sake of clearing the air, she answered, "he didn't have the chance to."

Luna nodded slowly to indicate that she understood before asking, "Did he tell you when he would get home to tell you about it?"

"Why are you asking this?" Li Yuming was suspicious but when Luna said that she was simply trying to understand, she answered that too. "He said he was on his way."

"That's my point." Luna suddenly chuckled, earning question gazes from Lanni and Li Yuming.

She used the back of her hand to support her chin as she assessed, "Uncle didn't have the chance to tell you about the shocking secret he discovered, and neither did you find out about it later, so how did you conclude that it is enough to give dad a motive to murder him?"

"You..."

Li Yuming was about to ridicule her when the latter interrupted. "Besides, he said that he was on his way home. Even if he had not yet hit the road at the time, do you think there was enough time for dad to find out that secret had been discovered, plan a murder then hire people to do it? Don't you think he would have been too squeezed for time?"

Li Yuming narrowed her eyes with a snicker. "Since you think you know so much about assessing cases, why don't you become a detective?"

"That's enough." Lanni interrupted to prevent another fight from erupting. "Luna, just because he told mom that he was going to tell her the secret he discovered on that day doesn't mean that he had just found out. He could have found it out some days or even weeks beforehand and didn't know how to talk about it. Or he could have been trying to find evidence.

Who knows? Perhaps he even decided to talk about it when he sensed that his life could be in danger."

Li Yuming smiled. At the time, she had thought about this possibility too.

"You are too imaginative." Luna snickered. She looked at Li Yuming once again. "You said that he wanted to make you and dad have a divorce at any cost. What if he came up with some nonsense to slander him and make you sue him for a divorce?"

"My brother would never lie." Li Yuming was on the verge of losing her mind from being interrogated by her own daughter.

"Anyway, it was already hard to investigate twenty years ago and now, it will be much harder. There probably isn't any lead." Lanni was at a loss.

"That's another reason why I couldn't tell you about it in the past. I was afraid you would treat it as baseless words and accusations since there isn't any proof."

Luna rolled her eyes when she heard that. "Quit trying to guilt-trip Lanni into believing your tale. You're already not trustworthy at all! First, you lied and told Lanni that dad was dead. Then you claimed that the family rejected her and now you just spun a new tale about him being a murderer and expect everyone to believe you?

Let's not forget how selfish you are—you even lied to Lanni about the career she chose and shoved her into an art class just to fulfill your own dream. What kind of mother are you?!"

"Xia Luna, are you insane?! Even if you don't trust her, can't you at least have some respect? Is this how you talk to your mother?!" Lanni couldn't hold it in anymore and exploded.

"Lanni, you..." Luna clenched her fists and swallowed back the rest of her words. In the next moment, she chuckled. "I was wrong."

Lanni was just about to be relieved when Luna continued, "I was wrong to think that this wrecked family could ever reunite." Her chest heaved as she looked at Lanni. "Fine. You can trust her all you want. It's your choice whether or not to believe what she said. It's up to you to decide whether you want to save him or not... but if you don't, then let me go in your stead."

"I hope you will not begrudge me for trying to save the life of the only person who considers me his family." After saying that, she stormed off.

"Oh well... as if there's not enough drama already." Lanni massaged her temples.

"Here she was claiming that I'm trying to guilt-trip you when she is the one doing that in such a blatant way."

Lanni was no longer sure who to believe. She scanned her mother instead.

"What? Why are you giving me that look? I gave birth to that girl. How can I not know the kind of person she really is? I let her stay here... I thought her personality had changed after seeing that you cared about each other... but it turns out I only brought the snake into my house."

Lanni found the word offensive. "Luna is right. This family was not meant to reunite."

There was too much distrust.

Amid the dramatic tension, Lanni left for Germany the following day. Using the directions that Flynn sent her, she made her way to Galaxis Academy as soon as she arrived. She finally realized why she was unable to find anything related to the school in the past; it was too isolated with no building within several kilometers of its radius.

There was no way to go to the school with Xiehan, so he had to stay as close to the premises as possible, which was a few kilometers away to avoid getting into trouble with those deplorable human beings. After nagging her to send him a signal if she encountered anything dangerous, he finally reluctantly let her go.

Lanni was dropped off by a van that Flynn had sent to pick her up. When she arrived, she looked around at the familiar yet unfamiliar environment and had mixed feelings. She had once put in all her effort to be in this place...yet at the moment, all she felt was hatred and a tinge of fear. Would her dad really be okay?

She was thinking about it when someone bumped into her on his way.

"I'm so sorry, miss. Are you alright?" He quickly apologized then froze in the next second when he saw Lanni's face. "Phoenix! It's actually you! You came back?"

Lanni squinted her eyes as she tried to remember the excited young man before her. She remembered him from a certain evening in Country C. She was on a date with Xiehan and was just about to confess her feelings to him when this young man bumped into her. His reaction had been the same: he had been shocked to see her. Only that at the time, he was surprised about her being alive.

The young man continued rattling on in excitement. "I knew it was you that night! I heard someone say you had lost your memory. Is it true? Is that why you did not recognize me?" Aside from that night, Lanni couldn't remember him from anywhere else. "Who are you?"

"Eh? What? You don't know me?" The young man looked disheartened. "You can forget everyone else but how can you forget your own little brother? Ouch~my heart hurts."

Lanni didn't know whether to laugh or cry. It seemed like there was one of Lin Jian everywhere, right?

Seeing that she was going to ignore him, the young man quickly reintroduced himself. "I'm your little brother, Robin."

"B-brother?" Lanni exclaimed as she glanced at him suspiciously. Since when did she have a little brither?

"Have you forgotten this too? I must have been so unimportant." He sobbed exaggeratedly. "We were both trainees under Flynn, that monster."

"Monster." A sudden voice resounded from behind them and the duo reflexively turned to see Flynn glaring daggers at them.

"Uhm... sis, I just remembered that I have something else to do. See you around!" The young man fled in the blink of an eye.

"Stay away from him." Flynn warned.

"That's not necessary." Lanni responded. She would not stay around for long enough to bump into him again.

Flynn cleared his throat and said, "I don't know how much you remember but I'm not going to treat you like a new trainee. You will have to do everything on your own, princess."

"Can you stop calling me that?" Lanni was irritated.

"Aren't you one? Anyway. I'm used to it so you will have to put up with it."

Lanni swallowed back her anger. Whatever, she would not be staying for too long anyway. "Take me to my dad."

"You finally asked. Let's go, he's been waiting for you." the man led the way and she followed.

He led her to one of the buildings which she vaguely recognized. They went on to the first floor and the more they walked, the more Lanni remembered the place. This was...

They entered one of the offices and after locking the door from the inside, Flynn pressed his palm onto one of the walls. In the next moment, a screen appeared on the wall and detected his hand, then the wall opened up to reveal an exit.

"A fake wall?" Lanni was unexpectedly calm when she saw what looked like magic happen before her.

"You seriously forgot everything, didn't you? I don't know what the old man was thinking when he decided to call you back.

The old man he was talking about was the boss; Lanni had never seen him but he only ever chose recruits based on their abilities. Logically, Lanni should not have been brought back in her current state.

"I suddenly thought of a reason. Perhaps the old man knows that you have recovered most of your memory and is afraid that you may pose a threat to the organization. Say, he wouldn't have called you because he wants to finish you off, right?" Flynn blabbered as they made their way to the headquarters.

"Are you trying to scare me? I'm not a gullible little girl." Lanni scoffed.

Flyn chuckled. "You used to be one."

Luckily, they arrived fast and she no longer had to hear him assault her ears with matters of the past.

When they entered an awfully familiar building, an eerie sense of fear arose in Lanni's heart. Her heart pounded as though they were entering the depths of hell. She didn't know what scared her more. Was she afraid that her father might have been hurt already, or was it because she was meeting the boss for the first time?

Flynn received a phone call with instructions and led her to a room.

Lanni was just about to ask how many weird entrances and exits they were going to go through when she finally saw something that ignited a ray of hope in her heart.

"Dad!" She rushed up to the man chained onto a chair and embraced him tightly.

"Lanni, why are you here?" Xia Hanchen looked displeased and worried.

"What do you mean why am I here? Of course I'm here to save you."

"You shouldn't have come here. What if you get hurt?"

Ahem..." Flynn coughed at the side. "I hate to interrupt your heartwarming reunion but the boss is waiting."

Lanni straightened up and nodded. "Dad, I'll be back shortly."

Xia Hanchen masked the worry in his tone and sent a warning look to Flynn before saying, "Take care, come back fast."

After that, she followed Flynn to another room. She expected to see the boss but instead, it was a large screen. Not surprising. This was how everyone communicated with him.

She started the call based on her memory and spoke as soon as she had the chance. "I have come as you asked. When are you going to let us go?"

A chuckle reverberated in the room before the boss huffed in disdain. "Little thing, you have not even started on your mission, yet you are already asking to leave?"

"Excuse me?"

What mission?

Lanni had a bad feeling about this.

"Did you think I merely called you here to take a look at you because I missed you? You wouldn't be so naive, right?"

Lanni clenched her fists. I knew it!

Chapter 279 - She Will Be More Comfortable

Li Yuming's villa.

No matter how Luna tried to distract herself, she would still think back to her argument with Li Yuming the previous day. The phrase 'brought a snake into my own house' irked her to the core.

She had been feeling it for a few days now but after hearing that statement, it was clear just how uncomfortable her presence made her mother and how much hostility she harbored towards her.

She slammed her laptop shut and stared at her phone. After contemplating for a while, she picked it up and made a call.

Previously, she had moved out of her apartment at Goldenwing when Li Yuming persuaded her to move in with her. Luckily, she had not permanently moved out and the house still belonged to her.

In actual fact, she had encouraged Cheng Yu go back and inhabit it after Li Xiyan got arrested. So the apartment was clean and in good condition too.

All she had to do was move back in.

After informing Cheng Yu about her decision, she casually packed her luggage and headed out.

Just as she approached the door, the housekeeper rushed to her with surprise. "Miss, where are you going?"

"To my apartment." Luna responded with a gentle smile.

The housekeeper was not sure what to do in this situation. She turned to look at Li Yuming who was just making her way downstairs.

Luna grabbed hold of her luggage when Li Yuming stared at her. "I'll be on my way now."

Seeing that Li Yuming had no reaction, the housekeeper chose not to interfere either. "Alright. Take care, miss."

Luna snuck a final glance at her mother as she turned to leave. Although she had decided to leave, she couldn't help feeling a little disappointed that Li Yuming didn't say anything to try and stop her. She didn't even have any reaction...

Her lips curled into a tiny smile. "She will be more comfortable now."

—

"Tell me, what exactly is going on?" Cheng Yu asked as soon as Luna arrived.

Luna tiredly lugged her bags to her room then returned and slumped onto the couch. "Many things are going on. First things first, Lanni went to Germany?"

"What's wrong with Germany? She could have gone for a vacation, right? She once went there with Xiehan but they were interrupted..." Cheng Yu stopped when she thought of something. "Unless..."

"Yeah. She went back to Galaxis." Luna completed the statement.

"You've got to be kidding me. Why would she suddenly go back? Is she insane?"

Luna let out a tiny laugh. "I'm insane to have let her go. It's all because my dad was kidnapped by those bastards, and they wanted Lanni back in exchange of his safety. If it wasn't because I had to stay back and make sure Li Xiyang is caught again, I swear, I would have knocked her out and gone on her behalf."

"Hold on. Could you drop one bomb at a time?" Cheng Yu was stupefied by the sudden pieces of shocking news.

"Your dad was kidnapped? How did that even happen and how... and why didn't you tell me? Also, Li Xiyang escaped from prison?"

"It was Flynn who kidnapped him. Flynn is Lanni's former trainer, that bastard." Luna sat up straight and looked at Cheng Yu seriously. "I'm sorry that last time you were caught up in my mess and ended up getting kidnapped because of me. However, this time, I will not let anything happen to you."

"Luna, what nonsense are you saying? It's all because that woman is crazy. It had nothing to do with you at all." Cheng Yu held her hand, feeling useless that it was almost always Luna helping her out and rarely the other way round. "What are you going to do now? Is there anything I can do to help?"

"Yes. Be careful and don't go anywhere on your own without informing me." She had to know where her friend was at every time to avoid surprises like what happened before.

"Just this? I want to actually help." Cheng Yu frowned.

Luna was helpless against the girl's eager look. "Okay, I may need your help with..."

They were still speaking when the doorbell rang.

Luna looked at Cheng Yu suspiciously. "Are you expecting anyone?"

Cheng Yu thought about it and shook her head. "No." She didn't have any friends aside from Lanni and Luna so no one would look for her.

Luna harrumphed. "Someone is here to cause trouble already? I just came back!" Luna laughed and grabbed a floor lamp at the side, then went to the door. She opened the door slowly with her right hand ready to land the lamp on whoever was at the door.

"My...Ahh!" Madam Jiang shrieked when she saw a huge lamp landing down on her head as soon as she walked in. She was not able to dodge in time but the pain she expected did not arrive.

Instead, it was an embarrassed laugh as Luna quickly shoved the lamp aside. "Aunty, it's you..."

Madam Jiang patted her chest in fright. "Luna... it's been ages since we last saw each other and the first thing you want to do is kill me?"

Luna quickly pulled Madam Jiang to the couch and stood beside her obediently like a kid who was admitting to her mistakes. "Aunty, I'm sorry. I wasn't expecting you and thought that it was someone who came to cause trouble."

No one knew that she had moved out of Li Yuming's villa so naturally, she was not expecting any guests. Seeing that Madam Jiang still looked sulky, she quickly added, "If I knew that it was you, the first thing I would have done would be hugging you!" She then hugged Madam Jiang warmly.

Madam Jiang could no longer put up an angry act. "You little sweet-talker."

Luna chuckled happily. "Aunty, I'll get you something to drink. How about iced tea?"

"Sure." She was unable to say no to her passionate offer.

Cheng Yu at the side was getting more surprised by the second. She already knew that Luna and Madam Jiang had grown close but she didn't expect them to be this close!

She had never smiled this happily even when with Li Yuming, her own mother.

Cheng Yu had always known that what Luna lacked the most was a mother's love. However, her own mother was so prejudiced against her. Earlier when she called and explained what had happened with Li Yuming, Cheng Yu was so angry that all her adoration for Li Yuming flew out through the window. Who would treat their own daughter that way?

But now when she saw her usually gloomy friend fawning over Madam Jiang, she smiled and was relieved. If only Madam Jiang was Luna's mother...

But it didn't matter, right? After all, Jiang Xingyu was currently chasing Luna so in future, Madam Jiang might become Luna's mother-in-law.

For the first time, she felt as though that man was a good match for Luna. How did he get so lucky as to have such a loving mother?

Luna soon returned with the iced tea as well as a plate of cookies. "Aunty, have some tea!"

Madam Jiang joyously sipped on the tea. "As expected, Luna knows what I like the most. If only that punk of mine was half as sensible as you."

At the mention of Jiang Xingyu, Luna's ears heated up slightly as she thought back to the scene Madam Jiang stumbled into that night. Why couldn't she stop thinking about that scene?!"

"Luna, why did you leave your mother's house? I went over to invite you to dinner but your mother said that you left."

Luna finally comprehend. No wonder Madam Jiang knew that she had gone back to her apartment. It turned out she had gone to look for her earlier. She shoved aside the gloom that was threatening to surface on her face and smiled instead, "Xiao Yu was unable to get used to living on her own so I came back to keep her company. But aunty, you could have just given me a call."

Madam Jiang had detected the slight hurt in Luna's expression a moment ago. She set her teacup on the table and took her little hands. "Luna, don't worry about anything, okay? If Li Yuming does not know how to treasure her daughter, I will take you away from her and pamper you for the rest of my life."

"Aunty..." Luna was moved.

Madam Jiang hugged her and patted her back. "Alright, don't cry. Otherwise, that punk of mine will accuse me of bullying you and fight me to the death."

Luna laughed as she recalled the silly banters between Jiang Xingyu and his mother.

For a moment, she considered getting together with Jiang Xingyu just so she would make Madam Jiang her mother-in-law.

She scolded herself as soon as the thought surfaced. How could she have such a selfish and terrifying thought?

Cheng Yu wanted to give the duo privacy to talk so she excused herself and went to her room.

Soon after Cheng Yu left, Madam Jiang thought of something and looked worried. "Luna, isn't it dangerous for you to be on your own? Xingyu told me that Li Xiyan escaped prison. She might seek you and cause trouble." Madam Jiang thought about Cheng Yu and was worried about her too. The last time, Li Xiyan had used her to force Luna into admitting guilt for a crime she had not committed. Since she was once again free, wouldn't she seek revenge on Cheng Yu as well?

Since she was Luna's friend, she was concerned about her safety as well, and was even considering having both of them move in with her.

Luna felt emotional that Madam Jiang was worried about her. "Aunty, don't worry about me. I'm an expert at hiding. Previously, I was in hiding for more than a year and not even special level investigators could find me, let alone Li Xiyan. This time, if I decide to hide, she cannot find me either. Not to mention, our roles have been reversed this time and I'm the one looking for her."

Madam Jiang did not look reassured in the slightest bit. "What on earth is a hiding expert? Don't be stubborn. How about you come and live with us? Xingren and I will take good care of you."

Luna coughed in a fit, choking on her saliva. "Aunty, what are you saying?"

"Come and move in with us. There are no rules anyway, you can do what you want and treat the house as your own. I can guarantee that you will be comfortable."

Luna was glad for the offer but she could not agree to it. "Thanks for offering, but I'm afraid this is not appropriate."

After all, she and Jiang Xingyu were not even friends, let alone dating. How could she audaciously move into his parents' house?

Madam Jiang knew what she was thinking about and clarified, "That punk of mine rarely comes to the old house to visit. You may not even cross paths for weeks. Anyway, you can just take it as living in a friend's house if you don't mind having a friend my age."

Luna was almost moved by the offer but she had to reject it politely. "Thank you but... I cannot leave Xiao Yu on her own. I'm afraid she may encounter some danger."

Madam Jiang thought about it and realized that Luna made sense. She could not force her into moving in with her, but she thought of a different method of protecting her. "Since that's the case, how about I send a few bodyguards to protect you? This way, your security would be guaranteed."

Luna was about to reject it but seeing that Madam Jiang was genuinely worried about it, she couldn't bear to. "Then I will have to trouble aunty."

Madam Jiang was overjoyed. "In that case, I will ask that punk to dispatch four of the best bodyguards. Two will be in charge of protecting you and the other two will protect your friend."

"Thanks aunty." Luna hugged her arm, earning a pat on her head.

At that moment, the doorbell rang again and Luna went to check. This time, she checked the monitor first so she did not require a weapon when she opened the door.

"Why are you here?" She asked Jiang Xingyu who had just walked in.

"I went to look for you then found out that you were no longer home. I couldn't reach through to your phone. I was so worried about you yet here you are, having the time of your life!" He complained in a flurry as soon as he was asked.

When he saw his mother in the living room, enjoying a cup of tea and cookies, he was furious. "Didn't you tell me you had a meeting with your old workmates for a chat? Why are you in Luna's apartment instead?"

Madam Jiang peeked at her son smugly. "Do I need to seek your permission before I come to see my Luna?"

Jiang Xingyu frowned at her. "Was the lie necessary? Just admit you didn't want me to tag along. And since when did she become your Luna?" She was obviously his Xia, okay?

Luna laughed heartily as she watched the mother-son duo start with their bickering again.

Jiang Xingyu ignored his mother and went to Luna instead. "Xia, are you alright? Will you be safe?"

Luna was helpless at the sight of his worried face. "I'm really fine. You and aunty can relax. Aunty even decided to dispatch bodyguards..." she laughed lightly. They seriously treated her like a delicate toddler.

Jiang Xingyu was relieved, but he didn't forget to shoot a glare at his mother for stealing his thunder. In response, Madam Jiang made a funny face at him.

Jiang Xingyu tried to redeem himself. "If you need anything, you must tell me about it. I am there to help you."

Unlike all the other times, Luna did not reject his offer and instead, hugged him for a brief second. "Thank you."

Jiang Xingyu was so overjoyed that he skipped over to his mother to flaunt.

In response, Madam Jiang gave him a sidelong glance. "What are you so proud of? You have to work so hard, cross a thousand seas and defeat several monsters just to get something that I can obtain by merely being there."

Jiang Xingyu sulked in a corner. "Are you really my mother?"

—

Meanwhile, in Berlin.

Lanni was infuriated when she learnt that she had to accept a mission before her father was released.

The old boss was an absolute idiot.

Indeed, like begets like. A scoundrel like Flynn could only be under the guidance of a scumbag worse than him.

When the call with the boss ended, Flynn brought her to another office to explain everything about the mission.

She had to swallow her rage and listen to the mission that was awaiting her.

"Do you know Xing Real Estate?" Flynn asked.

Lanni racked her brains and said, "I've heard about it."

Flynn nodded in approval. "It seems like my job is much easier this time. Xing Real Estate is a normal real estate company on the surface. But in secret, the company deals in drug and weapon smuggling. That's where they get the money they use in running business."

Lanni was not surprised. She had heard a few such rumors.

"However, there is no evidence to prove this. Your task is to enter that company as an employee and find the evidence needed to prove the dirty deeds that take place behind the scenes." Flynn explained briefly.

Lanni blinked. "May I know why I'm the one being given this mission?"

"Could there be any other reason? Of course, it's because Xing Real Estate is in your city. Besides, your identity is the least suspicious." Flynn scoffed.

"Do you have some misunderstanding about the words least suspicious?" Lanni furrowed her brows. "This is a Real Estate company but I'm a former student of art, and I was an undercover journalist in training before. How on earth am I not suspicious?"

Flynn's gaze turned serious. "No one knows about your training. Of course, you will be in trouble if you tell anyone about it.

About being a student of art... surely, I do not need to tell you, do I? It's up to you to find a way into the company."

Lanni swallowed the anger that was brewing. What kind of hell-mode mission was this? "How long do I have?"

Flynn checked the mission sheet and quirked up a brow. "There is no time limit. You can take as long as you can."

Lanni's eyes flashed with an icy glint. Awesome! She would never finish the mission.

"Since I have already agreed to complete the mission, you should let my dad go, shouldn't you? After all, I'm going back to B City to carry out the mission."

"Of course we will let him go." Flynn grinned.

"Great. Then..."

Lanni was still speaking when he interrupted and added, "As soon as you complete the mission."

"What? What sort of madness is this? You blackmailed me to come here and I did. You forced this mission onto me and I accepted it. Now you want to continue holding my dad hostage?!" She slammed her fist onto the table in rage.

Flynn looked at her enraged little face and felt pity. "It's not my choice, princess. It's an order from above." He pointed a finger upwards.

Lanni took in a deep breath to suppress the urge to murder someone. "You are an asshole! You and your stupid boss are both gaping assholes!"

Flynn tittered in amusement. "You better not say that out there. If the old man heard what you said, he would have your head."

"Whatever.." Lanni wanted nothing more than to strangle that old man and chop his body into pieces.