

Chapter 41 - I Was Forced To Say All This.

The moment Li Lanni heard those words, her brain felt like it had exploded.

What was with that tone? This was not like Jin Shanshan at all! They had only met less than five times but there was no way that girl could cry and bite her lips, acting like a damsel in distress.

Those who didn't know would think she was being forced!

The worst part was that all the professors in this meeting were people with high IQ, and they were able to tell the implication of her actions without needing anyone to explain it to them.

"What are you saying?" one of them asked, his shaggy eyebrows raising as he observed the girl who was confident a moment ago and was acting wronged in the next.

"Lanni..." Jin Shanshan clenched her fists so tightly that her knuckles cracked. "Lanni had me testify against Professor Marcus."

She looked at all of them and wanted to shut up but then continued. "She told me to say that Professor Marcus used my poor grades to take advantage of me and..."

Looking at the professors whose expressions were turning from curious to dark to worse, she fell onto her knees, bumping against the floor with a thud. "I'm sorry. I shouldn't have agreed to do this kind of thing. I didn't have a choice either."

"You are saying that this is all a lie?" The dean asked, his voice revealing just how annoyed he was.

His thoughts echoed those of all the professors beside him as well as those of the onlooking students.

The so called evidence that Li Lanni to prove Professor Marcus of sexual harassment was fabricated? What?

"Tch. She actually thought she could do it?" Nina had come to watch for the amusement of it but she got a free entertainment show instead. It's not that she didn't know that Li Lanni was probably being framed, she was just amused at how addicted a certain someone was in causing trouble for herself.

"I didn't think Li Lanni would be like this. I actually thought she was telling the truth." A Bob-haired student sighed.

"I thought she was the righteous heroine bringing the truth to light." another mocked.

"Tsk. She has been in school for less than a month but she has done nothing but attract trouble every turn she takes."

"What's wrong with her? Is she addicted to seeking attention?"

In just an instant, all those so called supporters of the truth who couldn't wait to see her put the culprits in their right places were now mocking her.

They cursed her for wasting their time, wasting the professors' time and making up lies to satisfy her need for attention.

The school forum was filled with all sorts of nasty insults.

Of course, there was the smug ones. Ji Feifei snuck a glance into the conference room and her lips smugly curled into a smirk.

Huh. Lanni, that's what happens when you bite off more than you can chew.

In the next moment, she turned to the bob-haired girl from just now. "Oh goodness! I think it's a misunderstanding. Lanni wouldn't waste everyone's time just to fabricate evidence." She shrugged, revealing a helpless expression. "We all know that what she accused him of might be true. After all, the rumors have been going on for months."

The bob-haired girl was infuriated. "What do you know? Just because there are rumors means he really did it? She is clearly bluffing, yet you want to spew nonsense in the name of standing by her side. Are all first year students so naive?"

Ji Feifei amusingly narrowed her eyes. Perhaps she was one of the only people who knew this bob-haired girl's identity.

Not only was she Professor Marcus' niece, her background was not half bad. Everyone wanted to curry favor with her. She was already angered by the fact that someone was accusing her uncle. If she saw that there were still people on Li Lanni's side, she wouldn't let the matter slide.

Of course, the best outcome was for Li Lanni to be expelled. But if Li Yuming flaunted her wealth and got her back in school, it would be good if she established enmity on Li Lanni's behalf.

So what if she was a rich princess, huh? As long as everyone avoided her like a plague, she wouldn't have a day of peace in school. It might even drive her to drop out.

All while this happened, Li Lanni was in a daze. She only regained her composure after a while and looked at Jin Shanshan. "Shanshan, this is a serious setting. You cannot joke around."

As soon as the words left her mouth, she realized just how dumb she sounded.

She pinched her nose bridge helplessly, her gaze turning stern in a jiffy. "Jin Shanshan, you can eat sh*t but you cannot play people for fools. When did I force you to confess?"

In response to Li Lanni's suddenly cold demeanor, Jin Shanshan cowered in fright.

"Please help me! I'm scared." She said to no one in particular, but it made everyone believe she was under a threat.

"Little girl, you will be fine. You just need to tell us the truth. If student Li Lanni actually forced you to lie, she will not be able to hurt you." The dean promised.

Li Lanni was speechless. Although B City university had groomed many students who became famous actresses later on, Jin Shanshan was clearly a former student of art. What was up with the explosive acting skills?

"Did someone coerce you to do this?" she asked, maintaining her calm as much as she could.

"The only one who coerced me is you!" Jin Shanshan didn't bat an eyelid as she pointed a shaky finger towards Li Lanni. "I even have the script you typed out for me to use."

As soon as she said that, she produced a sheet of paper from the pocket of her jeans and passed it to the dean who was closest to her.

The man's eyes narrowed the moment he saw it. "It's really a script and it contains the statements she said just now."

Li Lanni peeked over and saw that it was typed out. Such an amateurish scheme?

"If that was written by me, why is it not in my handwriting? Anyone could have typed it out."

"Or you could have typed it out so it could be easy to shake it off if it got discovered." the dean replied in disdain.

"Heh. It's already at this point but she is still trying to shift the blame." The bob-haired girl was at it again.

"My eyes have been opened today. I didn't know there was such a troublesome student in our school."

The onlookers were still there. Of course they would be. No one would want to miss the end of such a twist.

Li Lanni ignored their curses and only had one person in her eyes. "I'm sure you already know the implication of what you are doing. It's better to stick to the truth because once the truth is revealed, you will either be safe or be regarded an accomplice.

So I will give you a last chance. Did I force you to come here and testify against professor Marcus? Did I also type out a script and give it to you?"

"Yes."

"Damn it. Kick her out already! What are they waiting for?" a student roared.

"Yes. It's already at this point. Whose time is she trying to waste?" another student went along, making Li Lanni want to ask just who it was that called them to watch.

Before the chancellor, whose time had been thoroughly wasted, could say anything, the girl who was the center of attention finally made a move.

"Alright." Her gaze shifted from Jin Shanshan who was being dramatic on the floor and skimmed through the audience before her hands reached into her purse. Her fingers lingered on her phone for a while before she changed her mind and fished out a thumb-sized flash drive instead.

"Well...."

Chapter 42 - The Truth Comes To Light

Li Lanni played with the flash drive in her hand, wordlessly letting everyone have the impression that she had some sort of evidence to prove her words.

When Ji Feifei saw the flash drive between Li Lanni's fingers, her eyes bulged. She ran off in the next second.

"I heard a rumor... about a girl from B City University..."

She paused to make sure she had everyone's attention. When she was satisfied by the silence that befell, she continued. "...who reported that she was being abused by a professor. But not only did the professor not pay for his crimes, the girl was blamed for seducing him and leading him on instead..."

This was a familiar rumor. As expected, some of those curious faces scrunched up into frowns.

"On the day she was punished for her 'misbehaviour', she jumped into the lake behind the school and took her own life. I wonder if it's true?"

Many people were familiar with this tale, because it had only happened a year ago. However, her version of it was distorted.

"If you are talking about the student surnamed Zhen, you are mistaken. She did take her own life, but it was because she was ashamed of herself after the truth was revealed." The dean quickly answered, trying to make this end quickly.

"Oh really." Li Lanni's hand paused in mid air.

"Why are you bringing this up anyway? Are you going to use the excuse that the dead tell no tales to pin the blame on Professor Marcus? Li Lanni, you are shameless! This student should be given a letter of expulsion right away!"

"Who said the dead tell no tales? They do tell tales. Many tales." She was disappointed that the dean didn't truly regard the students and their safety.

"May I use the equipment in this room to show you something?"

"Go on." She was granted the permission, so she connected the flash drive to the projector.

"The following video is not suitable for viewers under the age of 18. Luckily all of us here are of legal age." As soon as she said that, she played the video.

On the screen, the setting was an office. A student was having a discussion with the professor. They were the protagonist and antagonist of the new discussion that Li Lanni had just brought up; the student surnamed Zhen and Professor Marcus.

It was quite normal, but thanks to the kind of discussion that was going on, it was hard to not imagine that there was more to it.

Sure enough, halfway through the video, the professor stood up and held the student's shoulder. She didn't seem to react negatively to it but that was because it was just a pat on the shoulder.

The next time, he patted somewhere else – her backside. The girl was obviously startled and she leaped away.

At this moment, the professor chuckled and gazed at her in a way a professor shouldn't gaze at his student. "Anna Zhen, do you know how pretty you are?"

The girl walked towards the door. "Professor, thank you for guiding me. I will work hard... I should head back to class now."

He abruptly blocked her path. , "What's so fun about class? You should spend time with me instead."

"That... Professor... I can't. I really have to go to class now." From an outsider's point of view, she was trying to reject him without offending him.

But he didn't give up. He closed in on her and – when she tried to move away – he locked the door so she couldn't leave. "Are you scared you will not be able to keep up your grades if you don't study hard? Don't worry. Books are boring. You can work hard in other areas and do even better,"

At this point, the girl was evidently trembling. She was yet to have a chance to retaliate when the lecherous man grabbed her neck and kissed her.

Even the onlookers who were watching almost retched; it was hard to imagine what the girl must have felt.

The worst was yet to come.

He paid no heed to her protests as he shoved her to the wall and did despicable deeds to her.

No one could bear watching anymore.

"I'm sorry I had to let you watch such an inhuman scene. But only this way would everyone know just what kind of beast we live with. I mean, it was bad enough that he did that; why did he have to record it as well?"

Now that Li Lanni said it, the way this video was shot made it look like a movie of some sort. The angle was good enough to record everything and considering it was not shaky in the slightest and judging from the point where it started, it could only be so if it was voluntarily recorded.

"What a beast! I can't believe there's such a beast in this world!" One of the closest onlookers had tears staining her face.

"He's even right here in our school. What a monster!"

"I don't know what to say. Poor Anna. Perhaps that's not the only time she was assaulted."

"She was so traumatized..."

Sniffles filled the atmosphere.

Even the professors took a while to react.

The beast, Professor Marcus, was still in disbelief. How did she...!"

"That's a fake video. It must be photoshopped." He finally snarled when he regained his senses, cold sweat staining his back and his seat feeling like it was full of needles pricking his butt.

"Oh, is it? In that case I would like to trouble the school to find an expert to verify it." Li Lanni was not in a hurry to deny anything. Of course it was real. It had to be, logically and considering where she found it.

"That's enough." The chancellor interrupted. His tone was so grave that some students almost scurried away.

"Professor Marcus has been dismissed of his duties."

Silence followed.

In the next moment, the students erupted.

"Just that?!"

"No way! He caused a student to take her life. Who knows how many more have suffered in his hands?"

"Call the police! This matter has to be settled legally!"

Li Lanni revealed a satisfied expression. The chancellor must have been planning to hand him over to the police after proving the authenticity of the video but since the students might riot if he did that, he would be forced to leave it to the police entirely.

At least, she was sure that professor Marcus wouldn't use his so called backing to worm his way out and lie that the video was fake.

Chapter 43 - Killed Three Birds With One Stone

"I just realized something." One of the students said, catching everyone's attention all over again. "Dean Felix kept taking the side of Professor Marcus and even admonished Li Lanni. He even insisted that she should be expelled!"

This statement gave them a light bulb moment and the other students immediately started to chime in.

"That's right. Now that you mention it, it's too creepy."

"Could it be that they are accomplices and he knew that Professor Marcus was wrong from the start?"

Li Lanni's eyes squinted.

He couldn't have known. From the little she had seen and heard about him, he didn't seem capable of taking a bribe to hide a demon. He was simply too self righteous and believed that everything he thought was true was true.

It wouldn't be bad to let him learn a little lesson, though. After all his words almost earned her an expulsion just now.

Following the huge reaction from the students, the police had to be called to take Professor Marcus away. Li Lanni handed over the USB flash drive for that video to be used as evidence. Only then did things start to cool off.

As for Jin Shanshan, Li Lanni didn't spare her a glance. Not even when she was taken away to be interrogated.

Logically, it wouldn't make sense for Li Lanni to hire a fake witness if she had such substantial evidence.

Her statement about being forced by Li Lanni to testify against professor Marcus was automatically regarded as a lie. She had just earned trouble when she could have stuck to the truth and evaded it – Li Lanni really wanted to congratulate her.

"Lanni! Lanni, you're a hero!"

"Li Lanni actually brought the truth to light. How brave. She is so young yet so gutsy."

"Many people knew what was going on but didn't dare to say a word. Not only did Lanni speak up, she also found evidence and helped the school eradicate a huge monster."

"Lanni is simply a goddess."

"She's from the same art class as me. Should I be flattered?"

Li Lanni's lips twitched. Hero? Goddess? These students were too easily swayed.

Just a moment ago, they were all cursing her and calling her all sorts of names for wasting everyone's time, playing righteous and seeking attention. Now that she did that one thing they were scared of doing, she turned into a goddess and even earned some fans?

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By the time she managed to make her way out, the students crowded around her, she was so tired that she almost thought she had escaped from a battle field.

She rushed to the abandoned school building and sat in one of the classrooms.

"There you are. I almost collapsed just trying to find to you." Cheng Yu walked in after a while, panting and with a thin layer of sweat on her forehead. She handed Li Lanni a bottle of cold mineral water.

Li Lanni looked at it and tittered. "I'm not from a battle, okay? Can you not be so dramatic?"

Cheng Yu's cheeks flashed but she still maintained her position with her outstretched hand. Li Lanni saw that she was eager and took the bottle then unscrewed it.

However, no matter how hard she tried, she couldn't bring herself to drink the water. This was a new bottle of mineral water and it was still sealed when she took it from her. Why couldn't she drink it? She didn't suspect Cheng Yu, but she didn't trust her fully either – at least not just yet.

Cheng Yu naturally detected the hesitation in Li Lanni's mind and hurt flashed in her eyes. Nonetheless, she did not dwell on it.

"Right. Where did you get that video?" She asked, referring to the one she presented as evidence a while ago.

"Where else? From Ji Feifei."

"Eh?" How was that possible? Ji Feifei obviously wouldn't give it to Li Lanni. Wait, the main point was, where would Ji Feifei get it?

Li Lanni felt that she had nothing to lose even if Cheng Yu knew too much at this point. "Do you really think Ji Feifei and that professor would maintain their little 'alliance' if they had nothing against each other?"

"What are you saying?"

"It's as simple as that. He must have something against Ji Feifei to make her so loyal to him – and she must have had something against him too.

Since she did, she would obviously keep it in a place that would arouse the least suspicion – probably something that would look normal but isn't. While it's quite normal that girls will rarely put their bags down, Ji Feifei is different. She can leave her bag when she should but she will always take out the small blue purse and treat it like her baby. It wasn't that hard to guess."

Cheng Yu filled in the rest of the details. So Li Lanni found an opportunity to get that purse and search it? How did she even achieve such a feat? She said it herself that Ji Feifei didn't ever leave that purse...

"So how did you get it?"

"I found her weakness and that was it. Oh, the process doesn't really matter, right? It helped me kill three birds with one stone."

"Three birds?"

"Professor Marcus is going to hell and I got my revenge. As for the third stone, surely you can guess this. Ji Feifei won't be trudging far. Just give it a few days. He will pull her to hell with him."

From her tone, she didn't plan all this in one day. She must have been plotting this for a while - probably ever since she decided to expose Professor Marcus.

So this was her trump card all along...

Cheng Yu bit her lower lip in disappointment. She had thought that they were quite close. In the end, Li Lanni only revealed her other little options and hid her trump card from her...

"I heard there's an upcoming art competition. Do you want to check it out together?" She asked to change the topic.

"I don't think so. I still have an exam to ace, remember?" Li Lanni didn't look too interested.

"Yeah." In fact, she had only brought it up to kill the previous conversation.

Chapter 44 - Running Into Idiots

Running out of topics to talk about, Cheng Yu simply sat next to the lost in thought Li Lanni, trying to make her presence as scarce as possible.

She couldn't explain it, but the present Li Lanni was quite different from what she was like in the past. In the past, Li Lanni was a friendly little angel, smiling back at everyone who smiled at her and often hanging out with many of her friends.

The present Li Lanni, however, was too different. Not only did she not seem capable of keeping close friends, she was rather intimidating. She could emit a scary aura even when she was simply in her own thoughts.

But she couldn't blame her. After all, she had suffered a huge trauma and was now insecure about everything.

Ring!

Li Lanni's phone chimed.

She took it and checked the new text message.

Her eyebrows pulled together before she placed the phone on the desk facing down and lifted her hands to massage her temples.

That kind of reaction... It wasn't hard for Cheng Yu to guess who had texted her. From the timing, she could pretty much guess the content as well.

"I suddenly feel hungry. Let's grab a snack outside school, shall we?" She spoke when she was calm enough to not detonate.

"Sure." Cheng Yu's eyes lit up. "There's a newly opened dessert shop near the school. I heard their cakes are especially delicious; the head chef is a former winner of the Dessert Master competitions."

"Then let's go. What are we waiting for?" Li Lanni stood up and took Cheng Yu's hand. She didn't particularly like desserts, but she didn't mind eating them once in a while when she was in a bad mood.

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In the restaurant, the girls took the seats close to a window. The scenery from this spot was quite pleasing to the eye.

"What do you want to eat? I'm treating." Li Lanni looked at the girl opposite her.

"Ah... you don't have to." Cheng Yu felt embarrassed. She didn't like freeloading on others.

"It's alright. I'm in a good mood and I dragged you here so I should treat."

Cheng Yu glanced at the so called good mood and coughed. If this was the good mood, she would rather die than see the bad mood.

Still, she glanced at the menu in her hands. "Then I won't be overly polite."

Soon, their orders were taken and their desserts arrived just a few minutes later.

"How fast, huh?" Li Lanni drooled at the sight of the Russian tiramisu on her plate.

"Perhaps it's because they just started the business recently and they are yet to be too busy." Cheng Yu scooped a spoonful of her panna cotta and brought it to her mouth. "Ah – so sweet! No wonder they say that dessert is a definite reliever for stress."

After taking a bite of her tiramisu, Li Lanni had no objection against Cheng Yu's words. "As expected of a 'Dessert Master' champion."

Just as they were savoring the taste of their dessert and chatting more as their moods uplifted, the ultimate mood killer walked in. To be exact, two ultimate mood killers walked in.

"Lanni, you're here too?" The incomer was Ah Chen – and of course his sworn shadow Yu Guang wouldn't be stumbling far off.

"My queen, why didn't you tell me you wanted to eat dessert? I would order it for you from any restaurant you want; you wouldn't have to go through the trouble of coming all the way here."

"Yu Guang, what's wrong with you? Why won't you stop following me? What are you, my tail?" Ah Chen was incredibly annoyed by this fool who kept following him and ruining his chances.

"What tail? Even if I were a tail, I would only be Queen Lanni's tail."

Li Lanni: "I don't need a tail, thanks."

The young man leaped to her side. "Lanni, the next time you want dessert, how about you tell me? I'll buy anything you want."

"No thanks, really." Li Lanni's head was on the verge of exploding,

"Punk! Get lost!" Ah Chen admonished Yu Guang before making his way to Li Lanni. "You must be tired today. How about we have a meal together sometime? Maybe this weekend?" He was about to offer to pay for her dessert but he knew that Li Lanni would never agree to that.

Alas, even his reasonable request was rejected. "I'm busy these few days."

Ah Chen clutched his pierced heart.

Yu Guang gloated in his misfortune. "Hahaha... what made you think my queen would agree to go out with you? She can only go with me. Right, queen?"

Li Lanni stabbed her fork into her tiramisu in annoyance. "How did I manage to attract a pair of idiots just by eating tiramisu?"

Cheng Yu held a hand over her mouth and giggled. "Lanni, you do know they're still here, right?"

The dejected pair stumbled out just like they had stumbled in. Li Lanni heaved a huge sigh.

"You have so many admirers, Lanni. Keeping them off your hair is enough to keep you busy." Cheng Yu commented, looking at the retreating backs of the dejected pair.

"Not only do I have admirers, I have stalkers as well. Can't my life just be normal?"

Speaking of stalkers, it was as though they had made a prior agreement with her mouth. As soon as her words fell, her phone chimed.

"Please kill me already." Li Lanni cursed and, although she didn't want to check the text message, she knew it might be from someone else so she did.

[Enjoying your Russian Tiramisu? It does look sweet.] Li Lanni frowned, then another text message came in. [Just like you]

Li Lanni skimmed her gaze around the restaurant. There was no one in the vicinity who she knew.

She glanced at the previous message as well, the one she received while in the abandoned school building. [Well done.]

Her eyes constricted, then she glanced at the curious Cheng Yu.. "Cheng Yu, I think I figured out who's been stalking me."

Chapter 45 - What Was I Like In The Past?

Cheng Yu's face went pale. Her heart almost skipped a beat.

"You... you have?"

Li Lanni was thinking of a major possibility but Cheng Yu's reaction startled her. "What's wrong with you? You suddenly look so pale."

Seeing that Li Lanni was sensitive and had noticed her nervous state, she became even more nervous. "It's... it must be the wind."

Li Lanni raised an eyebrow, obviously not believing a word of her lame excuse. "I see. We should go back to school now. I'll go check out that art competition then go home."

Um, on second thought, I'll just go home. I can check out the competition tomorrow."

Li Lanni was going to tell Cheng Yu what her suspicions were but thanks to Cheng Yu's sudden reaction, she changed her mind.

On their way out of the restaurant, Cheng Yu resisted the urge to probe about the matter, mainly because perhaps what Li Lanni had in mind was merely a thought. She might just solidify the suspicion if she asked.

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Once Li Lanni was out of the car, the first thing she wanted was to take a bath. Everything else could wait... she was so tired.

Li Yuming was in the living room, reading a business magazine.

"Lanni, come here."

Li Lanni felt this was the kind of tone a mother would use if their child did something wrong. Out of reflex, she hesitated. "Mommy, can we please talk later?"

Li Yuming looked frighteningly stern. "No can do. Get your legs over here young woman."

Faced with no choice ,she walked over cautiously.

"Explain." Li Yuming placed her phone on the marble coffee table. On the screen was a video of what happened this afternoon.

No need to ask, she had found out.

"Eer... mom..."

"Lanni, if I remember correctly, I took you back to school so it can help you regain your memory. What's the meaning of all this?"

Li Lanni clutched the hem of her school uniform tightly. So news didn't take that long to spread around after all. But then again, Li Yuming was her mother. It would be even more surprising if she didn't get news about her so fast.

"Actually this... this was something my schoolmates and I planned to do together. It was only because it would look like a riot if all of us waltzed into the chancellors office and reported the incident that we decided that one person should do it. That one person just happened to be me."

As soon as she was done speaking, Li Yuming frowned and looked like she had just lost a few years of her life. "Lanni, what happened to you? You never lied to me in the past. Why did you suddenly start lying and hiding things from me?"

Her words were like a trigger to Li Lanni's heart, and she felt as though her heart was being squeezed by a rope. Guilt washed over her whole being. "Mom, I..."

Li Yuming patted her shoulder. "Forget it. Go and freshen up, okay? I'll prepare your favorite coq au vin for dinner.

Li Lanni took a bath quickly, but she couldn't help thinking about what everyone around her kept saying. They all said her personality had changed.

Cheng Yu had even joked that it was as though she had become another person altogether.

Hence at the dinner table, she looked at her mother. "Mom, what was I like in the past?"

As soon as the words left her mouth, Li Yuming's face contorted and panic flashed through her eyes. It was brief and lasted merely a second, Li Lanni didn't grasp it.

Li Yuming reached for a glass of water and downed it in a few gulps. She then took a deep breath and met her daughter's gaze. "Why would you ask that?"

"My schoolmates say I've become... different."

Li Yuming's grip tightened on her fork. If she really became different, how nice would that be? It would especially be so if she stopped doing some of the things she did before she lost her memory.

But that was like a dream out of a fairy tale. Li Lanni was clearly starting to revert....

"It's probably because you are more cautious and don't trust people easily anymore. You were quite naive in the past."

"Is that so...." Li Lanni thought it was logically possible.

However, there was something she couldn't comprehend about her mother's expression.

Why did she look like she was at a loss about something?

When they peacefully finished their dinner, she dispelled their suspicions. She seemed to be suspicious about everything lately.

The doctor had said that it was an effect of her mild trauma. If not, she would have started thinking too much about her mother's strange expression.

"Lanni, come sit here with me." When they had finished eating dinner, Li Yuming went and sat in the living room, patting the space beside her on the sofa.

The television was playing a popular idol drama.

She glanced at it and giggled. Who would have thought her mother was into these?

She went over and sat next to Li Yuming, hugging her arm like a spoiled little girl.

"Lanni, mommy cares about you the most."

Li Lanni's back straightened into a rod. She could guess where this discussion was heading, and she had a feeling she wouldn't like the end of it.

She let go of Li Yuming's hand and scratched her head awkwardly before bolting up and flashing a smile. "I suddenly remember I have homework to do. How about we talk tomorrow?"

Li Yuming threw a stern glance over. "Mark said you tried to sneak away on your own again."

Li Lanni sat her butt right back to the sofa, rubbing her cheek against Li Yuming's arm.. "Now that I remember, I finished all the homework I had to do. What was it you wanted to say, mommy?"

Chapter 46 - Eternal Valor

Li Yuming shot a sidelong glance at her daughter who was putting on an obedient act. "It would be best if you only did home schooling. I think my worst mistake was letting you go back to B City University."

When Li Lanni heard the words she had been dreading, her back went cold. This was not what she wanted! "Mom..." Her voice sounded lifeless and dejected.

"That's what I wanted to say. Go to your room now; remember to not stay up too late."

"You didn't listen to my opinion, mom." Li Lanni blurted. Home schooling would be boring to death. Not to mention, she was seeking her revenge against Ji Feifei and her first step was almost accomplished. How could she leave school at such a time?

No one needed to remind her what the main point was either. It was still alright if she left school once because of inevitable circumstances and returned later. But if she kept waltzing in and out like it was her own territory, wouldn't that ruin her reputation? She might not be able to go back later even if her mother relented.

Li Yuming stood up and pressed a button on the remote control to switch off the television. "When did I ask for your opinion?"

Li Lanni remained in a daze as Li Yuming left the living room and ascended the stairs to her room. Did her mother just say that? She didn't care what she thought about her own schooling option?

In the master bedroom, Li Yuming lay in her bed sleeplessly for a while before going to the study. She took out her art tools and started painting absent mindedly.

The best choice was ultimately emigrating. It would be enough to keep Li Lanni out of the trouble she was trying to bring upon herself. But since Li Lanni would obviously not agree to go no matter what, it was still alright if she didn't interact with the outside world too much.

She knew that it would hurt her feelings, but it was better than letting her run wild and get hurt again.

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The next morning, Li Lanni soaked in the bathtub for a long time before making up her mind.

She opened the wardrobe and after staring at a set of her school uniform, she took it out and wore it. After checking her phone for messages, she took her bag and headed downstairs, where her mother was drinking a cup of coffee.

She withheld her nervousness and went over to hug her. "Mom, I'm going to school now."

"You haven't taken your breakfast." Li Yuming reminded expressionlessly.

"My friend asked me to have breakfast together in the university cafeteria." She said and hopped out before her mother could say a word more.

Until the car drove off, she didn't believe her mother had gone back on her own word and let her go.

The housekeeper standing beside Li Yuming couldn't believe it either. "Um, master, didn't you ask me to find the best teachers for miss Lanni's full time homeschooling? Why is she still going to school then?"

Li Yuming placed the empty cup on the marble table and picked a magazine from the collection the housekeeper had brought. "I don't think she will still seek trouble after what happened last night."

The housekeeper smiled slightly but said no more. The master just didn't want to admit that she was afraid Miss Lanni would be sad, right?

One had to know that the young miss was the only person Li Yuming was truly close to. She loved her more than her own life and she would do anything if it would bring a smile on the young miss' face. No one could blame her for that – for a child who grew up without a father, the best thing her mother could do was try to make sure she didn't feel the gap.

Too bad the young miss grew up to be carefree – a little too carefree for her own good.

...

In the school cafeteria, Li Lanni didn't have much of an appetite.

She barely took two bites before heading to the art building.

Cheng Yu was already in one of the classrooms, painting neat strokes with her brush. In the same room, Ji Feifei was also painting. Li Lanni couldn't help taking an extra glance at the contrasting pair.

Ji Feifei was obviously trying to look elegant even while painting. That was her main point and as for the picture she was painting, it was that of a vibrant and elegant woman; beautiful without any trace of a flaw.

Shifting her eyes to Cheng Yu's painting, she seemed to make a story out of it. It was a young woman too, but obviously not as pleasing to the eye as Ji Feifei's. However, there was something different. It was as though her misty eyes had come to life, and one could imagine the countless emotions in her eyes.

The contrast was obvious; while Ji Feifei was trying to impress the viewers with all the elegance and style, Cheng Yu was trying to express certain feelings and create a story out of the backdrop.

It wasn't hard for Li Lanni to think that one of the two had come into the room and started painting merely for the sake of outshining the other. And that person seemed to be Ji Feifei...

"Cheng Yu, that's beautiful. What is it called?" Li Lanni finally walked over after watching for a while.

Cheng Yu turned to look at Li Lanni and unconsciously used her body to block the painting. "Lanni, you're here. Are you going to check the details about the competition?"

Li Lanni held out a small box. "Why are you hiding it? It's very beautiful."

Cheng Yu blushed as she took the box from Li Lanni. "It is? I'm not that confident about it myself." Happy that someone liked it, she became even more invigorated. "Eternal Valor. That's the name."

Chapter 47 - She Could Dream On

"Eternal Valor..." Li Lanni repeated the name in contemplation. "It's quite suiting. Is it your entrance for the competition?"

Cheng Yu's face blushed even more as her eyes turned into slits. "Of course not. I was only fooling around. The competition will require something more refined."

"Is it? I think it's good enough. There's no competition you can't win with this. After all, most judges take into consideration the 'life' of a piece of art. Yours looks so real and expresses a lot. Not like some lifeless painting you see littering the walls of this building."

At the side, Ji Feifei's expression darkened. It was still alright for Li Lanni to keep showering Cheng Yu's ugly masterpiece with praise, but it was another matter altogether to indirectly insult her. Especially since her painting was obviously so beautiful... She couldn't contain her anger. "Lanni, what do you mean by that?!"

Li Lanni put a hand over her mouth. "Oh, you're here too. I was talking to Cheng Yu just now. Isn't her painting pretty?"

Ji Feifei clenched her fists and wanted nothing more than to berate Cheng Yu with her hands over her hips. However, more students streamed in at this moment.

It was more important to maintain her image of the easy going and kind girl. Moreover, she was not done with Li Lanni yet. She would deal with Cheng Yu later.

Hmph! Win the art competitions with that piece of rubbish? She could dream on.

"Lanni, let's have a word." Ji Feifei restrained her anger to say.

Li Lanni tapped Cheng Yu's shoulder. "I bet you didn't eat breakfast. You need to recharge; I brought your favorite meals from Eastern Kitchen. You should eat it before it goes cold." She pointed at the box she had given to Cheng Yu earlier before following Ji Feifei out.

Cheng Yu was stunned silly. So the box contained breakfast from Eastern Kitchen? She had thought that it was something Li Lanni wanted her to help her keep. She opened the box excitedly.

Meanwhile, Ji Feifei's expression was even darker. Li Lanni actually bought someone food from Eastern Kitchen so casually?

It was worth noting that it was one of the most expensive restaurants in the city. A mere glass of juice was capable of giving one a dent in the wallet.

Even as the heiress of the Ji family, she couldn't go to that restaurant mainly because the family didn't let her. She had been overspending money for a while so her father froze her cards. Yet that piece of trash...

"Why did you want to speak to me?" Li Lanni's voice brought her back from her thoughts.

Ji Feifei maintained her composure. "Is your relationship with Cheng Yu so good?"

"What about it?" Li Lanni was passive.

"Nothing much. I just heard some not-so-pleasant rumors about her. You should be careful."

Li Lanni snorted. "Thanks. I will take care. Is that all you wanted to say?"

Ji Feifei's fingernails stabbed into her palms. Since when was Li Lanni so cold towards her? Had she discovered something? "I just wanted to know how you got your hands on that flash drive yesterday."

Li Lanni swept a lock of her long hair to her back. Of course this was the only reason why Ji Feifei would seek her. That flash drive belonged to her. "Oh, that... I was just lucky. I found it in my locker mysteriously. Someone must be trying to help me out."

Ji Feifei wanted to slap her across the face and call her out for making things up, but she chose not to. It sounded far fetched but it was a tiny bit possible.

Wait... the aphrodisiac on the night of Li Lanni's welcome party... how did it turn into a sleeping pill?

As this thought surfaced in Ji Feifei's mind, her eyes turned blank. It seemed quite possible... that there was someone helping Li Lanni out from behind the scenes. Just who was it?

"I suddenly remembered I have something to do before the art class. I'll get going now." Ji Feifei left before she could explode.

Li Lanni wore a smug expression. "Tch."

Now it totally made sense.

Ji Feifei must be fond of driving wedges between people. Paired with what her mother had said about her being naive in the past, it answered one of her questions.

She now understood why she didn't have any real friends.

At the thought of it, Li Lanni really wanted to have a meeting with her younger self and scold the hell out of her. Just how stupid must she have been, to regard such a scheming b*tch as her best friend?

...

Ji Feifei wheeled her breathing back to normal.

Why did Li Lanni suddenly turn cold towards her?

She did want to eliminate that piece of garbage, but the piece of garbage still had some use. The exams were coming up soon. What would she do?

...

Li Lanni walked back into Art Classroom 03 and laughed when she saw Cheng Yu enthusiastically inhaling the food like she had been famished for months.

"Is it that good?"

Cheng Yu looked up and swallowed the food she was chewing. "So good! Lanni, I was about to tell you that you don't have to spend so much money buying me food but when I tasted it, it was totally worth it."

Li Lanni giggled. While one was a scheming fake friend, the other was so honest and her friendship seemed genuine.

Even a fool would know who to chose.

"Right. About that art thingie... didn't they arrange it at a very inconvenient time? The exams are coming up after all. Sigh, it's giving me a headache."

Cheng Yu frowned at her oblivious friend. "Of course they knew this. That's why the competition will be held two days after the end of the exams.

Moreover, I heard insider news that there's no such thing as submitting entries. All the competitors will paint their pieces on stage at the designated time."

"Wait, what?"

"Exciting, right!" Cheng Yu rattled on. "The prize is totally worth it! The winner will be recruited in Star Art International as a trainee and after the training period, a permanent job as a comic artist is guaranteed."

Chapter 48 - Senior Ah Chen Likes You

"This is Star Art International we are talking about. That renown company where most of the world's infamous artists have either trained or worked before. Setting a foot at the entrance of that company might require you to give an arm or a leg, and even that won't guarantee that they will take a second look at your work!"

Seeing that her friend probably didn't understand, Cheng Yu dragged her to the notice board.

Li Lanni was almost lost in thought as she looked through the requirements while Cheng Yu rattled on like a broken recorder beside her. "I'm totally going to work hard. Even the prize for the second place is so exciting! Aah! I'm totally going to beat those punks from Hun He Art School!"

"Wait, wait wait." Li Lanni grabbed her shoulders. "Slow down. Are you saying we are competing with students from Hun He Art School as well as other universities?"

"Of course! Did you think it's only for B City University? What were you reading from the notice?"

Actually, we are not the only ones who would have exams right before the competition. The organizers must have put a lot of consideration into it for fairness.

Urgh... how I wish Hun He Art School wasn't participating. Those guys are arrogant to death!"

Cheng Yu looked particularly excited about the competition. She was more keen on the prize of first place.

Li Lanni stopped thinking too much about the details and dragged Cheng Yu away from the notice board. "You want to become a comic artist?"

"That has been my dream since I was a toddler." she exaggerated.

"Seriously. I finally have the opportunity to make my dreams come true and prove myself. Surely I would be a damn fool if I didn't grasp it."

While Cheng Yu blabbered on, she saw someone from the corner of her eye. "Senior Ah Chen?"

Li Lanni looked displeased as the young man walked over. She didn't want to have anything to do with anything that was male, much less a human being. Her repulsion towards males was inexplicable at the moment but it was almost obvious in her eyes when Ah Chen came over.

"Not happy to see me?" Ah Chen smiled charmingly to disguise the hurt in the depth of his eyes.

Cheng Yu made her presence as invisible as possible, she might as well simply slip away. Li Lanni felt it was impolite to ignore people so she reluctantly spoke. "We are not classmates, are we? Classroom 01 is right opposite."

Ah Chen grabbed the opportunity to strike up a conversation. "I came to check out the art competition notice."

Li Lanni raised an eyebrow. "If I'm right, there is a similar notice on the notice boards of all art classrooms and studios."

Ah Chen was embarrassed. His cover was blown too easily. He coughed. This Li Lanni... since when was her gaze so intimidating? He couldn't stay in her radius for more than a minute no matter how much courage he mustered. "Classes should be starting soon. See you later, Lanni."

As soon as he scurried away, Cheng Yu broke into a smile. "Lanni, I was right. Senior Ah Chen really does like you."

Li Lanni rolled her eyes. "I don't want to be liked by an idiot, thanks!"

Cheng Yu squeezed her heart that had been stabbed on Ah Chen's behalf. "Actually, Senior Ah Chen is a mature young man and has excellent grades. He is good even in his minors, not to mention his good reputation and background. He only becomes an idiot when Yu Guang, that foolish playboy, is around. You have to understand that idiocy is highly contagious."

"Yu Guang was not here, but he acted like an idiot nonetheless." Li Lanni retorted with her arms crossed against her chest.

"That's because you were around. How could he act normal with you in his vicinity?"

"Are you blaming me for his stupidity?"

"You charmed him silly." Cheng Yu replied with a silly giggle and earned a glare from Li Lanni. "Cheng Yu, can you do me a favor and not talk to me about boys?"

Cheng Yu finally quietened down and classes soon begun.

Li Lanni sat next to Cheng Yu, but a parasite forced itself on her left; Ji Feifei.

Li Lanni just couldn't understand the depth of this girl's pretense. What did she take her for, a fool who wouldn't have discovered the true side of her up till now?

She ignored her and minded her own business.

After class, Li Lanni made sure it was just the two of them left in the classroom and deliberately made one of those jokes that Ji Feifei would never tolerate. "Right, Feifei, could you help me pass a message to your brother? Tell him to meet me... nevermind. I'll tell him myself." She left right before Ji Feifei could explode.

"She's so weird." Li Lanni couldn't help muttering to herself as she saw Ji Feifei flip up and throw things around. Why would she hate it so much that her brother had his eyes on someone else?

If she hadn't heard about Ji Feifei's famed dating history, she would almost think that Ji Feifei had an incest complex. Just the thought of it was disgusting.

—

Just when Li Lanni was starting to wonder why one of her expectations was not coming to pass, it finally happened.

On the fourth day after Professor Marcus' arrest, explosive news broke out and filled the school forum.

The young miss of the Ji family actually used her family's name to do dirty deeds behind their backs and not only did she bully many students, she also committed huge crimes?!

The most juicy part was her involvement with professor Marcus. The man had even provided irrefutable evidence!

Li Lanni looked at her phone and smiled.

This is just the beginning, Ji Feifei. How does it feel?

...

That evening, in the Ji Mansion.

"You idiot!" Before anyone could stop him, Old Master Ji's palm landed right smack on Ji Feifei's face.

"You have brought shame upon the Ji family! Is your brain merely a decorative ornament?! Is this how I brought you up?"

The girl knelt on the floor, clutching her chest and bawling her eyes out.

Madam Ji could not stand seeing her daughter in such a pitiful state. She held her husband's hand tightly and tried to calm him down before he could deliver another slap. "Honey, Feifei's still a child. Cut her some slack!"

"Still a child? Still a child, you say?!"

Madam Ji saw that her husband probably wouldn't calm down and might kill Ji Feifei in his rage. She grabbed on the strongest pillar that had just walked in. "Xiehan! Xiehan, please stop your father. He's going to hurt Feifei at this rate."

Ji Xiehan's face was devoid of expression.. "It's already good enough that he is not skinning her alive."

Chapter 49 - You Should Be Happy That He Is Not Skinning Her Alive

Madam Ji was stupefied for a moment before she erupted. "How can you say such a thing? She is your sister!"

Ji Xiehan lightly shoved her hand away and went ahead to sit on the sofa, as though the drama happening before his eyes was nothing but a television show. His face didn't reveal the slightest pinch of pity for his younger sister. "You should be glad that I'm not disowning her."

When Ji Xiehan walked in, Ji Feifei had been prepared to cling onto him and pitifully beg for help. But once she heard his words, more tears came gushing out of her eyes. These were real tears this time.

How could he? Why was he so heartless towards her?

Weren't brothers supposed to dote on their little sisters so much that they should slay gods for them? Weren't they supposed to tread on needles and swim in seas of lava if their sisters asked for it? Why was hers so heartless?

"Brother..." she cried.

Ji Xiehan narrowed his eyes and was about to say something.

Madam Ji grabbed her son's hand and gestured for him to shut up before he said something even more heartless. She knew his son well enough. He definitely would.

Ji Xiehan cast a disdainful glance over and remained silent, casually playing with his phone.

Master Ji had anticipated that his son would say something to stop him and had therefore paused what he was saying to Ji Feifei.

Seeing that Ji Xiehan didn't look interested butting in, he was relieved.

After all this girl had gone too far this time. She was their daughter, but she still had to be punished or she would continue wrecking havoc and commit more sins in future.

"For the next one week, you cannot leave your room. Do you understand?"

Ji Feifei wanted to protest amidst her tears but when she saw how intimidating her father looked, she didn't dare to let out a peep. She nodded. It was just being grounded for a week, anyway. It wouldn't hurt.

But in her heart, what occupied the large part was neither guilt nor remorse. It was hatred. Her desire to revenge was raging like a flame.

Li Lanni, you damned b*tch!! This is all your fault. Just you wait. Once the week is over and I am allowed to leave the house, I will peel off your skin inch by inch.

She would never have known that while she thought of new methods to make Li Lanni suffer, her father was currently thinking of the best punishment for her as well as the best school to take her.

No matter what school it was, it would be one specified for rehabilitating wayward children.

...

One thing still irked Li Lanni. Why was Ji Feifei still allowed to be in school? At least that was what she believed since there wasn't any news or rumor about her expulsion.

This shouldn't be happening. If the school head had a brain, the first thing they would have done was expel Ji Feifei.

She took a deep breath and kept her phone back into her bag. Never mind. She couldn't possibly know what the school head was thinking. She should just watch first.

Perhaps they simply wanted to let Ji Feifei go to school for a few days and then let her leave when the matter settled down. It would seem like a normal transfer.

Such a thing was possible since this was the young miss of the Ji family they were talking about. Out of all families in the capital, everyone must want to save the Ji family some dignity.

Although the school rules had to be followed in the end, it wouldn't be a surprise if they made it seem like Ji Feifei was not in the wrong.

Of course, this couldn't take long or the punishment would lose its meaning.

If they still allowed her to attend school like nothing happened even after a long while, only then would Li Lanni take action. Luckily there was still a lot of time for that.

...

That night as she lay in her bed, Li Lanni was unable to sleep even after reciting all the scientific stuff that she found boring.

She didn't hate science - she didn't like it that much either but had read some of it anyway. She just didn't like the feeling of not knowing anything. Her displeasure towards the fact that she had amnesia was concrete evidence.

As she tossed in her bed, she didn't know that elsewhere in the same city, a certain someone couldn't sleep either.

He turned in his bed restlessly before getting up and switching on the lights.

Then he opened a drawer by the side of his bed and took out a stack of paper. He started to look through them.

These sheets of paper contained all the information that Qiao Luna had gathered about Li Lanni.

He had read through them umpteen times but he still did again.

Qiao Luna had been very efficient; she even included the photos she could get her hands on.

Ji Xiehan didn't know whether it was the photos or the information that he wanted to look at more.

All he knew was that when he regained his senses, he was running his fingers through a recent photo of Li Lanni and wondering whether it was alright to meet her again.

She should have forgotten about their unpleasant little encounter, right?

Even if she hadn't, it had been many days already.. She shouldn't be bothered anymore.

Chapter 50 - Randomly Invading Her Thoughts

After spending a lot of time with his friends, paired with his little knowledge about women, Ji Xiehan knew that the best approach was trying to get closer to her one step at a time.

He still had an ultimate move up his sleeves and it was sure to make Li Lanni stay by his side forever. However, it could also possibly make her hate him to the bones.

It was still safer to use the slow approach- though his friend had scolded him for wasting his breath in trying to teach him how to pick up girls. The two of them had scolded him for one hour straight before they cooled up.

...

The next morning, Li Lanni woke up slightly earlier and hence went school earlier.

Because she wanted to buy something in the store near the school, she asked the chauffeur to drop her off some distance away and she would walk to school after getting what she wanted.

It was alright as long as she didn't try to go anywhere that would be dangerous on her own so he let her.

Once Li Lanni had got all the things she wanted, she strolled into the school with a happy smile plastered across her face.

But the happy smile froze and turned into a scowl once her gaze met that of one human being she didn't want to see.

She retracted her gaze and walked off, ignoring him.

She had just taken a step past him when she felt a grip on her elbow and her body was pulled back by a sudden force.

Li Lanni tilted her head and glared at him, trying to pull her arm back. "What do you want?"

Ji Xiehan had expected this kind of reaction from her, but he still felt heartbroken. "I have some matters to discuss with you, regarding Star Art International."

Li Lanni was about to chew him out and walk off but when she heard the name of that company, she hesitated.

This was related to the upcoming art competitions, right? After all, the prize for the winner was to become a trainee in that company.

What made it attract her attention was the fact that Cheng Yu really wanted to win that prize and go to Star Art International.

If there was something wrong with that company... it would be better if she knew and warned Cheng Yu about it.

"I'm going to the library right now." She said. She still had to study a lot.

"That's alright. We can meet after school and have dinner together. We can talk about it then."

This time, Li Lanni didn't reject him and silently agreed.

Watching her walk off, Ji Xiehan had to praise himself for his wits. He had had Qiao Luna update him about everything that was related to Li Lanni so naturally he knew about that contest.

He merely took a gamble and mentioned the first place prize, luckily he had won the gamble.

What Ji Xiehan didn't know was that Li Lanni had another reason to accept his invitation. She wanted to find out what had happened to Ji Feifei as well as test him in case he had evil reasons for trying to get close to her.

...

The day went by quite fast. At lunch time, Li Lanni went to the abandoned school building. She had grown fond of going to that particular classroom whenever she wanted to be alone.

Despite being an abandoned building, it was kept clean in case students wanted to use it. More accurately, it had only earned its name because it used to be the Literature teaching block and was no longer in use since another one was built.

Just as Li Lanni expected, Cheng Yu came in after a while.

The former was currently reclined in a chair as she fanned her neck using her hands. How she wished she could simply rip her shirt off! It was just impossible for her to do so because she couldn't guarantee that no one would come in.

Cheng Yu walked over with a box of ice cream and held it out with slight nervousness, as though afraid Li Lanni wouldn't like it.

Li Lanni took it gladly. "Is this for me? Thank you."

Before Cheng Yu could say a word, she had already started taking scoops of the ice cream, the chilling effect on her tongue making her feel much better.

"Damn summer." Li Lanni complained and scooped more of the ice cream.

Cheng Yu slumped on a chair next to her. "You can say that again! Thanks to the heat, I take almost 20 minutes every day deciding whether or not to wear a bra, and which one to wear if I have to."

Li Lanni tilted her head and glanced at her chest. "I wouldn't wear any if I were you. It wouldn't make much of a difference anyway."

Cheng Yu looked down at her almost flat chest then covered it with her hands and glared at Li Lanni. "Lanni, you pervert!"

Li Lanni broke into a chuckle. Then the word pervert reminded her of someone.

Urgh... why did he have to invade her thoughts even when she was simply having a random conversation with her friend?