

Chapter 491 - The Scum Of Society

While the Ji family was full of jubilation, the situation was different when Lin Jian returned home.

"Come here!" Lihua called him over as soon as he set foot through the door, looking like she was declaring war.

"Mother, what happened?" Lin Jian so badly wanted to dash out but he knew that whatever it is, he couldn't avoid it forever.

"Where is your fiancée?" She glared at him.

He was confused. "I'm not engaged. How can I have a fiancée?"

In response, Lihua grabbed his ear to pinch him. "Why aren't you engaged when your friends are already planning their weddings? Is it because of your playfulness that Ruby won't agree to marry you?"

"Mother!" Lin Jian saw his father coming downstairs and looked at him for help. "Father, help! Your wife is about to pull my ears away from my head."

"Lihua, at this rate you will really pull his ear off." His father came to his rescue, trying to stop Lihua.

In response, she glared at her husband furiously. "What are you saying? Don't you want a daughter-in-law and a cute little grandchild?"

"Nonsense, of course I do!"

Lin Jian was betrayed mercilessly.

But he couldn't blame his parents. He was their only child and since he grew up, he had been spending little time with them. They must be lonely, so they hoped that having a daughter-in-law and grandchildren would make the house more active again.

"You useless punk. It's all because you were a womanizer. Your father is loyal and so am I. Who did you even take after?" Lihua reprimanded him for his past once again, rendering him speechless. Were they going to bug him about it until he got engaged to Ruby? But that was going to take ages! Ruby didn't even trust him fully yet. If he proposed, not only would she say that she was not ready, but she would also think he was crazy.

As soon as Lihua let go of him so she would think about what to do with her son, he dashed for his life. This was scary!

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Meanwhile, Li Yuming and her daughters toasted to the triple happiness that they had gotten in just a short span of time. Not only was Luna engaged and expecting twins, Lanni was now engaged too! Li Yuming couldn't be any happier.

While Li Yuming toasted with wine, Luna raised her glass of milk. Feeling that it was unfair to be the only one drinking milk, she convinced Li Yuming to have Lanni drink milk too, so the other sulkily raised her glass of warm milk.

Luna burst into laughter at her sister's misfortune. "Don't be so gloomy. Aren't sisters supposed to share each other's joys and sorrows?"

"You're the worst sister." Lanni ignored her.

While they ate and cheerfully drank, a parcel arrived that was a gift for Li Yuming.

"Did you notice that mom has been receiving more gifts lately?" Lanni peeked at the gift box as she whispered to Luna, who nodded in agreement.

"At first, I thought it was her fans but what if it's a secret admirer?" Luna whispered back, also checking out the gift that Li Yuming was unwrapping. The girls were definitely more curious than their mother.

"What if the admirer isn't that much of a secret?" Luna whispered as she glanced at the women's watch that Li Yuming had pulled out of the box with a smile.

"No way, Luna! Mom could be falling for someone. She's so happy... oh my God! This is exciting..." Lanni squealed under her breath.

"What are you naughty girls whispering about?" Li Yuming didn't need to ask to know that they must be cooking up some mischief.

"Nothing!" They answered in unison, but that only made her more suspicious of them. Ignoring their gazes, she sent a thank you message to Neil Chan and resumed eating as though nothing out of the ordinary had happened.

"Have you and Xiehan planned anything out yet?" She asked Lanni, talking about their wedding.

"No, isn't it too early?" Lanni frowned slightly as it had not crossed her mind.

"Don't sweat it. Just do it at the pace you are comfortable with. I thought you would start planning since it's only a few weeks left before Xiehan has to leave." She explained, referring to Xiehan's departure to Cauldron Island. She thought that the kids would want to use marriage as a guarantee that Lanni would wait for him and he would not forget her either, since they would have rings on their fingers to help them feel less lonely about each other's absence.

"I didn't think of that." Lanni confessed, and she was not ready to rush it. It was a good idea but it would be too stressful at the moment. On the contrary, she preferred using marriage as a way to celebrate Xiehan's return.

After refreshing her mind, Lanni found that it was much easier to complete her research and she submitted it to Lin Jian the following day.

The man sulkily took the file containing the report, and Lanni found him strange. "Whoa, what happened?"

"Don't ask me what happened when it's all your fault." He sulked. "Do you know how much I've been scolded simply because you said yes to Xiehan? Do you? Do you have any idea how much my ears have suffered physically and verbally?"

"No, I don't." Lanni laughed. "But you didn't expect me to say no just to save you from the scolding did you? It's after all your fault that you were a playboy. Aren't you paying for breaking too many hearts now?" She laughed at him gloatingly instead of offering any word of consolation.

"You and your Xiehan are the worst people on earth!" He complained.

"Are you ready to listen to the detailed report? I'm sure that will make you feel better." She laughed, and he had no choice but to let her go ahead.

"That man, James, was from the Qian family. Why did you tell me that Qiao Linyou was trafficking weapons? It turned out they were trading illegal medicines."

"Aren't those weapons? They use illegal medicines to maim and kill, after all." He shrugged. He did say that they were trafficking weapons. He just didn't explain what kind of weapons he was talking about.

Lanni couldn't blame him. Or rather, she was too tired to do so.

"Xiehan's late grandfather already got rid of the entire Qian and Li families when he was alive. Li Xiyan, Xia Hanchen and James were the only ones left, and they were trying to revive the business. However, their plans were ruined by the death of the two major parties, Li Xiyan and Xia Hanchen. James is now trying to do it on his own but it's more difficult without his two most capable partners.

"In other words, he is finished?" Lin Jian.

"Not exactly. But if we find a permanent way to get him off the business, he will be done for good." She explained, and hoped she would not hear something she didn't want to.

"Then I will hand this evidence over to the related authorities."

"Lin Jian..." She tried to interrupt. This was the Qian family. They should not be letting them off this easily.

However, Lin Jian did not flinch. "Lanni, as a journalist, the most basic thing you should learn is to not let your feelings control you. Whether you murderer out of psychotic addiction or the urge for revenge, it is murder nonetheless and you will be prosecuted for it the same way. I'm sure you have heard this before."

She nodded slowly, recalling the last time she heard the exact words. As expected, Li Xiyan managed to escape from prison when they let the police handle her.

"Don't worry. They will not be sentenced to imprisonment. Because of the many lives they have ruined thanks to their dirty business, they will be sentenced to death by a firing squad, or hanged or beheaded." He reassured her, knowing how awful it would feel if someone they reported to have destroyed so many lives managed to slip through the hands of the police.

She was relieved, and handed over another file. "These are case reports, regarding all the people I could find, who are victims of James' illegal business. There is a girl who was paralyzed after being injected with poisonous medicine, as well as a young man who lost his sight thanks to the medicine that made his pupils inactive. Similarly, James sold the medicine to a woman who was having trouble conceiving. After paying millions for the pills she thought would make her conceive faster, she ended up having to undergo a surgery and remove her uterus because it was damaged—the whole thing was a scheme by

her husband who was looking for an excuse to divorce her and bring his pregnant mistress home. Men are evil."

Lin Jian was most disgusted by the final tale. "All of them will pay for their crimes. Leave it to me."

Before handing the man over to the police, he would send his bodyguards to beat the jerk into a pulp.. Such men were the reason why women were afraid of opening up their hearts to men, in fear of getting their hearts broken.

Chapter 492 - My Fiancé Doesn't Allow Laziness

Cedric and Cheng Yu's time off had been extended by Luna and when they finally returned, they were fully refreshed from all the fun they had. The first thing they heard upon their return was the news of Xiehan's proposal, and Cheng Yu was so overjoyed that she asked Lanni out for dinner.

"Congratulations! I was wondering when he was going to propose." She happily raised a glass to her friend.

Lanni chuckled as they clinched glasses. With everyone congratulating her and expressing that she and Xiehan had been in a relationship for so long that they started wondering if he was ever going to propose, her heart finally calmed down. She had been afraid that they might be rushing it too fast.

"What are you thinking about? Aren't you happy?" Cheng Yu nudged her. If she were in her place, she would be dancing to her own heartbeat the entire time.

"I'm just nervous. Will I be a good wife? What if I don't meet his expectations?" Lanni wondered aloud, and Cheng Yu smacked her playfully.

"The two of you have been in a relationship for so long already. If there was anything he didn't like about you, you would have known it already. He wouldn't have proposed if he was uncertain about wanting to spend the rest of his life with you. Besides, marriage isn't about being perfect. No one is perfect, but you have to compliment each other anyway. I'll not lie and say that it's easy but you can make it work as long as both of you are willing to."

Lanni raised an eyebrow when she heard the last part, which was identical to what Li Yuming had told her and Luna the previous day over dinner. "You know so much about marriage that you are about to become a love and marriage expert." She joked, to which Cheng Yu rolled her eyes.

"Have you forgotten what my profession is?"

Lanni chuckled. Indeed. As a comic artist, she had to include such topics in her comics since they were based on love and romance, but she couldn't write gibberish and had to do a lot of research.

"What about you and Cedric?" Lanni asked as she sipped her wine.

"I was scared of nothing." She cracked her knuckles, her face slowly flushing.

Lanni realized what was going on and lowered her voice to ask, "Did you..."

Cheng Yu nodded timidly. "I always thought he would abandon me after doing it, but it's as though something arose in him. He keeps showering me with affection instead. We are falling deeper in love with each other."

"You're finally a woman! Congratulations." Lanni chuckled and gave a toast to her friend, who was finally willing to give her heart to love. It was a huge step that Cheng Yu had managed to leave her past behind, so Lanni hoped that Cedric would never disappoint her friend.

When Lanni went to work the following day, Lin Jian summoned her.

"Good news. The police dealt with all of them. Their hearing is

at the end of this month and I'm certain of the outcome because of all the evidence that we have submitted." The man looked jubilant as he reported. "You and the team have worked hard. Feel free to ask for whatever rewards you would like."

"That's indeed good news." Lanni celebrated, and didn't need any other reward. The fact that she accomplished the mission was already enough of a reward for her. "Now that I think about it, why did you have me take care of my own personal matters?" She asked, realizing that her first task was to take down Li Xiyan, which she somewhat failed because Flynn was the one to take her down. Afterwards, her second mission started off as exposing Qiao Linyou, but in the end turned out to be about the Qian family.

In response to her question, a smile formed on his lips. "Only by clearing up your personal matters will you be able to concentrate on your work. I hope it's alright now."

"Yes, it is." She had to agree. "I couldn't ask for anything else. Thank you."

He nodded in response. "Are you ready for your next task? It has nothing to do with your personal matters this time, and it will probably take years."

"Yes, of course. I couldn't be readier. I will be done as soon as possible." She was invigorated when she heard that there was going to be a next task. She even added, "My wigs and masks are ready too."

He chuckled at her antics. "If you are thinking of going around with disguises then I have bad news for you, you will not go out this time. You are going to take over the position of Chief Editor. That's your next task."

She looked at him in shock when she processed his words. "Aw, what a bummer that I don't get to use my new wigs. But I don't qualify to be a Chief Editor yet."

"I know you are more suited for the field." He admitted. It wasn't that she didn't qualify for the Chief Editor's office, but she liked the field much more. In actual fact, he had thought that Qiao Linyou's case would drag on for months because of its complexity but she had finished it within a few days, which proved just how much fun she was having while handling it. However, "I will never be at peace knowing you are out there doing risky things to get news. Your boyfriend, no, fiancé will kill me as soon as you get a scratch on your finger."

Lanni couldn't deny his words. Based on the number of times Xiehan kept bugging her to be careful, it was highly possible for him to give Lin Jian a good beating if she so much as sprained her ankle. She could only give in. "Then I won't make life difficult for you, boss."

"You naughty thing. Just who is the boss between you and I?" He lamented. It was almost as though Lanni was the ultimate boss, not that he minded it. She was his best friend's treasure and it was his duty to take care of her.

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Lanni left Lin Jian's office and headed towards her new office, only to be stopped by the yelp of a young journalist in glasses, who was part of her team while stalking Qiao Linyou.

"Eh?Lanni..." She held a hand over her mouth.

"Did something happen?" She was curious about the young woman's gaze of adoration.

"Congratulations! Is that an engagement ring? Who is the lucky man?" The young woman yelled in excitement, curious for the gossip at the same time.

"Xiehan." She chuckled and answered her, knowing that the young journalist would find it out even if she ignored her question.

As for who Xiehan was, they all knew. While the two spoke, Lin joined them and just happened to overhear the news that Lanni was now engaged to Xiehan.

"Congratulations! How lucky! It's such a bummer that I'm a woman. If I were a man and got to know you before he did, I would never let him get so lucky." Lin joked.

"Thanks for the compliment, I guess." Lanni burst into laughter at her unique way of giving compliments.

"Seriously, Lanni. I'm not flattering you. You are the best kind of woman one could ever have as a wife. Not only are you beautiful, you are hardworking, not to mention such a darling you are." Lin explained, wondering what galaxy Xiehan must have saved in his previous life to deserve Lanni in his current life.

"Lin is right. Please don't give up work when you get married." The young woman in glasses whispered. It would be such a bummer if they lost Lanni from their team. Getting a teammate who was both a good leader and an excellent workmate wasn't easy, and they hoped that she would stay for longer.

The feeling was mutual. Previously at Tian Yu Media, there was a huge gap between her and the other journalists since she started off as a Chief Editor. Even those who were friendly to her maintained a high level of respect and couldn't ever be considered as friends. It wasn't easy to make friends which was one of the reasons why she felt bummed about leaving her department.

"Why are you silent? I hope you weren't planning to ditch us?" The journalist with spectacles looked like she was going to cry if Lanni affirmed her speculation.

However, the latter laughed. "My fiancé does not take laziness lightly so don't worry. I will continue to work even after our wedding."

"You are flaunting your love, jeez!" Lin and the journalist with spectacles felt stuffed with dog food. What a random way to flaunt their affection without prior warning!

Although the duo made it sound like they were complaining, they were curious to know more about Xiehan's relationship with Lanni. The two of them were after all, one of the city's most famous power couples.

"He is making you work?" Lin asked jokingly, even though she already knew the answer to that. Obviously, a man like Xiehan would prefer for his wife to stay at home and be in charge of looking beautiful while he takes care of everything else.

The young woman looked curious too, as she adjusted her glasses on her face. "He is so wealthy that you can spend your whole life staying at home like a lazy potato and digging huge holes through his wallet. I wouldn't work if I were you."

Lanni was speechless. So, did they want her to continue working or not? Their speed of switching opinions was too fast! She knew that all they wanted was gossip so she humoured them nonetheless. "He would support me if what I wanted was to stay at home. However, what I want is to continue working so he will fully support me throughout my career."

"Oh my God! I want to get married too!" The young woman exclaimed, pressing a palm against the left side of her chest to imply that she had been struck by a cupid arrow. "I want a Xiehan in my life too!"

Lin rolled her eyes at her and playfully smacked her arm. "Quit dreaming. There is only one Xiehan in the world and he is Lanni's. Though I have to admit that I feel the same way you do. What can I do? I want to get married too!"

"That's enough chit-chat." Lanni chuckled at their exaggerated praise and admiration. "Let's all get back to work. I need to get used to my new office too."

At the mention of the new office, Lin suddenly came to a realization. "That is right! Lanni, are you the new Chief Editor?"

When Lanni nodded, she looked even happier than she was when she learnt that Lanni would continue working despite being engaged. "Oh my God! We are totally in luck!"

Lanni didn't comprehend why her change of office equalled them having luck on their side, so she chuckled at their animated celebration as they did a happy dance.

"Lanni, please don't make us cry. The former Chief Editor found fault with everything we did, including breathing in too much air at a go." The young journalist complained, at the same time pleading for Lanni to be a little more lenient with them.

"Don't worry, as long as you are doing the right thing and you meet your deadlines, I don't have any reason to make you cry." She promised amusedly.

"All hail Lanni!" The young woman cheered, rendering Lanni speechless. Just how awful was her predecessor? She had heard tales about her and knew that the former Chief Editor often bullied the employees she thought to be below her, and she lacked professionalism, which was why she was fired not too long after being promoted to her position. However, she didn't expect that the situation would be much worse than she had expected.

Otherwise, it was impossible for the duo to be celebrating this much when she had just announced that she would be strict on them.

While the duo cheered and blocked Lanni's path to shower her with endless praise, the elevator doors opened and Lin Jian stepped out.

"What's the celebration all about? Am I invited?" He smiled at the jovial duo, spooking them out of their skins. Lin grabbed her colleague's hand and they scurried away like scared rabbits.

"They don't want to share their joy with me." Lin Jian scratched his head as he glanced in the direction that the duo had disappeared in. Was he that scary?

"I wouldn't if I were them." Lanni shrugged. Lin Jian was so strict when at work that it was impossible for anyone to dare to befriend him, let alone want to share their joy with him. Who was he trying to blame for that?

He frowned when he realized what she meant. "You meanie."

Just as he lamented about being left out, he saw a life saver making her way through the corridor after leaving the elevator, and walking towards them.

"Ruby!" He exclaimed excitedly and rushed to meet her, pulling her into his arms as soon as he was close enough.

"Calm down, you are still at work." She chuckled at his overexcited demeanor. Before she came, she was afraid that he might find her to be bothersome, since she was seeking him when it was still within working hours. Luckily, she was wrong. He was happier to see her than she would ever expect.

"I will get back to work. Please excuse me." Lanni stepped away to give them space to talk, after greeting Ruby and exchanging a short hug.

"Alright, sister-in-law." Ruby jovially changed her form of address, expressing just how much she had longed to address Lanni as her sister-in-law and how happy she was to finally do it.

"Let's have a seat in my office for a while." He delayed the meeting he was just about to attend and led her into his office.

Knowing that he must have things to do, she didn't intend to take up too much of his time.

"I wanted to bring you lunch but I will be busy later, so I brought it now. You can warm it up later." She gave the package she was carrying to him.

"You did? Thank you!" His eyes shone in excitement. It was not the first time that a woman sent him lunch, he had received bentos in the past, which were mostly food that the women cooked themselves. Most of them were unbearable to look at, let alone taste, and he would often throw the food away before taking a look.

However, now that Ruby had brought him lunch, his heart raced with anticipation to have a taste, and his mouth watered from the mere thought of Ruby's specially prepared lunch.

"I will get going now." She was relieved. It was her mother's idea to send him lunch since he must be under a lot of pressure from his parents, now that both of the friends he had grown up with were engaged. Luckily, he didn't despise the idea and even looked forward to eating it.

"Wait. I have something to offer as thanks for the lunch." He stood up after her, holding her hand to make her halt.

"Mmh?" She raised an eyebrow in surprise, and her eyes went wide when his lips landed on hers. So the thanks was a kiss. What a novel way of thanking someone for lunch, not that she was complaining.

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As soon as Lanni got to her office, she kept receiving a series of calls from an unknown number. She already knew who the caller was and kept ignoring them, but they were incessant so she answered it.

"You bitch! I will make you pay for what you've done!" Qiao Linyou yelled as soon as Lanni answered the call.

"Oh?" Lanni smirked indifferently. "You and what army, Youyou?"

"Don't call me that!" The actress was on the verge of tearing someone down. Unfortunately, her agent was right. Lanni was up to something all along, and it turned out that all she had wanted was to destroy her life. How dare she report her to the police? She had managed to escape charges by pinning all the blame on her agent, but she knew that time was ticking for her to be arrested too.

Lanni chuckled. "I was going to ignore you, Qiao Linyou. But I guess it's time for you to know that the worst thing you could ever do is provoke a reporter." She hung up, leaving the other party raging with fury.

In the evening, Lanni was about to leave her new office when she received a call from Xiehan.

"Love, are you done with work?" He asked enthusiastically, as though he had been waiting for her to be done.

"Yes. Do you want me to pick you up?" She took her handbag and locked her desk drawers, then checked around for anything she might have forgotten.

"I don't think anyone would mind getting a ride from a beauty." Came his flirtatious reply, making her smile deeply.

"That couldn't be wrong. I'll be there soon." She answered and took her car keys, preparing to go to Feng Ji International.

Just as she left the company building, she caught sight of a masked woman sneakily making her way into the elevator. Needless to ask, she knew who that was.

"I can't believe she would be this stupid." She chuckled to herself, then rejoiced in the actress' stupidity. Good for her.. The more stupid moves she made, the easier it was to destroy her.

Chapter 494 - The Fall Of Qiao Linyou

Lanni drove to Feng Ji International and by the time she arrived, he was already waiting for her.

"Are you done with work?" She asked when she got into his office, to find him packing up and arranging his desk.

"I was waiting for you." He paused what he was doing and pulled her into his arms. "I missed you so much, even though it's only been a day."

She rested her head against his chest, feeling the same way. "I couldn't wait to finish work so I would get a chance to see you again."

He wrapped his arms around her and kissed her lips gently. "Do you want to have dinner out, or at my place? We can watch a movie or two afterwards." He suggested.

"Can we go to your place?" She preferred having a homemade meal today, not to mention that she had missed eating his specially cooked food.

He immediately knew what she was thinking about, and he was willing to cook whatever she wanted. "Of course my love. We can get the ingredients on our way."

"I want to cook for you tonight." She suggested, thinking about what she should cook for him.

"That's alright too. We can cook each other's dinner." He thought it was a good idea, so he finished up packing and took her hand.

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While she drove, she noticed his gaze on her ring finger. She glanced up at him with a smile. "Doesn't my hand look more beautiful now?"

"It does." He took it up to plant a soft kiss on it, rejoicing when he remembered that she was his soon-to-be wife.

She eyed her ring and finally understand why Luna could barely keep her eyes off her ring. It was so overwhelming that she couldn't keep her eyes off hers either.

Soon after they arrived home, they were about to enter the kitchen when she noticed the news on the television, which had been tuned to a celebrity gossip channel.

"I didn't know you were into celebrity gossip?" She asked him curiously, not paying attention to the headlines.

"Ruby was here today." He explained, implying that it was Ruby who was interested in celebrities. He, on the other hand, only had his attention on his work, his family and most importantly, his Lanni.

"What's the breaking news? My phone is about to explode." He realized that he had been receiving too many notifications at the same time, so much that he almost couldn't use his phone. They were all from Oracle Magazine's website, which he had subscribed to as a way of supporting Lin Media Group for the sake of Lin Jian. If he knew that he was going to get so many notifications in a row, he would have definitely ignored it in the past.

"It's Qiao Linyou." Lanni explained with a slight chuckle as she led him to the kitchen to start preparing dinner. She would have been curious about what was going on but she wasn't because she already knew the entire thing.

"I'll tell you all about it." She promised jovially, and he found aprons to wear while cooking. He helped her into one of them and wore the other himself, then opened the bags of ingredients that they had bought.

"Honey, what would you like me to cook you?" He questioned as he sorted the ingredients.

"Anything is fine." She smiled, looking forward to whatever he was going to cook. "I'm going to cook a random dish, but I'm sure that you will love it." She promised and rolled her sleeves to start working.

"I look forward to it." He grinned and looked forward at her. She kept the main meal mysterious and merely washed and chopped the vegetables, keeping him guessing.

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While Lanni and Xiehan had fun in the kitchen, the world was turning upside down for Qiao Linyou. She was surrounded by reporters before she could notice it, and they kept firing questions at her even though she had stated that she was not ready for an interview.

She had no way out, and it seemed like her bodyguards were tired of their job. They were slacking off! How could they not be here at such a moment, to shoo these dumb reporters off?!

"Youyou, is it true that you were involved with James, a drug lord?" A young woman with spectacles asked, and to Qiao Linyou's chagrin, she had the badge of Lin Media Group on her chest. How could Lin Jian's underling treat her this way?

"I don't know what you're talking about." She denied the claim with a straight face while wondering when her bodyguards would be here.

"How could that be? Your agent was caught and there was sufficient evidence. It has been proven that she had a deal with James, and James' illegal business have been uncovered. What do you have to say about this?"

Qiao Linyou saw this coming, so she gave the answer she had already prepared in case such a situation popped up. She was an actress after all, and she had to be on the lookout in case her career was suddenly at stake. "It's up to my agent to live her life as she pleases. I have no right to control her, but that doesn't mean I advocate for such behaviour. She has already been fired and handed over to the police."

Her response was precise and to the point, answering all their questions. Not only had she cleared her name of all claims of her involvement with the dark market, she had also thrown Ms. Ming under the bus.

Her response was flawless, and her fans should have cheered her for being such a honest person. On the contrary, the reporters looked at her with disgust written all over their faces. Just as she wondered what was wrong with them, one of the older female reporters sneered at her.

"You ungrateful woman! Is that how you treat your mother after all these years she took care of you, is this how your repay her? By having her pay for all your mistakes?"

Her heart skipped a beat at the mention of her mother. "I don't know what you mean." At the same time, she tried to leave the crowd, only to be pushed back into the centre of it by the insane reporters.

"It has been revealed that Ms. Ming is your biological mother. What do you have to say about this?" A young man asked pointedly, shoving his microphone almost to her mouth.

She tried to remain calm. "First off, it's my decision whether or not I would like to introduce my family members to the media. It's up to them whether or not they would like to be in the limelight, and not up to you, reporters, who want nothing but gossip to talk about. Secondly, no she isn't my mother."

"What a heartless bitch!" The middle-aged female reporter found Qiao Linyou's mother too pitiful. "Not only did she give in to your every whim and impulse, she also did everything to help you advance through your career. She even lowered herself to be your agent. How can you employ your own mother? How heartless!

Not only did you disrespect her at many instances, you have also made her pay for too many of your crimes. What kind of role model are you trying to be to the younger generation that looks up to you?!"

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In the kitchen of Xiehan's mansion, Xiehan and Lanni could overhear the chatter of the maids who were watching the broadcast and whispering to each other curiously. He couldn't help wanting to know.

"Is she really her mother?"

Lanni nodded with a mischievous grin on her face.

"I noticed their resemblance the last time I met both of them but I didn't think too much of it. However, I later realized the peculiarity and pinned the pieces together." She explained.

It didn't make sense for Ms. Ming to be so close to Qiao Linyou that she was more loyal than a dog. Forget about the fact that Qiao Linyou was not respectful to her, she had also bullied her quite a number of times.

At first, Lanni thought that Qiao Linyou might have a stain against Ms. Ming, which allowed her to control the older woman as she pleased and the latter had nothing to do about it.. However, the more she searched, the more she found it peculiar. There was no stain against Ms. Ming except... the woman herself was Qiao Linyou's stain.

With Lin Jian's help, she had uncovered that shockingly, the two of them were mother and daughter.

"She brought this upon herself." She shrugged as she imagined what was going to happen to Qiao Linyou now. "I was going to let her off. She would at most be an ordinary actress with no more support. However, she just had to threaten me.. How could I let her off? I'm not going to free a snake so it bites me. Wouldn't I be crazy if I did that?"

Chapter 495 - Reward

While she spoke, his lips suddenly landed on hers, and she blinked in confusion. Why was he suddenly kissing her? How unpredictable...

"You did well." He praised, and she finally understood. Was that a reward? Then she should work much harder.

While she thought about it, his arm snaked around her body to pull her to him. He held her chin up, pressing his lips against hers.

"Honey, we're still cooking." Although she sounded like she was reprimanding him, she placed her arms around his neck to hug him. He deepened the kiss and hugged her closer, her body pressed against his as his tongue swirled around hers.

Her breath quickened and her body went limp, she could only hold onto him for support. He held her by her butt and lifted her with her to place her on the kitchen counter. He positioned himself between her legs and she wrapped her legs behind his back, with her hands still holding his neck.

"I want you," He croaked through his parched throat, his fingers gently caressing the side of her face. She looked up to meet his eyes that were full of desire, which made her press her lips against his.

She delicately undid the buttons of his shirt at the same time as he unzipped her dress, sliding it down her arms. She paused to let the dress fall to her waist before ripping the white shirt off and letting it drop onto the floor.

He lowered his head while holding her back to support her, kissing the top of her boobs. His tongue licked down her cleavage to find the front hook of her bra, which he undid with his finger to set her boobs free. She gasped as he cupped them in his hands, squeezing them slightly as he kissed them.

He pushed her back so she would lie on the kitchen counter and she shuddered from the cold, which she soon got used to thanks to the heat she was feeling in her body. When she was more comfortable, he pulled her dress down her hips, letting it fall along with her panty. His manhood hardened all the more as he looked down at her wet core.

She felt embarrassed when he parted her legs and wanted to press her thighs together when she felt his gaze down her most intimate part, but the feeling soon morphed into pleasure when he slid a finger into her.

A moan left her lips, making her immediately cover her mouth when she wondered whether the maids were still nearby.

"Don't be shy." He chuckled in his deep voice, his finger sliding in and out of her. Her toes curled behind him as she moaned in pleasure, sitting up to run her hands slowly down his bare chest.

Her hand fumbled with his belt before she clicked it open, then reached into his pants to stroke his manhood through his boxer briefs. She was driving him crazy with need as she teased and touched him. He pulled her hand out and impatiently took off the rest of his clothes. Pulling her onto the edge of the kitchen counter, he supported her hips as she held onto his neck, sliding into her.

She couldn't stop herself from gasping and moaning as he made love to her hard and deeply. Just when she was close to reaching her climax, he got her down the kitchen counter. He turned her around so she was facing the wall and holding the kitchen counter, then picked up his pace and rode her to her climax, reaching his own climax a heartbeat later.

Her legs shook from the waves of pleasure, and she slumped onto the counter with his hands still holding the sides of her waist.

He slowly pulled out of her and gathered her weak body into his arms, kissing her face. "I love you."

"I love you too, Xiehan." She bit out, then gasped when she felt her body floating.

"Wait, there are maids." She reminded him when she realized that he was planning to take her upstairs. Surely, he was not planning to do a naked walk along the hallways, right?

To her shock, he was. "They know better than to walk around after hearing what you think they heard."

Her face flushed. "But our clothes..."

"Don't worry about them." He carried her to the master bedroom without a word more, making her bury her head in his chest and hope that no one left their room.

As soon as she was placed on the soft bed, she so badly wanted to fall asleep from how drowsy she felt. As she drifted to sleep, she felt his lips on her body, kissing her comfortingly and she hummed in satisfaction as a warm blanket covered her.

By the time he was done cleaning both of them up, Lanni was already deep in sleep so he went back to the kitchen. She would be hungry when she woke up, so he picked up from where they had left off and continued cooking.

His phone rang as he sauteed the vegetables. It was Wen Lin calling, so he answered the call and put it on speaker then continued to cook as he spoke to her. "Mother?"

"How have you been? Is work too tiresome?" Wen Lin asked worriedly.

"No, it's alright. I can handle it." He answered, and Wen observed that he did sound like he could handle it. His tone was jovial and energetic.

"It's your sister's birthday soon. You have not forgotten, right?" Wen Lin gently reminded, to which Xiehan laughed.

"How could I ever forget?" In the past, it used to be the worst day of his year every day. Despite his hatred for Ji Feifei, he would need to give her a call to wish her a happy birthday and even send a present even if he didn't want to. If not, his parents would spend the rest of the week reprimanding him for being a bad brother.

However, he liked his biological sister more and didn't need to be forced into anything. He had already made plans for her birthday even before he was told about it.

"Your father and I are planning to take her out on a trip. We plan to go to Olphire. Do you want to come along with us?" She asked, knowing that Xiehan might prefer to stay in B City and spend time with his fiancée instead. "You can bring Lanni along if she wants to come. We have never had a family vacation since Ruby returned."

Xiehan thought about it and didn't find it to be such a perfect idea. "You do know that you might end up spending most of your time with father while I might be with Lanni. What about Ruby?"

Wen Lin felt bummed. It would be her daughter's birthday, she didn't want her to be lonely. She was about to cancel it when she got an idea. "We can bring Lin Jian along! He will definitely agree to go. Hold on, let me give him a call."

He chuckled at his mother's excited tone. Seeing Ruby in a relationship made her happier than she was when she first learnt that Xiehan was in love.

...

When he was done cooking, he left the food on low heat so it would not go cold, and went to check whether Lanni was awake.

"You are here." She woke up with a yawn when she heard the door open.

"Did I wake you?" He asked apologetically, since he had not intended to wake her up if she was still asleep.

She stretched her hands out. "Hug me."

Since he could never say no to her request, he went over to hold her in his arms and when he did, her hand slid down his body and grabbed his crotch. She reached into his boxer briefs and held his manhood, which started to harden under her touch.

"You..." He was yet to utter another word when she pressed her body onto his, rubbing her bare breasts against his arm.

His body stiffened as his manhood throbbed. Unable to handle the seduction, he pushed her down the bed with his body hovering over hers. He stroked the sides of her thighs while she hugged his broad shoulders and kissed his lips passionately. She pulled his t-shirt off him and flipped him to pin him under her, to which he complied and let her have her way.

She traced down his abs before her head lowered to kiss and stroke them, as her hand rubbed against his hard manhood.

After a whole evening of lovemaking, Lanni and Xiehan ate dinner as he finally brought up what he had talked about with his mother. "Would you like to come with us to Ruby's birthday vacation?"

"I don't mind. We can go together. However, I'm not certain whether Lin Jian will let me go." She contemplated as she wondered whether there was a lot of work to be done in her department.

He frowned slightly. "I'll have a word with him later."

Recalling how Lin Jian had complained about Xiehan giving him a hard time, she chuckled. "Don't fight with him, okay? If he doesn't agree, then don't force it."

"Alright. I'll book the plane tickets online later." He didn't give any promises but he would try to negotiate without beating anyone up.

"When are we leaving? I will carry some work with me." She suggested when she realized that Lin Jian might go on the trip too. If she left and didn't work at all, he would have so much on his plate that he might not have for his girlfriend.

"You can have your assistant handle work matters. It's just two days." He said in disapproval. When did she become so workaholic?

"If you say so." She chuckled at his tone.

"I don't think I got you tired enough. You still have time to mess around." He raised an eyebrow at her. Before she could react, he carried her off the seat and headed towards the bedroom, rendering her speechless.

Li Yuming was all smiles as she baked Lanni's favorite cupcakes.

"Madam, you shouldn't let Miss Lanni eat too much sweet food. It's not good for her health." The housekeeper reminded Li Yuming, who was too overjoyed to realize that she had been baking pastries too often.

"Now that you mention it." Li Yuming was still blooming with a smile. She wore a pair of mittens and took out the cupcakes that were now ready. When she was done, she looked troubled. "I can't give them to Luna either, she shouldn't eat too much sugar. Do you want them?"

"Uhm...madam, I don't have a sweet tooth." The housekeeper, who was older than Li Yuming, shook her head. Although Li Yuming had been kind all these years and treated the maids as though they were her siblings and daughters, they were not so free as to overstep their boundaries.

Li Yuming knew this, and she chuckled. "It's okay." She kept some of the cupcakes in a colorful pastry box, then left the rest to the housekeeper. "You can give these to your kids. If not, let the maids have them. Otherwise, we can only throw them away since I'm not a big fan of cupcakes." She only liked baking them but couldn't bring herself to eat more than a bite or two

"Thank you." She knew that Li Yuming would not take them back so she could only nod and say her thanks.

...

Li Yuming was going to Lanni's apartment to give her the few cupcakes she had set aside but before that, she decided to get her a necklace she had seen at the store near Lanni's apartment complex. It would be even better if she could get two of them, one for Lanni and one for Luna.

She entered the store and called a sales girl over. "Hello. Can I have a look at that..." Just as she spoke, another sales girl took the necklace she had noticed to show to someone else. She frowned slightly at her bad luck. "Is there another of the same model?"

"I'm sorry. There were only two of this design and the first was sold yesterday." The sales girl apologized. "However, there are others that are of the same quality. Would you want to take a look?"

Li Yuming sighed and was about to ask whether it had already been bought when she noticed the gentleman to whom the necklace had been given. "Neil?"

"It's you?" Neil was surprised to see Li Yuming. He stood from the couch where he was sitting and inspecting the necklace.

"Are you here to buy jewelry too?" He asked even though it was obvious.

"I wanted to buy a necklace for Lanni and Luna. What a bummer that the one I wanted is sold out." She sat on the couch and he sat down too.

"What a bummer. Luckily, there are many others to choose from." He was unaware that the one he had picked was the very one that Li Yuming wanted. He glanced around and asked, "What do you think of this one? I wanted to buy it for Ruby but I don't think it suits her that much. Do you think it would look good on your daughters?"

Li Yuming raised an eyebrow an amusement. What a coincidence that he was showing her the very necklace she had chosen for Lanni. "It's beautiful. Let me find one for Luna."

"Do you mind helping me pick for Ruby too?" He requested, believing that women were better versed in matters of jewelry.

"No problem." She placed her box of cupcakes on the couch and let the sales girls show her the necklaces on sale and their prices.

She chose a teardrop one for Luna and one with a small crystal ball for Ruby, then returned to show it to Neil. "What do you think of this?"

"It's perfect." He wrote a cheque and gave it to the sales girl, who was surprised when she saw the amount. "Sir, you paid too much!"

"I don't think so. The three of them amount to that." He smiled, stunning Li Yuming.

"I can pay for my own purchase." She didn't understand why he wanted to help her pay.

"I know. I have never given any gift to Lanni and Luna. Take this to congratulate them on their engagements." He insisted, leaving her with no chance to reject it.

"Then, thank you." She could only smile and thank him.

The necklaces were returned in their velvet boxes and packed separately. When Li Yuming received her package, she was so excited that she almost bolted out of the store, leaving behind her party box.

"You forgot this..." Neil was just about to hand the box to her when it dropped. "I'm so sorry."

It was certain that the cupcakes were disfigured, which disappointed Li Yuming. "It's alright. It was an accident."

"No, it's not." He felt bad for ruining the cupcakes, which he was certain must be a surprise for her daughters. "Where did you buy them? I'll help you get new ones."

"I baked them." She smiled. "It's really alright. I'll bake her some more next time."

Hearing that she had baked them, he felt even worse. "How about I bake some at my place? You can pick them up."

He was impossible, she thought. Knowing that they would remain stuck on the topic for ages, she decided to agree. "I can come after giving this to Lanni." She motioned at the necklaces.

"I'll be waiting." He hurried to his car, making one wonder why exactly he was rushing. He seemed to be more excited than would be expected of someone who was trying to make up for a mistake.

She chuckled and proceeded to Lanni's apartment.

The latter was not home. She was probably out with Xiehan, so Li Yuming left it at the reception as a parcel and went ahead to Neil's residence.

She was planning to help him out but when she arrived and a maid showed her to the kitchen, the situation was much worse than she would ever expect.

"Have you ever been to a kitchen?" She tried not to laugh when she saw the man who had flour all over him, making one wonder whether he was trying to bake or swim on the jar of flour.

Meanwhile, he was trying to stir eggs into the bowl of flour using a fork, and he didn't seem to understand the role of the mixer on the kitchen counter. She shook her head and pulled the bowl from his hands. "This isn't how you do it."

"Wait! Don't ruin your clothes." He rushed to bring an apron, then looked at her high heeled shoes and wondered whether she would be able to bake with them on. Besides, her hair looked too beautiful. What if she got flour in it?

"You do realize that aprons exist." She scolded and tied it behind her waist, then proceeded to start preparing the batter while he watched.

"So that's how you do it." He nodded in understanding when he saw her position the mixer to mix the egg whites in the bowl.

"Haven't you ever baked before?" She wondered how he was planning to do it if it was something he had never done before.

She shook his head. "Ruby's mother would do it in the past. Once she left, Ruby hated desserts and everything she used to cook for her."

"I'm sorry." She felt bad for reminding him of his past, recalling that he was divorced.

"It's alright. I've long forgotten about her. I have someone else in mind now."

His words took her by surprise. "She must be a lucky woman."

He looked at her meaningfully. "I'll be the lucky one."

Chapter 497 - I Didn't Realize I Needed A Wife Until I Met You

Li Yuming paused her movements in surprise. She was not a young woman, she comprehended Neil's hint and was quite surprised about his implication.

"Yuming, can I ask you an audacious question?" He asked.

"Go ahead." She didn't want to jump into conclusions and hoped his question was not too personal.

"Have you ever thought of remarrying?" He asked directly, knowing that beating around the bush wouldn't work with Li Yuming.

She let out a soft sigh as she mixed the ingredients in a large ceramic bowl. She didn't want to talk about her past since it was nothing but a pain in the butt. However, she had already allowed him to ask so she could only answer him. "I would have done so twenty years ago if I wanted to. I don't think relationships are worth my time anymore."

"Not even if you get a man who loves you?" He gently asked, trying not to sound pushy.

In response, she tilted to look at him, knowing why exactly he was asking but pretending not to know. "I would have done so if my babies really needed a father in their lives but they don't anymore." Lanni had

needed a father before but soon after reuniting with him, she found out just what kind of man she had been pining for. On the other hand, Luna was still devastated after finding out that the man she trusted the most was a murderer and a scumbag who was only using her and her sister. It was certain that she didn't need a father either.

Neil had heard bits and pieces about what had transpired, which made him uncertain what to say about it.

A long spell of silence passed before he cleared his throat. "My daughter has already found her parents. She doesn't need a mother since she already has one. However, I need a wife. I didn't realize this until I met you."

"Neil..." His words took her by surprise, and she looked up at him in shock.

"We don't have to talk about it." He knew what he was going to hear and he was not ready for it so he evaded the topic.

Li Yuming looked down at the bowl instead, hoping they wouldn't bring up the awkward topic anymore. She took a baking tray with heart-shaped slots. "Here. Once the batter is ready, pour it in the baking trays. The slots determine the shape. Don't fill it." As she spoke, she carefully poured the batter into each of the slots, shaking it slightly to equalize it.

"Why did you apply butter on the trays before pouring in the batter?" He asked curiously, even though he didn't have a particular interest in baking.

"For ease of taking it out later. But you don't even need to learn it. Ruby won't eat it." Li Yuming remembered how he had mentioned that his daughter no longer liked pastries and cakes.

The oven had already preheated, so she put in the tray and set the timer.

"We can wait in the living room." She said, tired from standing in her high heels.

He noticed her shifting and was embarrassed. "Forgive my manners. I'll get you a pair of indoor sandals."

Before she could respond, he had already rushed away and returned with white slippers. "They are new and no one has worn them before."

She couldn't bring herself to reject his kind gesture. Not to mention, she was indeed tired so she changed into the sandals before heading to the living room.

"But if we don't watch the cupcakes." He pointed at the kitchen, afraid that the cupcakes would burn.

"Don't worry, I set the timer." Li Yuming chuckled. He had indeed never baked before. Heaven knew what he was going to bake on his own.

The cupcakes were ready soon, and she let them cool before getting a pastry box with cookies and cakes drawn on it.

"Can I have one?" He glanced at the inviting cupcakes that now had strawberry cream on them.

"Of course, go ahead."

Taking her permission, he took a bite of a cupcake and was puzzled. Why didn't he ever realize that cupcakes could taste this delicious? He had always thought that sweet foods were for kids and that he had overgrown his love for them.

Li Yuming sealed the box and took it in her hand. "I'll drop these by Lanni's apartment."

"Okay... I'll see you out." He knew that she wouldn't stay any longer even if he tried to convince her so he didn't try and led her to the door instead.

"Let's have lunch together when you're free." He boldly stated, hoping that she wouldn't have anything against it.

Before he could walk her to her car, another car pulled over and out of it walked Ruby.

"Ruby?" He was pleasantly surprised.

The young woman was more surprised. Why was Li Yuming leaving her father's house?

She kept her curiosity to herself and offered the older woman a smile. "Miss Li, hello."

"Hello." She averted her gaze. "I'll get going now."

...

When she left, Ruby continued to give Neil curious looks.

"If you have anything to ask, go ahead and ask." Neil chuckled at her obvious curiosity.

They headed to the house and she sat opposite him, across the coffee table. "Uhm Dad, is she the woman you like?" She would never have had such a suspicion even if a woman left his house, but she had seen how excited he looked to be around her.

Neil neither acknowledged nor denied it, reclining in his seat. "What do you think of her?"

She took his response for a yes, and her eyes widened. "Are you kidding me? Her daughter is my sister-in-law! Wouldn't that kind of relationship be incestuous?"

"There isn't any blood relationship, nor am I related to Lanni in marriage. It's alright for me to court Li Yuming." He shrugged. It would have been wrong of him to marry Li Yuming if he was Xiehan's biological father, which would have made him and Li Yuming relatives through Lanni and Xiehan's marriage. However, the only link between him and the Ji family was Ruby, who was no longer his daughter since her family had taken her back.

Ruby thought about it and although she didn't think it was totally right, she didn't find anything wrong with it either. "As long as the law allows it. The most important thing is your happiness, dad."

He had been afraid that she would oppose it, so he was overjoyed and patted her head. "Thank you, princess."

"Dad, I'm no longer a little girl." She laughed at how he still treated her like he did when she was a child, tousling her hair and kissing her forehead when she went to sleep. If she didn't stop him, he might have continued reading her bedtime stories too!

"What's that awesome aroma?" She headed to the kitchen following the waft of the cupcakes, making his heart lurch.

He followed her to stop her, but she had already seen the cupcakes that were still on the kitchen counter.

"Ruby, that..."

She stalked towards them and picked one, listlessly taking a bite because they looked too tempting. A few seconds after having a taste, she wolfed the whole thing down and he was overwhelmed.

"You didn't bake this. Of course, you can't even boil water." She laughed as she exaggerated his lack of experience in the kitchen.

He shook his head. "It was Yuming."

He thought she would be mad at Li Yuming for bringing up unpleasant memories but instead, she picked up a second cupcake. "No wonder Lanni likes them so much."

"I like them a lot too." He picked another cupcake and sat in front of the kitchen island to savor it.

"Dad, you have to work hard. Should I help you out by bringing out my cute daughter skills?" She joked, even though she was serious about wanting to help him out.

"I will do my best." He promised. He felt they were meant for each other after all, he only needed to make her realize this.

—

Jiang Mansion.

"Xingyu, I'm tired!" Luna complained as Xingyu made her do exercise for expectant women.

He glanced at the timer and didn't give in to her pleas. "Five more minutes."

"Five! I will be dead before it's over." She groaned lazily. "Tell me the truth. Is it because you are tired of me that you are trying to kill me indirectly?"

He laughed at her theatrics. "No, my love. On the contrary, it's because I love you that I'm making sure you don't have too much trouble later."

"Then let's take a short break. Please." She leaned against him to plead with her puppy dog eyes, which he could hardly resist.

"You're becoming more and more of a lazy bum." He rubbed his palm against her protruding belly, and had no choice but help her back into their room.

That night.

Xingyu was just about to drift to sleep when he felt Luna shift uncomfortably beside him.

"My love, what's wrong?" He patted her to ask worriedly.

She grabbed her arm and squeezed on it. "It hurts so much!"

Chapter 498 - New Members Of The Jiang Family

Xiehan's mansion.

"Honey, I need to go to work tomorrow." Lanni protested to Xiehan, who was once again running his fingers along her skin. At this rate, they would not be able to wake up on time the following day.

"Just one more." He coaxed. He just couldn't have enough of her.

She shifted in slight discomfort "I'm sore..."

He immediately stopped his actions, looking at her sternly. "Why didn't you tell me?"

She buried her head in his chest so she wouldn't have to meet his gaze. "If you were in my shoes, would you say no to something that makes you feel so good?"

"How naughty." He chuckled.

"I'll..." The ringing of her phone interrupted her, and she frowned when she saw who the caller was. "Why would Xingyu call me at this time of the night?"

Her heart lurched to her throat as she thought of the only reason why Xingyu would contact her regardless of the time. Was Luna alright?

"Brother-in-law?"

She paused to hear what he had to say and when she did, her heart pounded. "Why is Luna at the hospital? And so late at night?"

He grabbed the closest clothes he could find and wore them, while giving a dress to her. "Let's go and find out. Dress up while I start the car."

...

At the hospital.

"What happened to Luna?" Lanni asked as soon as she saw Xingyu.

Li Yuming was present too, she and Xinghe sat beside each other on a bench while Xingyu and his father anxiously paced the hallway.

"I don't know what's happening either. She suddenly started having contractions." Xingyu explained worriedly. "She isn't due until a month later. I don't understand."

"They are about to die from nervousness." Xinghe spoke to Li Yuming, referring to Xingyu and Xingren, and now Lanni and Xiehan too.

The two of them were nervous too, but premature delivery was not unheard of so they weren't as worried as the men were.

"I'll talk to Xingyu." Li Yuming couldn't keep watching her future son-in-law break down, so she stood and went to him. She was yet to say a word when the door opened and the doctor stepped out.

"Doctor, how is she?"

"Doctor, is Luna alright? What about the babies?"

Everyone rushed up to bombard the woman with questions, so much that they almost toppled her by bumping into her.

She had them calm down and sit before focusing on Xingyu. "Are you her husband?"

He nodded. He would be her husband soon anyway.

"Don't worry. The mother and the children are all in good health." She explained, her expression not shifting. Before they could let out their breaths, she continued, "However, she is restless and her condition may not stabilise. I suggest that we induce labor."

"But the risks of inducing labor are too many." Xingyu protested when the words sunk in.

"There are many women who gave birth to healthy babies despite all the risks. In fact, it's rarer for the babies to have complications. On the other hand, they may keep putting their mother's life in danger if they continue to the full term." The doctor explained seriously.

He let them think about it, and Xingyu was conflicted.

"I want to agree to induced labor, but I don't know if Luna would be mad at me. Lanni, what should I do?" He decided to ask the closest person to Luna.

"Let her decide." She couldn't make the decision for her sister.

"She would never agree." Xingyu guessed. Like any other mother, Luna cared about her babies more than she cared for herself. She would never agree to risk their health to save herself, even if the risk was slight.

As expected, she adamantly shook her head to the idea." What if the babies aren't alright? I don't want to compromise them for my sake."

"They will be alright, my love. The doctor said so." He held her hand and kissed it in an attempt to convince her.

"I'm scared." She rested her head against his arm, not daring to imagine what she would do if anything went wrong.

"Luna, you don't need to be scared. It will be alright." Li Yuming went beside to coax her.

"You think so?" She looked up at her mother, who tucked a strand of her sweaty hair behind her ear.

"Yes. Look at you, you're in so much pain that you're sweating. If you continue being in this state, it's going to be more dangerous for you and them."

Hearing that her babies might be in danger if she didn't agree to induce labor, she thought about it and nodded in the end.

...

A large group waited outside the maternity ward, hugging each other tightly every time they heard Luna's screams from inside.

Xingyu had fire on his soles and butt, not allowing him to take a seat or stand still. Every time he sat, he would stand in the next second, then rush to the door and come back when he remembered that distraction might make it harder for Luna.

"I'm suddenly scared of having kids." Xiaoshi muttered under her breath, imagining what kind of pain Luna must be going through. She had made sure not to say it aloud, but someone heard her and slotted himself next to her.

"Don't say such things when I'm thinking of having at least five babies with you in future." Grinned Han Xichen.

"Don't joke around!" She scolded him. This wasn't the time to make such jokes.

Lanni and Li Yuming shared each other's nervousness and anticipation while Xinghe held her husband's hand tightly. Cheng Yu was present too, and she was probably the most calm even though she almost couldn't hide her anxiety.

It had been hours already, and they started wondering how much longer it was going to take.

Cheng Yu was about to say something but was interrupted by a shrill cry of a baby.

"It's the baby!" Xingyu jumped and almost fainted from the sudden rush of excitement. He was already at the door before it was even opened, and he rushed in before the doctor could say a word.

"Luna!" He grabbed her hand and kissed it, before hugging her while trying not to exhaust her by moving her about too much.

"Xingyu..." She burst into tears.

"My love, you just brought the cutest pair of twins into this world. Why are you sad?" He didn't understand why there were tears in her eyes, which were not tears of joy.

"She..." She choked. "Our daughter might not be alive." She cried against his chest.

"What do you mean?" He felt his soul leave his body.

"She is yet to react to anything. She didn't even cry. They took her away." She cried weakly.

"Sir, your wife is distressed. The girl was taken away for her lungs to be checked." The nurse tried to explain to Xingyu, and was devastated when she found that Xingyu didn't seem to understand either. They both thought that their daughter might be dead, and no one could blame them. Anyone would be in panic if their baby didn't respond normally.

At that moment, Lanni walked in carrying the little boy, with the others behind her. Luckily, the ward was big enough for them to stand or sit comfortably without imposing on Luna and Xingyu.

"Luna," Li Yuming held her devastated daughter and didn't know what to tell her.

While they pondered over what to do, a nurse returned with a wailing baby.

Luna shot to sit up. "My baby!"

"She is alright. The world outside wasn't very easy to adapt to, which is why this little princess was still in a daze." The nurse explained with a smile as she carefully placed the girl in Luna's arms.

Luna hugged her, feeling her soul finally return to her body as tears filled her face. She lowered her head to kiss the baby's tiny face, and the latter groaned as though to acknowledge her mother.

Xingyu joyously poked his daughter, leaning back to cradle her when Luna passed her over.

"My son." Luna held her arms out for Lanni to return the boy to her.

Earlier, she didn't know whether to be happy or sad. Having two kids and losing one of them was probably the most painful experience she could ever imagine, and she didn't know whether she would have lived with herself if her baby really died.

"Have you thought of their names yet?" Li Yuming asked jovially at the side, bouncing in the joy of becoming a grandmother.

Luna nodded as she kissed her son's tiny arms. "Jiang Linhou."

"Her name is Xiaomu. Jiang Xiaomu." Xingyu added as he joyously teased her little feet, and she groaned slightly.

"She likes it too! The most beautiful name for the most adorable girl in the world."

Chapter 499 - Xiaomu And Linhou

Linhou and Xiaomu were fully developed despite being born five weeks ahead of their time, so they did not need the incubator. The family of four returned home two days later and soon after, they started preparing for their full moon party.

Because the party was held a few days before Luna and Xingyu's wedding, it was a small party with only close family and friends present.

Lanni couldn't move her eyes away from the crib where the babies were. They wore the same adorable unisex outfit in pink and blue, with "cuter version of mummy" and "cuter version of daddy" printed on them respectively.

She wiggled a toy in front of Xiaomu, who didn't seem to notice her and was trying to grab her twin's tiny hand.

"They're so cute! Xiaomu will definitely take after her mother." She felt her heart melt just watching them.

"No, she will take after her grandma." Li Yuming laughed at the side, making Lanni speechless. What was the difference?

Li Yuming teased the girl who now had her tiny arms flailing, probably seeking her mother's attention. "She looks just like Luna when she was little. Luna was the most curious one too." Li Yuming smiled as she shifted her gaze between her grandchildren.

Xinghe had just arrived, and she was holding the boy. "Linhou is an exact copy of Xingyu. When he was little, he was calmer than other babies but growing up, he would nibble on everything that came his way and that included toys and his own hands."

"Aren't all kids like that?" Xingyu laughed when everyone laughed at him.

"Yours was a special case." Xinghe endlessly made fun of her son, talking about what a naughty little boy he was, that had probably been passed down to Linhou and Xiaomu.

"Forget them, my love. Let's go ahead with what we were doing." Xingyu pulled Luna away so she wouldn't hear about his embarrassing past.

"You are right. They're impossible." Luna consoled him, even though she was curious to know more. She would find out from Xinghe later, so she decided to placate him for now.

They were about to go and greet the guests who had started arriving, only to be interrupted by a shrill cry from Xiaomu who wanted her mother's attention.

Luna took her from Li Yuming with a laugh. "To think I was starting to imagine that she will be the calmer one."

Meanwhile, Linhou, who had been the louder one at birth, was blabbering and giggling in Lanni's arms. It was almost as though he could comprehend what the people around him were saying.

Seeing as he hadn't noticed her presence, she slipped away with Xingyu and Xiaomu.

"You are here. I thought you wouldn't make it." Luna was happy to see Xiaoshi and Han Xichen, who were in France when she told them about the full moon party.

"We wouldn't miss it for the world." Han Xichen focused his gaze on Xiaomu. "How cute. No wonder a certain someone has forgotten about his group of friends—it must be because he is working hard to be the best father." with a daughter that cute, it was hard to not dote on her.

"Luna, you look so beautiful." Xiaoshi gushed in admiration as they walked to the garden to join the others.

After childbirth, Luna looked a bit more mature and much more beautiful than she was before she became pregnant.

"Thank you. You look beautiful yourself. Is Han Xichen making you so happy?" She asked teasingly, having learnt about the relationship between these two.

"Yes. He is so loving. We will get married soon." Xiaoshi smiled shyly.

As expected, Luna was puzzled. "So soon?"

The latter nodded and secretly patted her stomach. "We have to."

Luna held back her shock and whispered, "You're pregnant?"

Xiaoshi nodded and kept her voice low as she explained, "That, and the fact that we don't want to leave anyone or anything the chance to come between us."

After thinking of ways to convince her father that they were meant to be together, they failed each time so they decided to take matters to a level where he couldn't do anything to separate them.

"Of course, I was ready to be with him so I agreed. The baby was just a much-needed bonus." The two of them burst into laughter.

"Congratulations." Luna smiled.

"Is it hard?" She asked, referring to everything that happened during pregnancy. How ironic that just a month ago, she was talking about being scared of having kids because it seemed to be painful—not knowing that she was already pregnant.

"To be honest, it's much harder than it can ever sound. The sleepless nights, the mood swings... sometimes you would be sad without knowing why you are sad, and you might take it out on everyone who comes your way. Xingyu was so patient with me." Sometimes, she would be scared that he might have enough of her and leave. Luckily, he would always hug her when she needed it and give her space when she yelled at him to leave. Sometimes she would show him the door and cry or get mad at him when he left. The thought of it made her laugh at times.

"However, the second you hear your baby cry, all those hectic days will be worth it."

Xiaoshi felt her eyes sting. No wonder parents loved their children so much. Having them was never an easy journey.

"Are you still keeping it a secret?" She asked, referring to the latter's pregnancy.

She shook her head. "Not exactly. I just didn't want to steal the thunder."

"Come on, what thunder is there to steal from a pair of month-olds?" Luna burst into laughter and so did Xiaoshi.

The party went on for the entire afternoon, and the guests almost fought for turns to hold the cute darlings.

In the evening when the babies were asleep, Luna and Xingyu joined her friends for a few drinks. Of course, she could only drink fruit juice while the others drowned themselves in beer.

Xiaoshi was about to pick up a bottle of beer when it disappeared from her hands.

"You can't drink that. Join Luna in drinking natural fruit juice." Han Xichen gently reminded her, making the others raise their eyebrows.

Han Xichen raised his bottle to toast. "We are going to be parents soon!"

"Oh my God! congratulations!" Cheng Yu was the first to react, while Lin Jian looked at him like he was a god.

"That was fast! I only started dating Ruby recently but the two of you are already soon to be parents!" He praised, then looked at Lanni and Xiehan meaningfully.

"I don't have a good feeling about that gaze." Lanni recoiled.

"Why aren't you two having a baby yet? You were the first to start dating!" Cheng Yu exclaimed before Lin Jian could say it.

"At least we are engaged." She shrugged and raised her hand to flaunt her ring.

"Being engaged is one thing. Xichen and Xiaoshi got to it before you, Jeez." Lin Jian teased.

"That's because they progressed so fast." Lanni explained. She and Xiehan were in no rush.

Ruby glanced behind her and turned back to them. "You think that is fast? I think they are faster."

Everyone secretly followed her gaze behind her to see Neil and Li Yuming happily chatting about something. Neil said something and Li Yuming burst into laughter.

"I now know who has been sending flowers and gifts." Luna laughed, making fun of her mother.

Lanni raised an eyebrow, caught in between curiosity and excitement. "I have never seen our mother this happy."

"Neither have I." Luna had to admit. Li Yuming looked even happier than she did when she held her grandchildren. She then turned to Ruby curiously. "Does this mean we could become sisters soon?"

"Your point of focus..." Ruby groaned, and everyone else burst into laughter.

They couldn't help recalling how much these two hated each other in the beginning, when they suspected Ruby of having romantic feelings for Xiehan.

"You two should go shopping sometime, and familiarize yourselves with each other. In fact, you should all go together, The three of you." Cheng Yu suggested to Luna, Ruby and Lanni. "Of course, if you invite me, I will be happy to go along." She added mischievously.

Xxiaoshi chuckled at the progress of things. "Isn't your family growing so large all of a sudden?" SHE teased Ruby. "Soon after you reunite with your real family, both of your families fuse. Your sister-in-law is now your foster sister as well, and you gained an adorable pair of nephew and niece. I'm jealous of you!"

Lanni burst into laughter and joked, "What if we are the only ones overthinking things? It's quite possible that they are merely two friends catching up while we have come up with a nonexistent relationship and fast-forwarded it to their marriage."

"Don't jinx it!" Luna jabbed her.

Lanni drunkenly clung to Xiehan as they left the venue of the party. She sang songs that only she knew of, but it wasn't necessary to have heard the song to know that she was singing it wrong.

I have loved you carefully? What in the world was that?

"Xiehan, I'm an aunt!" She flaunted against his neck as he carried her to his car.

"That you are, and the cutest one at that." He put her inside the car. "And you will be the best mother in the world."

She sat up as though she comprehended his words. "Mother? But I'm not pregnant."

He looked down at her stomach meaningfully. "We can correct that when you are ready."

Hearing this, she grabbed his car and pressed her lips against his face. "Let's make one now. If we sleep for nine hours, we will wake up with a baby tomorrow."

He chuckled. She really was drunk.

Hearing his laugh, she looked up at him, his expression turning sadder. "Don't you want to have a baby with me?"

"I do. But we won't have it in nine hours." He explained to the impossible drunk.

"Then, when?" She asked.

"Nine months if we start now." He stated, unsure whether she would understand.

"You are right. It's nine months." She sighed tiredly. "Then, let's get to sleep. We can set an alarm for nine months later."

Xiehan was speechless. Just when he was starting to think that she actually understood him...

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Meanwhile, Luna teased and tickled the twins who were wide awake even though it was so late at night. She fed them one after another then put them back in their cribs. These two were alarm clocks, she had concluded after a series of sleepless nights. They would often cry at night and had her wake up to tend to them, not that she was complaining. She loved everything about them and their cries reminded her that she was a mother—the most beautiful word in her dictionary.

Xingyu held her shoulders from behind as she rubbed Xiaomu's small body to soothe her, since the latter must have realized that she was no longer in her mother's arms and was making a fuss about it. She blabbered some incoherent soft sounds and fell asleep, and Luna pulled her tiny fist from her mouth with a soft chuckle. Her hands must be too delicious, they always somehow ended up in her toothless mouth.

"Thank you, my love." He whispered as he watched the heartwarming mother-daughter interaction, the same words he had been saying every day for the past one month. "Thank you for making me the happiest man alive."

"If you keep thanking me, I will grab the babies and leave you." She joked, pretending to be irritated. It was not fun to hear the same words every day at every turn. However, these words explained just how happy she was, so she didn't want to dim his enthusiasm. Not to mention, she felt the same way. Not only was she about to marry the best man in the world, she was a mother!

Xingyu laughed at her threat as he held her in his arms. "Love, do you have plans for tomorrow?"

She nodded. "I'm going to try out the wedding dress."

Before he could suggest going along, she pulled away. "You cannot see the wedding dress before the wedding."

He looked deflated and helpless, hearing that he didn't get to see her in her wedding dress. "But that's only a series of traditions."

"Maybe. But I still want to surprise you on our wedding day." She crossed her arms and chuckled at his disappointed demeanor. She couldn't help tiptoeing to pat his head. "Look at it from the bright side. On our wedding night, you will get to take the wedding dress off."

The thought got him excited but he shook his head soon after. "But we cannot make love until the babies are three months old."

She shook her head. "The point of that is to let the mother fully recover, but I'm alright now. I can even jump around and wear high heels and most importantly...." She closed in on him to wrap her arms around his neck. "I need you."

Taking her words as a cue, he carried her in his arms while softly kissing her lips, making his way back to their room.

The following day.

It was the weekend, so none of the girls had to go to work. They accompanied Luna to watch her try out her options for her wedding gown.

"What do you think of this?" She walked out of the dressing cubicle in a strapless gown that must have several layers in its skirt. It was beautiful, but the girls shook their heads.

"That's so unlike you." Lanni teased with a chuckle. Luna didn't look like the type to love a fairytale wedding with a large gown.

The latter went back, to return in a gown whose train was long enough to remain at the entrance of the chapel even when she reached the end of the aisle. The women burst into laughter, not even commenting on it.

Luna sighed tiredly. "I used to think that trying on a wedding gown was easy. You know, every wedding gown is beautiful, or so I thought.

"You thought right." Cheng Yu stated. "Every wedding gown is beautiful, it's just that there are different kinds of women. Of course, they are not going to all suit the same woman."

"What are your options?" Lanni asked. Luna had not revealed her options before, because she wanted to give her friends a surprise.

Since she was tired of trying them and seeing everyone shake their heads, she sat down and took out the wedding gown album for them to look at. Her options had red dots on them, which allowed for ease of navigation.

Thinking about it, they requested for more tablets so that every one of the girls would have one of their own, then they selected all the gowns they thought would suit Luna. She then tried out the ones with the most number of dots.

"You look amazing!" Lanni exclaimed then next time her sister left the dressing cubicle.

"Oh my goodness Luna!" Cheng Yu wished she could take pictures to flaunt.

"Xingyu will cry throughout the wedding. You look too beautiful." Ruby went over to touch the hem of the gown that all of them-including Luna-had selected. It looked much more beautiful on Luna than on the picture, and its texture was unique and regal.

"Do you think we should let the readers know what the gown looks like?" Xiaoshi asked teasingly at the side, to which Lanni shook her head.

"Nope. Let them wait along with Xingyu to see it on the wedding day."

"Xingyu's going to hide you in his pockets lest other men see you and try to steal you away from him."
Cheng Yu laughed.

"We still have a lot to do. Let's pick a pair of shoes and jewelry to go with the gown." Lanni sat down and browsed through the tablet for shoes and jewelry in this, as well as other wedding clothes and accessories stores.

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Meanwhile, Xingyu tried on suit after suit with the help of Xiehan, Lin Jian, Han Xichen and Cedric.

"Go for white. One that will compliment Luna's white gown." Lin Jian suggested.

However, Han Xichen shook his head. "Go for a color that goes with every possible color of wedding gowns."

"He has a point." Xiehan seconded.

"Considering that Luna is not a huge fan of white, it's possible for her to pick other colors." Xingyu nodded.

"How does this guy know so much about women?" Lin Jian was in disbelief that Han Xichen had pointed out such a detail and it ended up being valid. "Just how many women have you been with?"

"I'm not a womanizer like you." Han Xichen ignored him.

"hey! How dare you call me that?" Lin Jian conceded in defeat, glad that Ruby was not present. Otherwise, it would have needed a lot of coaxing to convince her that he was no longer a player. If he ever had a son, he would warn him against playing around too much.

After thinking for a while, the men selected the suit they thought would be most fitting, one that would make him so handsome that Luna would fall in love all over again.

"This for a watch isn't bad." Xiehan pointed at a diamond watch, while Han Xichen showed Xingyu a brooch that just happened to be a great match with the watch.

"Tie..." Lin Jian brought over a burgundy tie.

"What the heck is that?" The other men didn't spare another glance at the tie that made their eyes sting from the odd color.

"Isn't this an excellent color? It's bright enough for a wedding." Lin Jian glanced at the tie again, finding nothing wrong with it.

"Did you see the color of the suit we chose?" Han Xichen reprimanded him.

"Ignore him. Let him wear that for his wedding.." Xingyu taunted, making the rest burst into a roar of deep laughter and make endless fun of Lin Jian.