

Chosen Wife 481

Chapter 481 - Enjoy The Rest Of Our Stay

"How can you almost get caught when you only followed them for three minutes?" Lanni did not understand.

"Because I almost rear-ended them." Tang explained apologetically.

Lanni felt bummed. How could they lose so soon? Even so, she was not ready to give up. "Try and catch up. Tang, you stay away." She instructed, since the young man would be even more suspicious if he joined the others in looking for Qiao Linyou's car.

"Starlight Road." A female voice interrupted Lanni who was speaking, and the others were shocked that it sounded like Lanni was interrupting herself.

Lanni stopped in surprise. "Luna?"

"Don't mind me. I'm just listening." Luna chuckled and Lanni was thankful to her.

"She's my sister, don't mind her. Who's closest to Starlight Road?" She asked, understanding Luna's hint.

"I caught up." A girl announced.

"Good girl." Lanni praised in relief.

"Don't exit onto Moon Road. It's under heavy traffic due to impromptu inspection." Luna instructed, not being able to keep silent anymore. "Take another route towards the West. I'll keep track of them."

The girl didn't know whether or not she should follow Luna's instructions and waited for Lanni to tell her to proceed.

"Good idea..." Realization dawned on Lanni and she let out a small chuckle. "Did you cause the traffic on Moon Road, Luna?"

"How would you know?" Luna laughed, feigning innocence.

"How would you know?" Lanni returned the question. Unless Luna was monitoring the entire city, she wouldn't know.

"I didn't do much. I just messed up the traffic surveillance cameras a little and made the drug detection system alert the authorities of the presence of drugs." Luna chuckled like it was something she did every other day.

Lanni didn't know whether to laugh or cry. "Thank you for buying us time to get ahead of them and plan. But my dear sister, may I know what you're thinking? You're ruining everything by having them arrested before they reach their destination."

Although the police were only alerted of drugs, weapon smugglers would not escape either. If the duo had the weapons in their car, it would be tragic.

"They will not. Just go ahead and prepare for what you have to do." Luna instructed and did not exit the conference call she had sneakily joined.

"Take the West route." Lanni instructed the others.

"Lanni..." The long-haired woman frowned. Although she trusted Luna, the others didn't and found the change of plans problematic and risky.

"Do as I say." Lanni insisted, and they had no choice but follow the pop up plan.

"Tang, Lin, stay close to me. The rest, get off the road." Lanni instructed, and the young man and woman closed in on her car. She raced towards the exit into the West outskirts and so did Tang and Lin, waiting for the next instructions.

"Help me distract them." She said to the duo over the call that was still on.

"Distract who?" Lin asked.

"Qiao Linyou and her agent." As they spoke, they realized the car they had been following finally closing in. Lanni smiled in relief and once again thanked Luna, who then exited the call to attend a meeting.

"Lin, stay ahead. Tang, let them overtake you."

That was easy to do since the duo was in a rush, but they were shocked when they heard the next instruction. "Lin, make them slow down and Tang, rear end them at the red light exiting the city."

"Do what?" Tang was shocked.

"Just a slight hit, which is why I want you to do it at a red light. Don't damage the car too much."

"You got it." Tang promised, and Lin continued wasting time until she was let off the road. By the time the duo arrived at the red light, there was only a few seconds left before the light turned green.

Lanni neared them cautiously. "At the count of three. One, two, three."

As soon as she said "three," Tang rear-ended Qian Linyou's car just as the light turned amber.

As expected, Ms. Meng exited the car fuming with rage, and Qiao Linyou stepped down to check whether her precious car was damaged.

Lanni used the chance to throw a pair of magnetic bugs onto the front and back tires that were on her side. She then activated them on her laptop and sped off the road amid the hooting of the cars behind her.

"Mission accomplished." She yelled in excitement. "It's time to watch. Tang, I'll call the insurance company to deal with the damages. Lin, let's exit at the next U-turn."

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"If I may ask, why did we spend so much effort?" Lin asked when they were all back to Lin Media Group.

"Yeah, we don't even know where they were going." Added a young man.

"We will know their location in a few minutes. Did you really think I was simply overtaking them? I planted a bug on the wheel of their car." Lanni slumped into the couch of the resting area and wanted to sleep after all the nervousness she had felt earlier.

"No wonder you said not to damage the car. They would have taken it to be repaired." The realization finally dawned on Tang.

"Yeah, but they were in a hurry. If it's negligible damage, they will handle it later." Lanni was confident of this since they were in a hurry to begin with, and Luna wasted their time later with the traffic surveillance and inspection. She wondered how they escaped it and how Luna was certain that they would not be arrested. Was this one of her stunts?

"Thank you guys." She smiled at them gratefully.

"You're welcome. It was exciting to work with you." Lin winked, and the others seconded her.

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"Was it successful?" Lin Jian asked when he sought her in the resting area.

"Leave me alone. My stomach is in knots." Lanni didn't even open her eyes.

Lin Jian laughed but didn't bother her when he imagined what would have happened if the girl found any of them suspicious. "Okay, I'll leave you alone. Ask for any reward once you complete it."

"Roger that." Lanni waved a finger lazily while using the time to think about what to do once she found out who those two were meeting.

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It wasn't too long before the bugs recorded something. It was much safer than someone following them right into the dangerous zone, which is why she had chosen this route. When she got the recording on her laptop, she watched it a few times before going to show it to Lin Jian.

"The cameras were too far, unfortunately. But I can confirm that the person they met is suspicious." She explained.

"Black hair, a scar that looks like a faded bullet hole on his face, I have seen him on a wanted poster before." She added, but couldn't recall the name of the man on the poster she had seen.

"Good job. Can you find out who he is?" Lin Jian was satisfied by her progress.

She chuckled. "The question is, can I find out who it is and still keep my life?"

"Yes you can, I believe in you." He reassured her, and she left to go back to her office.

He was just about to watch the video again when the door swung open and in came a raging man.

"Shoot, Xiehan, what are you doing here?" Lin Jian almost fainted from shock.

"I want to have a word with you." Xiehan smiled, but from how sinister he looked, he was not here to have a word. He looked more like someone who was here to reap someone's soul.

What was worse, Lin Jian didn't dare to ask what this was about. Did he unknowingly upset Ruby? Or was it about Lanni?

He finally understood. It must be because of Lanni.

"I swear, I'm only giving Lanni difficult tasks to train her. She will need to scout for news later, she will need the skills." He frantically explained, wondering whether every boss had it this hard.

"Putting my woman in danger, is that your so-called training?" Xiehan's gaze narrowed at him like he was ready to beat him up.

"I promise, she is not in danger." He raised both of his palms to swear.

"She better not be." Xiehan's tone was still full of threat.

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Meanwhile, Cedric and Cheng Yu were having the fun of their lives at a resort.

"Yu, do you want to go for a swim?" He asked Cheng Yu, who was leaning against the balcony railing.

"Nothing beats a good swim on a warm day." She smiled as she turned to look at him.

"Then let's go." He joyously took her hand to lead her back into their suite so she would get changed.

As she wondered whether to wear the purple or blue swimsuit, she let out a sigh. "I can't believe we only have a few days left before we have to go back."

He wrapped his arms around her waist from behind. "Good things don't last that long.. But instead of thinking about it, let's enjoy the rest of our stay here."

Chapter 482 - I Love You

"I have a bad feeling." Ming stated when she and Qiao Linyou were done with their business and were on their way back home.

"Is this about Lanni again?" Qiao Linyou rolled her eyes with a scoff even before the latter could respond. "You are being too paranoid. I told you she is harmless."

Ming tiredly sighed. She didn't think so about Lanni. Otherwise, if people were supposed to be as harmless as they looked, Qiao Linyou would be innocent enough to be unable to swat a fly. But being the venomous snake that she was beneath her facade, it could only prove that looks were deceiving. "Wiat till she does something tragic, then you can tell me how innocent she truly is." she huffed in annoyance.

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Cedric led Cheng Yu into the swimming pool, where they swam for the better part of the afternoon.

"I feel so drained." She flopped her backside onto the surface of the pool after competing three laps with him.

"Don't be a lazy bum. One more!" He urged, but she was too lazy to move a single finger.

"I'm tired. Race against the water, I'll cheer you!" She joked and burst into laughter when he gave her a dirty look.

"What should I do with you?" He smiled dotingly, wondering why he loved this woman so much even though she enjoyed teasing him. Perhaps that was part of what he loved about her.

"Do you want to go back to our suite?" He asked when he saw her recline listlessly against the tiled floor with her legs still dangling in the cold water.

"I'm so tired." She whined with no intention to move an inch.

"If you ask me nicely, I can carry you back." He grinned happily, waiting for her to ask him to carry her to the suite. When she raised her arms to signal him to carry her, his heart flooded with joy as he wrapped a towel around her and carried her.

She wrapped her arms around his neck as she gazed at his side profile, finding him more handsome than before. She brushed her fingers up his neck gently, making his body stiffen.

"Don't do that. You run the risk of getting kissed." He warned, and before she could stop what she was doing, he pressed his lips against hers in a soft, gentle kiss. "See? I warned you."

She smiled and buried her flushed face on his chest. When she heard a kick behind her followed by a gust of wind, she knew that they had arrived and the door had just been opened. He placed her on the bed gently and covered her with the towel that had started slipping off.

"I'll get changed instead." She suggested, not wanting to wet the bed with her soaking swimsuit.

"Okay." He stepped away from the bed slightly to let her pass.

She stood and dropped the towel, then tugged on the top of her swimsuit, before her face flushed furiously when she realized that he was still watching.

"I don't mind the audience but are you sure you can take it?" She asked with a tease, making his body go stiff.

"Let me grab you a snack." He left the room as though his heels were on fire.

When he returned, he had a bunch of snacks in his arms and placed it on the bed where she was sitting with her legs crossed.

"Want some?" He dangled a bar of chocolate in her face, which she immediately grabbed.

"That's mine. I was yet to give it to you." He knitted his brows, but she merely laughed at him.

Opening the wrapper, she broke off a piece and put it in her mouth. "How sweet. You can't take it back now."

She was still speaking when his lips landed on hers. Her eyes widened at the sudden kiss.

"I can't get the chocolate back. It's only fair that I get the taste, right?"

"She didn't say anything against his words. Leaning forward, she pecked his lips and brought her hands around his neck, letting him kiss her before she pulled back and placed a piece of chocolate between her teeth.

She did not bite it off completely, leaving half of it protruding from between her lips.

He leaned in and but the remaining part of it, but after eating the chocolate, his lips lingered on hers, taking them in a deep kiss.

"Cedric," She whispered when his hands gently grabbed her boobs.

"Yu, I..." He was about to let go when she held his hand and pressed it against her chest so he wouldn't stop touching her.

"I'm just nervous..." She breathed. "I don't dislike it."

By the time she got through her last words, she was so embarrassed that her entire face had turned red.

He looked into her eyes and kissed her neck, pressing his lips against on her soft skin, earning a soft moan from her. His hands slid up her thigh before grabbing her hip and placing it against his waist. He pushed her down against the bed before his body came down on hers.

"Yu, I want you." He whispered, then waited for her reaction.

"I..." She didn't know what to say. She wasn't sure that she was ready to take her relationship with him to the next step, but that was not the main point. The main point was, what was she supposed to say? Would she appear to be too forward with him?

One thing was for sure, however—she liked the feeling of his hands on her skin.

Slowing down in case she was uncomfortable, he stroked her skin gently, to which she arched her back and closed her eyes, gasps escaping her lips.

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The following morning.

Cheng Yu woke up to the rays of sun seeping in through the curtains. When she tried to stretch her limbs, she found that she was too exhausted to move much.

"Morning, sleepyhead." Cedric smiled from the side when he saw her stretching.

"Good morning." She beamed and suddenly remembered what had happened the previous night, which made her blush and cover herself with the blanket all the way to her head.

He sat on the bed next to her, dipping a hand into the blanket to stroke her hair. "I'm sorry I hurt you. I..." He paused and sighed. "I didn't know it was your first time and..."

"Stop talking about it." She was so embarrassed that she wanted him to shut up. Last night was her first time as well as his. Everything he did was out of instinct and even when he realized that he had hurt her, he didn't know what to do and could only clumsily kiss her to try and ease the discomfort, and her hiss of pain had him almost jolting off the bed.

He chuckled and agreed that it was indeed awkward to talk about it.

Even so, she felt as though it had brought them even closer to each other. When she was less awkward regarding the entire thing, she peeked her head out of the blanket. "What was that anyway? Is it considered as having done the deed?"

He tried to think but couldn't figure out either. "Whatever it is, you belong to me now. You are not allowed to think about other men." He demanded.

"Including my brother?" She asked with a tilt of her head.

"Except your brother." The only man he could tolerate her around her was Cheng Ying, and this was majorly because the young man had nothing against him and would never be competition either.

"You cannot look at other women." She likewise demanded.

In response, he pulled her out of the blanket and into his arms. "Of course not. They are not even half as beautiful as you. What's there for me to look at?"

She knew that he was saying honeyed words but she subconsciously believed him. She trusted that he would not mess around with other women behind her back. If he wanted to, he would have done so already. Since he hadn't ever thought of it, it only meant that he was true to her.

"Yu, I love you so much." He pressed his lips gently against her temples.

She wrapped her arms around his waist, resting her head on his chest comfortably. "I love you too, Cedric."

"While she leaned against him, her body pressed against a hardness she was quite familiar with, and she suddenly didn't know what position to sit in. "Uh..."

Noticing her discomfort, he chuckled lightly. "My little friend wasn't satisfied last night so he's poking you. You can ignore him until you're ready to feed him."

"Stop talking about it." She playfully slapped his shoulder and buried her face in his chest.

Chapter 483 - The Culprit (1)

"I have to follow this person." Lanni stuck a post-it on a board, along with a picture of a man whose face she circled. This was the person Qiao Linyou was dealing with, and she was suspicious of him in many ways. She then sat on her study desk to note down details like where to find him and what day and time she should go to look for him.

When she realized that the only place she could find him was at a casino, she cursed. But what was she to expect? The idiot was a weapon dealer, of course he would go to such places as casinos.

However, she knew that the worst thing she could do was go to such places on her own, without telling anyone else about it. What if the man discovered her and tried to hurt her?

Hence, she planned it out and went along with a few journalists from the team that had accompanied her to stalk Qiao Linyou previously.

"Let's just go in like friends who have decided to spend the night out. I'm certain that guy will notice us, especially with you looking like this." The long-haired woman, Lin, suggested as they planned to go to the night club-cum-casino where Lanni had noted the place where the man would be tonight.

Lanni was dressed up seductively in her voluptuous disguise, which was in line with the kind of women that had been seen next to the man in all the pictures they had gathered.

"Let's not do anything that might make it difficult for us to escape. It would be troublesome if the man tries to hold onto us and does not allow us to leave on our own." Lanni frowned when she thought of the possibility of that happening. She knew that it was not impossible for such a lecherous man to cling onto them, and the mere thought of it made her stomach turn. She did not want to imagine it actually happening.

"Let's just go in and try not to attract much attention to ourselves. You can help me out for a bit and I will disguise myself as a waitress." Lanni suggested, to which Lin nodded.

Soon after they walked in, they pretended to have lost their way and went into a VIP room, following a waitress in.

Lin grabbed the waitress before she could be noticed by the patron she was going to serve drinks and pulled her to the restroom next to the VIP room, where she took off her work coat and apron to give to Lanni.

"Switch clothes with me." Lin demanded. "Willingly, or I will have no choice but to force you."

"No." The waitress shook her head stubbornly, not because she found it humiliating but because she knew what this meant. The woman before her was going to enter the VIP room in her stead, and she would get to serve the billionaire inside, hence snatching her hard-earned chance to get the man's attention.

Lin sighed and simply knocked her out, and took off her clothes which she took to give to Lanni.

"Thank you." Lanni got out of a cubicle where she was hiding and hurriedly changed into the clothes then made her way out. Because this was a large place, she could easily sneak around without being noticed by the manager as someone who was not part of the staff. Not to mention, there were new waitresses fired almost every other day and new ones to replace them, the manager couldn't keep track of all of them.

However, Lanni didn't want to take too much risk so she grabbed some drinks at the pantry and hurriedly went to the VIP room where she should be.

The man was sitting comfortably on the couch with two beauties at his sides while another danced on the table in front of him. She only slid off the table and joined the other two when Lanni arrived with the drinks, which she placed on the table.

"Did you get what I asked for?" The man roared.

Lanni recoiled to the side apologetically. "I'm sorry. What did you ask for? I forgot the order and brought a drink that is most popular among powerful men."

Her words stroked his ego, hearing that she had referred to him as a wealthy man. His tone softened and he couldn't help noticing that she was quite beautiful. She was even more beautiful than the three women accompanying him. Noticing that the skimpily-dressed trio was glaring at Lanni, he knew that his judgement was right. She was so beautiful that his companions were afraid that the waitress would snatch his attention from them.

"Never mind. You can open the drinks." He instructed patiently, seeing as she was a beauty and she knew what to say to get herself out of a sticky situation.

While she bent over to open the bottle, Lanni felt him place his hand on her butt. She was so repulsed that she wanted to slap the hell out of him and puke all over his face. Even though she was wearing padded underwear to make her butt look bigger and he wasn't actually touching what was naturally hers, it still disgusted her.

Contrary to how she felt, she opened the bottles and smiled as she poured some of it into a glass.

"Enjoy your drinks." She smiled as she patted him on the chest, leaving behind a bug as she straightened up to leave.

"Wait." He ordered, and she turned around nervously.

"Is there something else?" Her face was full of indifference contrary to the nervousness she was feeling. Would the stupid pervert ask her to stay and drink with him, or do other things that she was not willing to do? She hoped not, but the seconds felt torturous as she waited for him to continue speaking whatever he had in mind.

"Pour yourself some drink too." Came the dreaded order.

"I... I don't dare." She acted embarrassed about it.

"Don't worry. Your boss will have nothing to say about it. I can drink with whichever waitress I want over here. I can even fuck them if I want to, and no one would have a say about it."

Lanni tried to hold back the bile in her stomach. No wonder the girls working in this place did not last long. She had always wondered whether the work description was too difficult, but now she understood it.

The waitresses were regarded almost like prostitutes, and they probably didn't have the chance to decide whether or not they wanted to engage in sexual activity with patrons. If many of the patrons were like this idiot, they probably ended up molesting the poor girls, and they were fired or decided to leave this god forsaken place. Heaven knew how they ended up. It was surprising that no one knew of the happenings inside this place.

Lanni remained indifferent to the man's perverted language, and she poured a drink but didn't bring it to her mouth.

"I have taken an order for another VIP room already. I heard the patron is CEO Jiang. I should probably serve him first, then I will be back to drink with you." She conveniently dropped Xingyu's name, knowing that not many people would want to cross paths with him.

"Jiang Xingyu?" The man confirmed as he pushed one of the beauties aside in shock.

Lanni nodded as though she was just telling one of the things she had heard. "I heard he is here drinking with his friends."

As expected, the man's face was full of shock. Everyone knew that Jiang Xingyu's close friends were Lin Jian, Xiehan and Han Xichen. If all four of them were here, then he might be able to make some connections. Though for some reason, he looked bummed.

"Go and confirm it then return to me." He sent her. He would never have trusted her, but he knew that no waitress had the audacity to try and offend him.

Lanni nodded and made her way out. As soon as she was out, she rolled her eyes. Damned man. Did he really think that she would return? Xingyu was not even here and neither were Xiehan, Lin Jian and Han Xichen.

Looking around to ensure no one was watching, she slipped into the washroom that had an 'under maintenance' sign outside it and switched her clothes back on, then rushed back to her car after taking away the maintenance sign.

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"Did you manage to do it?" Lin asked when Lanni returned to the car. She had been sitting on edge the entire time.

"Yes, I did." Lanni let out a sigh of relief, then set her laptop to record footage of whatever the bug captured, hoping the man did not notice it or change his clothes before it recorded something helpful.

Chapter 484 - Bugged

"What are you aiming for?" Asked Lin, wondering if there was anything else she could do to help.

"I want to know what exact weapons and who he is dealing with." Lanni responded and started the car to drive off before the man could realize that he had been tricked by her. The manager could simply claim that the woman he had seen before had made a mistake and was fired, since he didn't know about her either.

" Where are we going now?" Lin asked.

Lanni thought about it and decided that it was too late to look for Lin Jian. "I'll drop you off and look for my sister."

Lin knew that Lanni would be insistent if she rejected the ride, knowing that the latter would not want her to go home on her own so late at night. She could only nod and give her address.

When she arrived, she was flabbergasted to find a man at her doorstep.

"What are you doing here?" She turned and was relieved to find that Lanni had left the place.

Lin Jian waited for her to open the door and when she did, he entered the house like it belonged to him and welcomed himself onto a couch with a slight laugh. "You are less hospitable."

Lin nervously stood by the door, ready to bolt out in case Lin Jian was up to something she was not ready for.

Noticing her demeanor, he chuckled. "Don't worry. I only want to ask you what Lanni has managed to accomplish. Sit down and tell me."

Lin was unsure whether or not to trust him. What kind of man would appear in front of a woman's house like he did, and still expect her to believe that he was not up to anything harmful to her?

Lin Jian noticed her nervousness and aside from being funny, it irritated him to some level. "I already have a woman now. I want nothing to do with other women." He tried to rush her so he would leave as fast as possible and go home to sleep, and probably give Ruby a call since he missed her so much.

"She put a bug on the man. I still do not know what his name is, but he is the same man that was captured in the same frame as Qiao Linyou the last time." Lin explained nervously, still not making any step into the house in fear.

"I got it. Will you step away from the door now? I still need to leave." Lin Jian instructed and when the woman recoiled into the house, he chuckled and left.

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Meanwhile, Lanni went to the Jiang Mansion where Luna had called her.

When she arrived, Luna went to greet her fondly. "Lanni, come in. We need to talk."

"What do you need to talk about?" It wasn't often that Luna used such words, so Lanni was curious about it.

"I just wanted to see you." Luna hugged her emotionally. She was becoming more and more emotional by the day.

Lanni hugged her back. "I missed you so much."

The two women sat on the living room couches, and a maid brought them drinks; juice for Lanni and a glass of warm milk for Luna.

"How have you been? You have changed so much." Lanni observed. It was not just about her belly, the aura around her had changed a lot too. She seemed more friendly and warmth radiated off her.

Luna was aware of these changes too, and she smiled. "I guess it's what happens when one becomes a mother. Many things change about you, it's the beauty of motherhood."

"I have no choice but to agree to that. You are so beautiful." Lanni commented. Sometimes she wondered what it would be like to be a mother but then again, she didn't think she was ready for it yet. "How are Aunty and Uncle? They're not home tonight?"

"They went outstation." Luna smiled and took a sip of her warm milk. "Xingyu had to work overtime today but he will be home soon."

"Is he treating you well?" She asked. It wasn't because she didn't trust Xingyu, but because she wanted to make sure that her sister was happy.

"I couldn't ever ask for anything else. He loves me so much. And our wedding day is approaching too... I feel so happy."

Lanni hugged her sister, who returned the hug and suddenly pulled away when the babies kicked again.

"Ow! Your nephews or nieces seem to be having a lot of fun in here. Perhaps they know of their aunt's visit and are overjoyed about it." She chuckled, and they both burst into laughter.

"How is Xiehan treating you?" Luna asked. "Is he still as loving as he used to be?"

"He is even more loving." Lanni sighed, her expression changing into a sad one.

"Sis, what happened?" Luna asked in concern.

"He is leaving soon. I feel like I miss him already." Lanni sipped on her juice and looked helpless.

"The days will fly before you know it." Luna coaxed her using the words that she had been told by many people already.

"Besides, I will be there for you. My babies and I will bug you so many times every day that you will not think of Xiehan for a single day." Luna laughed.

Lanni chuckled when she thought about it. "If your babies are as naughty as you are, yup, I will not think about Xiehan and he will return before I know it."

"Hey, who is naughty? You are the naughty one!" Luna slapped her playfully.

"I have to go home now. I'm handling a case, see you tomorrow, Luna." Lanni stood to say her goodbyes.

"Aw, what a bummer. But the babies want to stay with their aunty a little more." Luna felt bummed that Lanni had to leave.

"I'm so sorry. I want to stay longer too." Lanni was so helpless that she almost decided to stay. If it wasn't because she had to look out for whatever videos the bugs would record, she would have stayed the night.

"Hey, how about you come with me to my apartment? You can stay over and we will have more time to spend together once I have finished up what I have to do." Lanni suggested, to which Luna sighed helplessly.

"I wish I could do that. However, a certain someone will go crazy with wanting to say hello to his babies." She stated her reason, and Lanni blushed when she understood her double meaning.

"What case are you talking about anyway?" She asked, ready to help if there was anything she could do to make it easier for Lanni.

"Nope. You cannot take part in this. You have to stay peacefully at home and take care of yourself." Lanni said strictly with no room for negotiation, and Luna could only feel bummed.

"But I want to help out too. I'm not as delicate as you think. Besides, I will do what I have to while sitting on my desk and won't move around to do dangerous things." She tried to convince Lanni, but that only earned her a resounding no.

"You meanie." She complained but could only bite her tongue and feel wronged.

When Lanni returned to her apartment, she quickly took a bath before sitting in front of her desk to find out what the bugs had recorded. At first, it was only a few snippets of things that did not even make much sense, which Lanni so badly wanted to get off her screen. However, she knew that doing so might make her miss out on something important, so she could only continue watching the torturous video.

Luckily, the idiot did not do anything obscene or x-rated. She thought, and as if on cue, one of the voluptuous women who were with him slid a hand down his chest and grabbed his manhood through his trousers.

"Urgh, I jinxed it." Lanni cursed, disgusted by their actions. But then again, it was she who had placed a bug on someone and captured the actions that they did in secret. They didn't do it in public. Besides, the man was known for his debauchery, so she should have expected such a thing from him.

However, the videos rolled out and the man didn't do anything suspicious. It was getting on her nerves. Bugging him again would be much harder than it had been the first time as the man would be more wary of her the next time.

Just as she wondered whether or not to give up and try to bug him again, someone else entered the VIP room.

It was a man, and it made her eyes narrow. Wasn't this Xia Yuguang, her uncle? What was he doing here?

Chapter 485 - Don't Poke Your Nose Where It Doesn't Belong

What was he doing here? Lanni knew from a glance that he must be here for business. Though she wondered, what would the Xia family have to do with weapon smugglers? She had thought that they only dealt harmful and illegal medicines. As expected, that family was much darker than it appeared.

There were many more dark secrets than one would ever expect, even though she had already anticipated it.

In the video. Xia Yuguang sat down opposite the man whose fake name was James, and exchanged a few words over drinks.

"Do you have the goods?" James asked as he lit a cigar, and Lanni turned on the recording function. It was here!

"Yes." Xia Yuguang glanced around.

"The room is safe." James let out a hollow laugh.

Taking it as a cue, Xia Yuguang took out a small bottle from his pockets and placed it on the table, making Lanni's eyes narrow. That had to be a drug. The Xia family was trading with James too?

Xia Yuguang did not stay for long, he decided to leave soon after handing over the bottle and receiving a few gold bars in exchange. Lanni had recorded the main part, but she suddenly noticed that James was taking off his jacket.

She cursed and the man suddenly looked at a spot on his jacket, his face enlarging on the screen of her laptop and eyes appearing to be looking straight into hers. "Naughty little Minx."

Lanni trembled and almost thought he could see her, before she remembered that the bug was one way. She held her breath as the man continued, "Don't poke your nose where it does not belong. I'm only warning you because you're pretty. Otherwise, you would be six feet underground."

She trembled from the compliment which made it sound like the end of her life was drawing close. Taking a deep breath, she saved the video she had recorded and sent it to Lin Jian before deleting her own copy. As for poking her nose where it did not belong, she was not about to give up now when she was about to uncover the truth. She would only tread more carefully.

....

Xiaoshi hugged her phone as she tried not to fall asleep. Han Xichen had promised to give her a call at least once every day. It had been five days since he left for the site where a dam had broken to destroy an entire town, and he had only called her once when he arrived. For the last four days, she waited while holding her phone, afraid that he would call as soon as she drifted asleep.

She kept her eyes glued onto the screen of her television during news hour, hoping that she would get to hear news of the town where he was, and it would make her worry less. Alas, there was only news of it on the first day and after that, she could only keep guessing.

However, she believed that no news was better than bad news, so she remained hopeful.

Sliding off the bed, she went to the kitchen and brewed herself a cup of coffee, which she drank while stealing glances at her phone. A text message did arrive, but it was from her network provider.

She closed her eyes and hugged her arms. Why did she pretend that it would be alright? This was too much torture. She should have insisted that she didn't want to be on her own, and followed him. How much longer would she wait without the slightest strand of hope?

Soon after finishing her coffee, she became too sleepy. It seemed like the caffeine had lost its effect on her. She could only drag her exhausted body to bed.

However, it was barely a minute after she left when she heard a slight chime. Her eyes popped open when she heard it again. It was the doorbell!

She shuffled out of bed and ran to the door, before scolding herself. How could she rush to open the door in the middle of the night? What if it was a burglar?

Her feet went cold and she was just about to turn back to rush to her room when the doorbell rang again. This time, it was followed by a calm, deep voice. "Shishi, it's me."

"Xi... Xichen?" She whispered the name out in disbelief.

"Yes. Could you open the door for me, my love? I'm about to freeze to death." The man chuckled outside the door.

"Xichen!" Her tone raised in disbelief, and she opened the door as tears freely rolled down her cheeks. She jumped into his arms and buried her head on his chest.

"I'm sorry." He held her and ran his fingers through her hair.

"I'm bad at you!" She hit his chest with her fists. How dare he make her worry for so long? She was going insane just thinking about him!

"I'm sorry, it's my bad. I shouldn't have made you worry so much." He apologized, and she ignored him to enter the house on her own.

He followed her in, closing the door behind him, then went to sit next to his sulking girlfriend. He knew that she had been worried after not hearing from him for so long.

"Can you hear me out, my love?" He coaxed.

"Go on." She looked up at him accusingly, wondering what he had to say for not saying a single word.

"On the second day, I lost my phone. That small town is hectic. Not only is the governance so pathetic that amenities are poorly built, but there are thieves and robbers at every turn too. Our tents were searched and robbed while we went about our business trying to rescue the casualties. We didn't have time to find new ones, not to mention, we had no money either." He explained.

She would have found it ridiculous if anyone else gave such reasons, but she knew that he had no reason to lie to her. It finally made sense why he couldn't contact her and could only go to her as soon as their work was finished.

It was only now that she noticed how tired he looked. "You must be tired. Rest here tonight, you can leave in the morning."

"I would love to, but are you sure you want that to happen?" He asked teasingly.

In response, she disappeared from the living room for a while and just when he started wondering whether she had dropped on the floor somewhere and fallen asleep out of fatigue, she returned. "Use the guest room. I just changed the sheets."

"Alright." He stood up, though he felt a little bummed. He hoped to be invited to her bed. "Show me there."

She led the way and he followed. Once he climbed onto the bed, she turned off the lights and was about to leave when her hand was grabbed and tugged, making her fall onto the bed. Before she could process it, the man wrapped his arms around her tightly and fell into a deep sleep. Her struggles to leave were futile, and she could only give up.

He was asleep anyway, he couldn't do anything to her. She fell asleep too.

Once he heard her soft, steady breathing, he checked her and chuckled at the trick he had used on her. Helping her onto a comfortable position, he fell asleep with her in his arms.

...

It was the most peaceful sleep that Han Xichen had had in a week. The last few days had been spent bustling around and he barely had time to swallow his saliva. He had not slept for more than three hours every day, so with Xiaoshi in his arms, he slept through the remainder of the night and only woke up at noon.

Xiaoshi was no longer on the bed. He was bummed when he realized that she was not in the room either. Did she leave when he fell asleep? He could swear that he had never slept that much in his life. He didn't even feel it when she slipped away.

Just when he wondered where to find her, the door opened to reveal a beautifully dressed Xiaoshi with a jovial smile on her face. "You're awake. I was going to join you to continue sleeping."

She had not been as busy as he was in the past week, but she had been kept up with nightmares and worry. Last night was her most peaceful too.

He chuckled at her words and waved her over. "We can continue rolling in bed even without sleeping."

She hopped over and lay in his arms, placing a hand on his chest.

"You didn't go to work?" He stroked her back as he asked.

In response, she pinched his vibrating chest. "I have a week off. Have you forgotten? There is only one day left."

"Then let's spend your last day off, along with the weekend, together."

Chapter 486 - What Xiaoshi Wants

Xiaoshi hummed in agreement even though it was uncertain whether she had heard his suggestion. She was drifting off to sleep.

He peeked at her and embraced her dotingly. "Go to sleep."

When she was asleep, he pulled away while trying not to wake her up, sliding off the bed.

"Xichen..." Her fingers clutched his shirt clingily as though worried that he was leaving.

"I'll be right back." He promised and kissed her forehead, then headed out of the room.

When she woke up, she looked around and sat up with a jolt. "Xichen?"

She didn't get any response, so she rushed out of the room only to see him setting the dining table.

"You scared me. I thought you had left for some emergency again." She clung to his back, making the apron around his waist loosen up.

He turned around to hold her in his arms. "I promised to come back, didn't I? I was going to wake you up in a moment." He explained to his girlfriend who looked like she was afraid of losing him.

"I know I sound selfish but I wouldn't want you to put your life in danger. But then again, you're a doctor and will probably need to do so once in a while." She purred against his chest.

He tousled her hair to coax her. "Do you want me to quit my career? I can do that if you ask me."

She pulled back and jabbed his stomach at the insane suggestion. "Don't be silly. I didn't say you should quit your career for me. I only need you to take care of yourself when you have no choice but to go to dangerous places."

"That, I can promise you. Can we have lunch now? I'm sure you are hungry." He led her to the table and pulled a chair for her. He guessed that she had not been eating healthily. There was a lot of food in her fridge and kitchen shelves, none of which looked like it had been touched. On the other hand, there was a box of instant noodles on one of the shelves as well as snacks.

The sight and aroma of the food on the table made her mouth water and she sat down, digging in as soon as she served herself a portion of vegetable fried rice.

She didn't have a specific preference for vegetarian food but when she had a taste, she almost forgot her manners to gulp down the entire serving.

He picked up a piece of wet fried chicken and placed it on her plate. "Eat some meat too?"

"Mmh?" She looked up at him curiously.

"Don't only eat vegetables and rice." He explained and resumed eating his food, wondering why she was blinking in confusion.

She had always assumed that doctors would be extra careful with what the people around them ate, and that they would not allow them to eat anything that was fried or that they considered too sugary.

She quickly munched on it as though afraid that he would take it back, and he could only laugh at her antics.

"Do you want to watch a movie later?" He asked as they ate. In truth, he knew little to nothing about dates. He was only guessing what to do based on what she liked.

"Of course. Let's go!" She jubilantly agreed, overjoyed by the fact that they would be going out on their first movie date.

Hence, when she finished eating, she ordered clothes online which arrived later in the afternoon.

"What are these for?" He curiously asked about the men's jeans that were of the same color and type as the women's shorts, as well as the black tshirts that had the same skull print but were of two different sizes. She wanted them to wear matching outfits? Not that he was complaining. He found the idea quite cute.

"It's for...the date." She looked down in embarrassment, realizing that she didn't ask for his opinion before ordering the clothes. Thinking about it, a man like him had probably not worn such an outfit in his life. Was this overstepping her boundaries?

He held the larger t-shirt up and shook his head in disapproval. "If you want me to wear this, you are going to have to convince me."

"How?" She asked, relieved that he didn't totally reject the idea and left her room for negotiation.

"What do you think?" Came his nonchalant question, and she had to figure it out on her own.

She held her chin in thought. "How about... I will cook you a sumptuous meal tomorrow?" She suggested, to which he shook his head.

"Not convincing enough. You would cook me whatever I want even if it is unrelated to the clothes."

"That's true... Hey!" She complained when she realized that he had just tricked her into revealing her opinion.

He burst into laughter at how easy she was to trick, then pulled her into his arms, kissing her deeply. He only paused when she was out of breath, then pulled her to the couch and sat next to her before resuming his kisses.

Her body felt light and she leaned against him, his name leaving her lips in a mutter.

His hand wove its way down her body to hold her waist as he lowered her to lie on the couch with him on top of her. Her eyes closed as she felt his hot breath against her neck.

Her phone rang, interrupting the mood. She wanted to ignore it but he pulled away to allow her to answer the call. She could only grudgingly pick it up and almost exploded when she saw the mood pooper was her own father. Couldn't he pick a better timing?

"Dad?" She croaked into the call.

"How are you doing?" The man asked, even though they both knew that it was not what he really wanted to know. What he wanted to know was whether his daughter had managed to charm Xingyu. He had wanted to get rid of Luna but it seemed as though the Jiangs were more careful, there wasn't any chance no matter how hard he tried.

However, it was only understandable. The little bitch was pregnant and the Jiangs wanted a grandchild. He didn't think they would continue to be that protective of her after the baby is born.

Xiaoshi wanted to postpone it but she knew that the longer she delayed, the harder it would be for her to tell her father the truth. She decided to come out with it. "Dad, I'm doing fine. Is there anything else? I'm about to go out with my boyfriend."

"Xingyu? I knew you would manage to charm him. There isn't any man who wouldn't love my perfect daughter." He bragged amid joyous laughter.

"No. It's my boyfriend. Hann Xichen." She finally got it out of her mouth. "I really love him, dad. I don't want to leave him to fight with Luna over her fiancée."

Since she had explained the major part, the rest of it rolled out smoothly.

"Do you even know what the hell you're saying? Are you listening to yourself?" Her father growled in anger.

"Yes, dad. I know you mean the best for me but..."

"You have no fucking idea!" The man yelled, his fury rising by the second.

Xiaoshi trembled. This was the first time her dad was raising his voice at her, and she could believe that it was all about who she wanted to spend the rest of her life with. Wasn't it supposed to be up to her from the start?

Well, it was up to her from the start. She liked Xingyu after all. But now that she no longer liked him and had fallen in love with someone else, why was he forcing her back to Xingyu?

"Dad, I hope you can understand me. I..."

"Shut up. Useless brat." The man hung up, leaving Xiaoshi confused and heartbroken. How could he say such harsh things to her?

"He will come around." Han Xichen took her hand to comfort her, even though he knew that it would not be that easy. The man was probably specific about wanting Xingyu for his daughter for a reason. Maybe it was the wealth of the Jiang family...

He frowned when that thought registered itself. The wealth of the Jiang family was incomparable to that of the Han Clan. If all Uncle Yun wanted was for his daughter to live a luxurious life in future, he could provide that too. He could ensure that Xiaoshi didn't ever lack anything she wanted.

If it was all about wanting to give his daughter what she wanted, she no longer wanted Xingyu..

Hence, it didn't make much sense. Just what did he want from the Jiang family?

...

Don't forget to vote!

If you haven't yet, join my discord server, follow me on IG using the following link. linktr.ee/Avalorian.

You can also buy me a coffee!

Chapter 487 - Let's Get Married

Song recommendation

Stuck with you—Ariana Grande and Justin Bieber

~

When the call ended, Xiaoshi didn't know how to face her boyfriend.

"I'm sorry..."

"You don't need to be. It's not your fault." He took her in his arms, not blaming her for the fact that her father was not welcoming of him. It was thanks to his own vanity.

"Let's prepare for our movie." He urged her as he stood up.

She was still gloomy, and her eyes suddenly widened when he pulled his shirt off and started fumbling with the sides of his pants. She looked aside with a flushed face.

"Forgive my manners. I forgot that I was still in the living room and had audience with me. I'll go change in the guest room." He didn't look sorry in the slightest, and he turned to grin at her. "Of course, I don't mind the audience. I can change right here if you don't mind."

"Get lost." She pushed him out of the living room with a red face, and only after he left did she realize that she had touched his bare skin. It felt so hot under her palms, tempting her immensely. How dare he tease her?

She rushed to her room and took a shower. When she returned after changing into her shorts and black t-shirt, she quickly forgot about her dad as she wondered how to style her long hair. After thinking for a while, she parted some of her hair with a comb and tied half of it into a ponytail, then made a small braid at the side and let it fall on her shoulder.

Satisfied with her look, she exited the room and wondered whether he was ready.

"Here comes my beauty." Han Xichen, who was waiting on the living room couch, swallowed when he saw her descending the staircase. He had already seen her clothes but they looked much more beautiful on her.

"What should I do? I'm scared all the men at the theater will have their eyes on you." He complained.

"Don't worry. They will be focused on the movie." She walked over to him more confidently and hooked hands with him.

He chuckled at her response. Wasn't she supposed to say that it didn't matter who looked at her, because he was the only one in her eyes or something along the lines?

"Let's go. I'm so excited." She was almost bouncing as she pulled him out of the door, feeling as though he was too slow. She had never thought of wearing a couple outfit with anyone either. She had found the idea online when she searched about simple but fun date ideas that wouldn't make her feel too pressured.

However, she found that searching it and ordering the clothes was one thing but doing it was something else altogether. She was excited yet nervous, especially when he suggested taking a walk instead of driving to the theater, since it was not far away.

"Try to ignore everyone else." He tapped her head, realizing that she was anxious about the look that everyone was giving them. They were obviously a young couple in the initial stages of their relationship in everyone's eyes, which was not a bad thing except everyone had their different opinion of them. While some found them cute, there were some who found their interaction annoying and judged them for being mushy in public. Caring about all of their opinions was too draining.

She nodded and held his hand, feeling more at ease when she felt the warmth of his palm against hers.

...

After watching a movie, they happily went to eat supper at a popular restaurant.

"You've been staring at me for half an hour." He observed with a chuckle, that her eyes had not left his face since they placed their orders. She had probably not realized that their food had been brought.

"Where else should my gaze be? You are so handsome that everything else pales in comparison." She laughed, making his eyebrows rise.

"That doesn't sound like something you would say."

She laughed at his slow brain. "Don't you remember? You said it before. That I was so beautiful that everything else paled in comparison, which was why you were staring at me."

"You still are." He affirmed, then pointed at the food so they could eat before it became cold.

"I've never been this happy." She confessed yet again. Just when she thought that she couldn't love him any more than she already did, her heart proved her wrong.

"Then let's get married." He joked.

"Don't make such jokes." She rolled her eyes.

Of course, she didn't know that he was only half-joking. He had long decided to spend the rest of his life with her and was only waiting to know whether she felt the same way.

They were soon done eating, and when they left the restaurant, she was surprised to see his car parked outside. She was familiar with it since he was fond of driving it to work, and she had met him at the parking lot many times. Not too long ago, it was her major source of joy. She would be overjoyed every time she saw it driving into the hospital parking lot.

"I figured you'd be tired so I had it brought over." He explained when he saw how confused yet pleasantly surprised she was.

She smiled as he led her into the car and drove off. He was so thoughtful. He must have noticed her shift uncomfortably earlier.

Before he started driving, she slid an arm onto his neck and kissed his neck. "I love you."

Sliding his hand to hold her waist, he pressed his lips against hers in a deep kiss.

"That's enough." He pulled away even while knowing that she still wanted more. Seeing her complaining gaze even though she didn't dare to tell him what she wanted, he grabbed her hand and pressed it against his crotch.

"You..." She withdrew her hand like it had been scalded, admitting that it really was enough.

Lanni felt lost after seeing the videos that seemed to lump her uncle and James in one category. She knew that no one in the Xia family was to be trusted but it still hurt her feelings that all her lifetime beliefs were unfounded, that she had been trusting in people who shouldn't even be considered as human beings, but devils.

She massaged her forehead and proceeded to check the information regarding Xia Yuguang, which she had searched online on the night that he saw the video.

Her phone rang, interrupting her from her busy schedule.

"Xiehan." She answered the call in a weak voice, feeling tired from all the work.

"My love, how have you been? It's been long since I last heard from you." He asked worriedly, taking note of how feeble she sounded.

"I'm alright. There's just so many things that are falling into place but they're not good or fun things. I'm just... in disbelief."

"Do you want to come out for fun with me?" He suggested, knowing that what she needed the most right now was a break.

She glanced at the stack of files on her desk and couldn't bring herself to go out yet. "How about we go out tomorrow instead? I still have a lot of work to do."

"What are you looking for?" He casually asked.

"I want to know whether he really is involved with dirty deals with this man whose fake name is James... if they have been in it for a long time or if it's a new thing that's just begun recently." She explained casually, trying to figure it out even though it was difficult to do so.

"What makes you certain that they have been in some dirty deal together?" Xiehan asked.

"I placed a bug on him." She briefly explained.

"Mmh." He hummed. "How long did it take before you caught evidence of their dirty deal?"

"About a few hours after I bugged him." She answered as she wondered what he was up to.

"Then the answer is obvious, isn't it? What are the odds of that being a coincidence—that you bugged him on the day that he just just happened to meet Xia Yuguang for the first time?"

Lanni thought about it now that Xiehan mentioned it. Higher chances were that the deal had been going on for some time now. Especially with how naturally Xia Yuguang had entered the room and how friendly their interaction seemed to be.

"You're right. I really need a break." She shut the files on her desk. It was insane that she couldn't figure out something that was so obvious. It could only prove that she was indeed exhausted.

"Come down." He suddenly chuckled.

"Down...You're here?" It was only now that she realized that it seemed like he was driving a while ago. Was he coming over?

"Yes. Don't keep your boyfriend waiting.." He confirmed her words, and she shot up to hurry out of the door.

Lanni dashed to the parking lot and when she saw Xiehan leaning against his car, she threw herself into his arms. "I missed you."

"I almost got sick from not being able to see you the entire week." His words sounded like a complaint as he held her in his arms. They had both been so busy that they were unable to spend much time together.

"Do you feel better now?" She looked up at him, her fingers running gently along the back of his neck.

"Not yet." He leaned down to kiss her lips. "I feel better now."

"Where are we going?" She asked as they entered the car, and he drove out of the apartment complex.

In response, he merely smiled. "Why are you asking when there is a better way to find out?"

"Watch and see where we land. Right." She chuckled and let him continue driving, and he smiled after successfully putting her in suspense.

About half an hour later, they stopped at a large garden with different kinds of colorful flowers. At the centre was a large fountain and close to the fountain, a large picnic mat had been set up.

"It looks beautiful." She gushed, feeling like all her troubles had flown away thanks to the beauty in her line of sight.

"You better have fun and forget about work for a while." He teased and followed her as she ran around the garden then slumped onto the cushioned mat that had a parasol above it.

She caught a blue butterfly and placed it on her shoulder, then looked bummed when it flew away. "It's been long since we had this kind of fun."

"You are right, and we should do it more often." He cupped her face to press a soft kiss onto her lips. Hugging his shoulders, her eyes darted around the garden as though looking for something.

"Do you miss your little butterfly that much?" He teased.

"I'm looking around to see if we are alone." She whispered, making him hold his belly and laugh. Was she worried that the place wasn't that private?

"Don't worry, it's a private garden and no one else is here." He reassured her. Besides, the flowers around their picnic spot were too tall for anyone from the outside to see whatever was happening inside.

Hearing his reassuring words, she kissed him deeply. She had so badly missed doing so and could only do it now.

When she pulled away, she felt even happier as she looked forward to seeing what was in the cooler box beside them.

"Are you up for some drinks?" He opened the box to reveal different flavors of juice and yoghurt. It looked more like a party than a picnic with the assortment of wine and beer below the yoghurt.

"Nothing beats cold vanilla yoghurt on a hot day." She admitted when she took a sip.

"I have to agree to that." He admitted after taking a sip of her yoghurt, then proceeded to pour himself wine.

While she joyously drank her yoghurt, he took out the sandwiches he had prepared, along with snacks that made her eyes bulge in excitement.

"Xiehan, are you trying to make me add weight?" She narrowed her eyes to jokingly interrogate him.

In response, he chuckled. "I wouldn't mind it if you were chubbier. You would look cuter that way."

Although she knew that these were not new words and she had heard them before, she still smiled.
"Such flattery."

He laughed at her response then studied her face carefully, as though he did not want to miss a pore.
"You are so beautiful." He whispered.

No matter how many times he looked at her, he found her more beautiful every time he did, and the fact that she was his girlfriend filled him with the urge to keep her by his side forever.

She looked up at him from her yoghurt and her face was filled with warmth. "I love you."

—

"Madam, there's a call for you." Li Yuming's housekeeper reported, handing the telephone over to her.

"Who is it?" Li Yuming was a little surprised, but she answered the call before the housekeeper actually had the chance to state who the caller was.

"Miss Li? It's been long." Came a male voice which Li Yuming recognized as Neil's.

She was a little surprised that he would give her a telephone call. "I couldn't agree more, Mr. Chan. Is there anything you need my help with?"

"No. Actually, yes." Neil sounded confused. "I would like to invite you to lunch. Is that okay with you?"

Li Yuming remained silent, so the man sounded uncertain. "It's alright if you are too busy. We can go some other day."

"It's alright." It was just surprising to be invited by him. "I'll get changed and join you."

"Shall I pick you up?" He offered, and she agreed when she remembered that her favorite car had been sent for maintenance.

...

Ruby had dropped by to visit Neil and as soon as she arrived, she was dragged to the dressing room to help him choose what to wear.

"The blue suit... let's choose a tie." Ruby checked his ties and gave him a dotted one. "What's the occasion?"

"I'm going out for lunch." He responded briefly, then looked bummed when he remembered that Ruby had only just arrived. "I'll be back soon, princess."

She laughed at his antics. "It's alright dad."

Having known him for years, this was the first time she couldn't comprehend his actions. Why was he acting like a man in love? Was he seeing someone? When he finished dressing up and dragged her to the mirror to tell him whether or not he looked handsome enough, her suspicion was confirmed. Her dad was in love! She wondered who the lucky woman was.

...

"You look amazing." Neil opened the car door for Li Yuming, who looked so beautiful that he didn't know what the right compliment should be. She was wearing a simple blue dress and a single diamond necklace but she could steal the heart of anyone who looked at her.

She thanked him with a smile and entered his car, which he drove to a restaurant he had booked after asking her out.

"How are your daughters?" He asked to strike a conversation.

"They couldn't be any better." Just as she answered him and was about to place her order, her phone rang.

The frown on her face when she answered the call made her nervous, and he wondered whether she had to rush and leave. That would be a mega bummer, the kind that only happens once in a lifetime with the help of ten generations of bad luck.

Just as he counted how much bad luck he could have possibly accumulated all his life, she placed the phone on the table and picked up the menu.

"An emergency?" He asked, relieved that she was not leaving.

"Nothing major. It's the National Arts Union, inviting me to yet another exhibition." She answered and looked through for what she would like to eat.

He was even more relieved since she had not mentioned anything about the exhibition happening too soon and having to go. "You don't sound like you enjoy the NAU events anymore."

She shook her head. "Honestly, I'm a little tired of it. It has always been painting, going for events, charity banquets and repeating the cycle. It's a bit too monotonous."

Although that was what she said, she knew deep down that it was more monotonous than it sounded. It had been years after all. At first, she still had Lanni to take care of and was less bored. However, her Lanni was now a grown up girl so she had less to do and more time to be bored.

"Maybe you should retire and only paint for fun? You need some time to yourself after working hard for all these years." He felt the same way, which was why he would soon give up the position of CEO in his company and spend the rest of his time doing things that interested him more.

She nodded to his suggestion. "What a coincidence that you think the same way. I plan to do so soon." Her aim was to accumulate enough properties for her daughters, so even if they ever needed her financial support in future, they would be able to enjoy a lifetime of luxury with their children.

"We have more in common than we thought, don't you think?" He smiled as he placed his order.

"Maybe?" She returned a warm smile.

"Are you very busy lately?" He asked when the food arrived.

"That depends. Do you need help with something?" She asked kindly, to which he nodded.

"A painting for my study. I prefer a landscape, and we can talk about the payment once you are done."
He stated, picking up his cutlery.

"I have one that would suit you." It was lucky that he had asked before anyone else saw it, otherwise he would have had to miss out.

"That's a heavenly streak of luck for me." He admitted. "Could you send it to my address later? Send me your account details along with it."

She nodded, but when she sent the painting to him later in the afternoon, it had a note attached to the scroll.. [Consider it a gift.]

Chapter 489 - Rolling Around In Bed—or On The Picnic Mat—all Afternoon

Neil smiled and went ahead to open the scroll. The painting was much more beautiful than he had expected, he knew that it would be valued in the tens of millions if she sold it. Money didn't matter to

him, but the fact that Li Yuming had sent him a gift made him smile so much that Ruby noticed it and giggled secretly.

"Dad, is that a gift? Who sent it to you?" She asked while feigning innocence, even though she had already set her eyes on the painting and knew from the pen name at the bottom left corner that it was Li Yuming's.

She wondered how magical the lucky woman was, that she would know her dad's favorite artist.

Neil turned around to find the best place to place it. "It's not from anyone else. Li Yuming sent it to me."

Ruby had a strange feeling about his words. "Okay..."

Who did he go out for lunch with?

Neil placed the painting on the table and took her hand, leading her to the couch. "Ruby, daddy has something to talk to you about."

"What is it?" Her heart skipped a few beats as it raced in fear. The last time he used that kind of tone, he told her that she was not his daughter. What was he going to tell her this time?

Neil sighed as he started, "Would you mind..."

"Dad, what is it?" She probed when he hesitated, as though he was going to change his mind.

"Would you mind it if you had a stepmother?" He finally asked, then looked at her nervously as though waiting for a life or death verdict. He had a woman in mind, but he had to seek his daughter's opinion. If she would be uncomfortable with the idea of him remarrying and having another wife who was not the mother she had grown up with, then he would stop now before it was too late and he was too deep to break it off.

Ruby listened to him and remained silent for a while before she burst into laughter. "I knew it! You are in love, dad. Tell me, do you need my help wooing her? I'm sure she will agree to be with you as soon as she sees what a cute and obedient step daughter I will be."

"Get lost." Neil shoed her off. His little girl was so grown now that she was even starting to become a cupid for him.

She laughed joyously and wanted to ask what kind of woman she was. She must be exceptionally beautiful if she attracted Neil's attention. Moreover, he was even considering making her his wife so she really must be a stunning woman.

"I need to send something." Neil jolted and made a call.

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Meanwhile, Lanni took a nap after finishing her snacks and when she woke up, she was still in Xiehan's arms with her head rested on his chest.

"You're finally awake." He kissed her forehead as she stretched.

"What time is it?" She asked.

"About 4pm." He answered, much to her chagrin. How could she sleep for so long? She had missed out on so much fun!

"Why the long face? We still have a whole evening and night to spend together."

"I still feel like I missed out." She snuggled in his arms comfortably. He wrapped his arm around her with his hands resting against her stomach. "Xiehan, I feel like all my problems come to an end as soon as I'm with you." She confessed while playing with his long fingers.

"I feel the same way, my love." He responded, his fingers intertwining with hers as he thought about how peaceful he had been since she became his girlfriend. They complimented each other and there wasn't anything they couldn't do together.

He held their hands up to kiss her fingers gently. "Which is why, Lanni, I hope we can spend the rest of our lives together. Honey, will you marry me?"

She smiled while shifting her head against his chest. "I hope so too..."

As soon as she spoke, her eyes bulged and she pulled away as the second part of his words started to sink in. "Xiehan, what did you just say?"

Taking a deep breath, he pulled out a velvet box and went down on one knee in front of her. "Lanni, will you marry me?"

"Xiehan..." Her hand flew over her mouth in disbelief. "Yes! Yes I will."

She threw herself into his arms in excitement, tears streaming down her face when he placed the blue ring on her finger.

He cupped her face to wipe her tears and kiss her. "Thank you my love, I thought you were going to say no."

"Don't be silly. Why would I say no?" She jabbed him for his slow brain. Who would say no to marrying a handsome, kind and caring man who doted on them so much? Unless she had a bug in her brain, it had been a yes from the moment she decided to be with him. Now that she thought about it, the proposal wasn't totally a surprise. With the way he had been acting since he picked her up, she should have expected it.

She stared at her ring which was beautiful and valuable, and its meaning was even more valuable. She once again jumped into his arms. "I love you, Xiehan."

In response, he held her tightly and kissed her, as his heart returned to its place. "I love you too, Lanni."

"Mom, mom!" Lanni yelled in excitement as soon as she got to Li Yuming's villa.

"What happened?" Li Yuming was terrified when she heard her daughter's shriek, and came running downstairs then realized that nothing had gone wrong. On the contrary, her Lanni looked excited.

"He..." Lanni paused in excitement and jumped into Li Yuming's arms. "He proposed!"

The girl was so excited that her words almost sounded like gibberish, but Li Yuming understood her and her eyes went wide. "Oh My God! When did that happen?"

"This afternoon." Lanni did not go into detail and showed off the engagement ring on her finger. "I'm so happy!"

"I'm happy for you, honey." Li Yuming hugged her emotionally. Happiness came so suddenly that her eyes started to tear up in joy.

"We have to celebrate. Where is Xi-, no. Where is your fiance, and my soon to be son-in-law now?" Li Yuming proudly changed her form of address and directly addressed Xiehan as her soon to be son-in-law.

"My fiance went to have dinner with his parents. He will probably break the good news to them." Lanni smugly changed her form of address too. She had thought that the happiest day of her life was when she became Xiehan's girlfriend, and when she found out that she was going to be an aunt. However, that was before she realized that there was an even happier day coming up-today, when Xiehan popped the M question.

"I have to share the news with Luna!" She hurried upstairs before Li Yuming could suggest inviting Xiehan over the following day.

"She's so happy." Li Yuming was caught in between laughter and tears. Her baby had finally grown up.

"Madam, shall I have the kitchen prepare Miss Lanni's favorite dishes for dinner?" The housekeeper conveniently asked, having overheard the good news. She had smiles all over her face. After all, she had been Lanni's nanny when she was young and although her position was changed later, she still viewed the young woman as a daughter.

"Yes. I'll help out." Li Yuming was so happy that she had to make an appearance in the kitchen.

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"Sis, guess what? I'm engaged now!" Lanni chirped to Luna over the phone.

"Oh my God, what?" Luna squealed in excitement before suddenly calming down. "You better not be joking around. My babies almost came flying out from the surprise."

"Oh no! Hold them back in so they wait for the right time. No need to rush out, their aunt will only get married when they are born." Lanni joked.

"He really proposed! Congratulations, sis." Luna was so full of joy that she decided to go over to celebrate together.

Lanni thought it was a good idea, so she urged her. "Come over. I'll have the kitchen cook more food and if possible, I'll even call the rest over."

"Call Ruby. Shoot. Ruby must be at her home since her brother must be celebrating with the family." Luna recalled. "Just try to ask her out anyway. I'll give Xiao Yu a call."

Lanni chuckled. "I hope she's not rolling in bed with Cedric."

"You dirty minded pervert. I should be the one asking why you are not rolling in bed with your fiancé." Luna rebutted, to which Lanni snickered.

"We already did enough of that for the rest of the afternoon. Not on the bed, though. On a picnic mat. Go on, call Xiao Yu," Lanni hung up before she could be scolded.

Chapter 490 - Dog Food For Dinner

Xiehan was so excited when he went home that Wen Lin noticed him smile to himself once in a while.

"What's got you so happy?" She asked curiously, wanting to share her son's happiness.

"Come here, mother. I have good news." He pulled her over with a deep smile on his face, and Wen Lin sat down to listen. Even Ji Huifen, who was reading a magazine on the opposite side from them, peeked from the top of the large magazine and tried to listen in.

Wen Lin looked at her son and tried to guess what could make him this happy. Was Lanni expecting a baby?

If she learnt that she was going to be a grandma, heaven knew she would fly to the sky before coming down to brag about it to her circle of friends. Heaven knew that since Luna got engaged to Xingyu and everyone found out that they were expecting a baby, Xinghe had been walking on clouds.

She had long stopped talking about it but the smile that was permanently plastered on her face proved just how elated she was.

Wondering how it felt to actually be a grandma, Wen Lin's lips curled into a small smile. Her son was handsome while Lanni was beautiful, her grandchild would be the cutest.

"Lanni said yes." He finally announced, doing an internal happy dance.

His voice pulled her back the present and her smile deepened. She stood up to pull him into a hug. "Finally! Wait. I hope it's the kind of yes I'm thinking about?"

"She agreed to be my wife." He clarified while wrapping his arms around his excited mother.

"Punk. What took you so long?" Ji Huifen scolded his son, even though it was evident that he was overjoyed from how deep his grin was.

Before Xiehan could answer him, Wen Lin came to his rescue by glaring at her husband. "What's wrong with you? Our son finally proposed. Shouldn't you be congratulating him?"

"You're right, dear." Ji Huifen was too happy to argue over anything. His boy was finally a mature man. Not only was he taking over the company soon, he had also successfully found himself a wife-to-be.

"Let me show you something." Ji Huifen urged, and Xiehan followed him out of the living room while Wen Lin looked at them curiously. Deciding not to mind them, she did a happy dance and grabbed her telephone to brag to her friends, before she prepared to celebrate over dinner. She even went to her husband's cellar to select the best wine.

Meanwhile, Ji Huifen led Xiehan to the old library.

"Father, why did you bring me here?" Xiehan asked. He had been to this place before, and he didn't think there was anything that his father would want to show him. Perhaps he only wanted to talk in secret, he concluded.

Ji Huifen pressed his palm against a wall and a section of it rolled away, revealing rolled pieces of paper that were so old that they looked like ancient parchment.

Picking them up, Ji Huifen blew the dust away before untying the ribbon keeping them rolled up and unrolling it, under Xiehan's surprised gaze. Such a thing existed? He thought he had combed through the entire library. It turned out, this library was more vast than it looked.

"It's your grandfather's will along with property ownership documents." Ji Huifen explained. "This is the only place I could keep them safely, ensuring that none of my siblings ever found out about it. Your grandfather wanted my son to inherit all his secret estates, which are more vast than everything he left us."

"Why?" Xiehan wondered.

Ji Huifen shrugged. "Who knows? No one could understand his train of thought. The prerequisite was that you settle down, and being engaged counts as settling down. So, this belongs to you now."

Xiehan flipped through the documents and realized that the properties were much more than he had thought. No wonder Ji Huifen would hide the documents here. Otherwise, they would cause too much controversy. Even if he received these documents as a pauper, he would become a billionaire overnight.

Ji Huifen let him read whatever he wanted before taking out another file and giving it to him. "This is a share transfer document."

Xiehan glanced at it in surprise. "Why would you transfer your shares to me?"

"I want you to gain a strong foothold in the company. Having the highest shares is a major step at that. Initially, I wanted you to buy them from the Feng or Gu family but that's no longer necessary thanks to your quick wit."

Suddenly understanding something, he asked, "Is this why you were rushing me into marriage before?"

Ji Huifen nodded and leaned against a firm, antique shelf. "I knew you would need a lot of money to buy the shares, but I was the CEO and couldn't give all of mine to you."

Xiehan finally comprehended his reason, and he didn't blame his father. It was all for the company and he had not actually been forced into anything.

"You will make a good CEO." Ji Huifen encouraged his son with a pat.

Xiehan nodded. "I'll do my best."

By the time they got back downstairs after a long chat, Wen Lin was waiting for them and the food was ready.

"There's my son!" She hurried to meet him with a hug.

"Mother..." He smiled at how doting she was of him today.

As though she understood what she was wondering about, she patted him matter-of-factly. "You are my only son. We once shared a life and you have grown up so fast. Soon, you will not only be my son but someone else's son too, as well as a husband and a father too. It's so overwhelming."

He smiled and hugged her. "I will not be any less of your son than I am now."

"Thank you, son." She was relieved. It was every mother's fear that their child would forget her once they got married, and hers had just been cleared. She urged him to the dining table. "I cooked your favorite foods. Why didn't you invite Lanni?"

"She went home." Xiehan answered as he made his way to the dining table. He was still lost in thought, wondering whether it really was happening. Did Lanni really say yes to his proposal, or was he dreaming about it?

"Then call your friends over. You punk, don't you know how to share your happiness?" Wen Lin urged him, so he took his phone and called Lin Jian and Xingyu. Luckily they were home so they immediately rushed over.

"What's the good news? I ran over as soon as I got your call." Lin Jian hurried to Wen Lin to ask about it.

"He proposed to Lanni and she said yes." Xingyu, who was a little upset about his Luna leaving him all alone to rush home, broke the news before Xiehan had the chance to say it.

"You did? She did?" Lin Jian did a happy dance as though he was the one who had proposed. "We have to drink to that! Let's drink till we drop."

"I'm sorry but I have to miss out. If I have time after dinner, I would like to ask my fiancée out instead." Xiehan smiled as he called a rain check.

Lin Jian looked like his heart had been struck with an arrow. "You traitor. As soon as you propose, you start flaunting your love and ditching your bros. So it's wives before bros to you, huh?"

"What would a man like you know? Only engaged men can understand it." Xingyu added salt to Lin Jian's injury.

"Aunty, they are bullying me." Lin Jian complained to Wen Lin, who was too busy laughing at him. The kids were too cute. It felt surreal, seeing the troublemaking trio finally grown up and discussing engagement and wives.

"Will the three of you bicker all day, or will you serve yourselves some food to eat before Huifen scarfs all of it down?" Wen Lin laughed as she glanced at her husband who was 'tasting' large portions of the food.

"Who is to blame? My wife cooks such delicious dishes." Ji Huifen sat down guiltily.

"Dear, I only prepared the ingredients." Wen Lin laughed.

"My wife prepares such amazing ingredients. As long as she sets foot in the kitchen, everything becomes delicious." Ji Huifen corrected himself and continued with his flattery.

"Uh... I feel full already." Lin Jian groaned. It was uncertain how much dog food they would be stuffed with before the actual meal.

"Aren't you used to it?" Xingyu laughed at him. Heaven knew what happened but since Ruby returned to the Ji family, Wen Lin and Ji Huifen had been lovey-dovey. They looked like an ordinary couple in the

past but their love had never been obvious.. However, it seemed as though they had recently ignited a spark. Perhaps Ruby was their cupid?