

Chapter 531 - Business Trip (1)

Ji Huifen stared at her hard as though he wanted to say something but couldn't say it. In the end, he simply let out a tired sigh. "Me either. I don't like the idea and you know that better than anyone." He had struck a chord at her, and she continued before she could say a word. "But that doesn't give us the right to force our decisions on them. The way you handled it was not just immature. It was absurd and rude and you ruined our relationship with our son and his wife for no good reason." He didn't mince his words, and as expected Wen Lin looked like she was ready to detonate.

"Now you are blaming me?" She squinted her eyes at him. Luckily, Ruby was asleep. It would be embarrassing for her to witness such a childish fight between her parents.

Ji Huifen shrugged. "Yes. Aren't you to blame?"

Wen Lin laughed bitterly.

"Look. I hate to be on bad terms with Lanni too. Especially now that she is my daughter-in-law. But I'm not going to pretend to approve of something I don't like."

Ji Huifen stood. "That's up to you. The worst that could happen is Lanni leaving our son because his family is against her."

"Don't say such things." She roared.

"Well, it's the truth." He left and went upstairs.

In the hours that followed, she thought about her tone when she expressed her disapproval. Had she been too much? Was Ji Huifen right, that it might cause trouble in Xiehan's marriage?

Her son's happiness was important no matter what, and she didn't want to risk ruining it.

And when she replayed her conversation with Lanni, she realized that she had indeed gone too far. She could have been more gentle while expressing her opinion but she let her own rage overcome her.

Hence, she bought presents and tonics the following day and here she was, at her son's door— unannounced and probably unwelcome too.

"Hey Lanni." She greeted cheerfully in an attempt to mask the awkwardness.

Lanni pursed her lips as though she didn't know what to do. In the end, she stepped aside to make way. "Hello, come in."

There was no hug, no friendly greeting. Just like one would welcome a stranger to their home only because their family knew the stranger.

This felt like in the past when she was against Lanni being with Xiehan, before she got to know the young woman well enough. Only, it was much worse. It was gnawing at her entire being.

"Lanni, I..."

She was still speaking when Xiehan emerged from the kitchen.

"Mother, what are you doing here?" He didn't seem pleased to see her either. He must still be mad at her.

"I'm here to visit the two of you. I brought fruits." She attempted to smile without seeming awkward and was clearly doing a bad job at it. Lanni looked like she would rather drown herself in the glass of water she was holding than sit here in the living room and force a conversation with her—not that the latter was any fun.

She took the bag of fruits and presents but that was only because she could not reject a gift from her mother-in-law. The last thing she wanted was for Xiehan to have to choose between her and Wen Lin. No one deserved to have to make that choice, so she smiled and forced out a "Thank you."

Wen Lin couldn't handle the awkwardness either, she went to the point. "Lanni, I acted like an idiot that night. I'm sorry."

Before Lanni could say a word, Xiehan interrupted. "Mother, I don't want to dwell in the past. I just need you to do me one favor. Stay away from my wife if you are not going to treat her with respect. It's for everyone's good." It was much better for his mother and wife to not be close than it was for them to fight.

Wen Lin was taken aback. "What are you saying? I respect her."

The look in her son's eyes was enough to prove that he didn't believe a word she was saying. She could only sigh. "Can I have a word with Lanni, woman to woman?"

Xiehan was about to protest when Lanni looked up at him sweetly. "Xiehan, please get us some drinks. Mother must be thirsty."

He understood that she was comfortable having whatever conversation was brewing so he nodded. "Sure."

He quickly brought drinks and disappeared up the stairs, muttering to Lanni that she should call him if she needed him.

"Lanni," Wen Lin was about to speak when she was cut off.

"I don't understand why you hate my mother so much." Lanni spoke, her tone firm yet not rude. If she remembered correctly, Wen Lin's hatred for her was purely based on the fact that she was Li Yuming's daughter. Li Yuming, the woman who had supposedly charmed her son to love her more than he loved his own mother, and the woman who might as well have been Ji Huifen's mistress. Even after the air was cleared about the misunderstandings, the women didn't exactly become friends. It was more like tolerating each other because their children were together.

They had never fought before, which made Lanni question why Wen Lin suddenly exploded at the mention of her name.

"I don't. Not anymore." Wen Lin explained.

"Then why..." She wondered why Wen Lin was so much against the Li surname.

"I was jealous." Wen Lin sighed, in relief after letting it out.

"What?" As expected, Lanni was taken aback.

Wen Lin took a deep breath and a gulp of her drink. "You must be wondering why it was I who reacted so negatively while Huifen didn't even say a word."

She pursed her lips. Yes, that had crossed her mind too and she couldn't make sense of it.

"Lanni, I don't have parents anymore, nor do I have siblings. I'm the only one with the surname Wen." She started, and Lanni immediately knew where this was heading.

"When Xiehan was born, I wanted him to take my surname. Huifen and I fought over it so much that I gave up on it. I didn't even suggest the same thing with Feifei." She let it out in one breath, which made Lanni want to scoff.

"So you were jealous that my husband agreed to what I wanted when yours didn't?" What kind of childish reason was that?

"When you put it that way, it sounds so childish and embarrassing." Wen Lin looked down in her cup. "But basically yes. It's because Yuming gets to have what I couldn't."

Lanni raised an eyebrow. Wow.

She remained silent for a while trying to process it. "I can't lie that it's okay. It's my child, mother-in-law. If I decide to give it to my mother to raise it, that's up to Xiehan and me."

"I understand that now," Wen Lin admitted. "My thoughts were clouded. I hope our relationship doesn't become strained because of this. But if you would like me to keep my distance for a while, I will respect that."

Lanni shook her head. "I don't want to be the reason for a mother to stay away from her son."

"Don't worry, we changed our minds. Our child will bear its father's surname like every other kid." She added.

"Lanni, don't do that because of me." Wen Lin felt guilty and even she found herself strange. How ironic that when what she wanted to happen was happening, she didn't feel happy about it.

Lanni offered a smile. "Let's not argue about this. It's all good. #"

"Okay."

The two continued to take their soft drinks, until Xiehan returned and shifted his gaze between them. "You're all good?"

"Perfectly, yes." Lanni smiled.

Xiehan heaved a sigh of relief. He had been worried that they would no longer see eye to eye.

"Mother, would you like to stay for lunch?" He invited.

"If you don't mind having me." She didn't mind spending time with them.

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While they ate much lunch later, Xiehan finally said, "Lanni and I will be away on a business trip."

Wen Lin frowned at him. "You punk, why do you rush into work mode as soon as you get married? Spend more time with your wife."

"That's exactly why I'm taking her along." He reached to take her hand to tease it.

Wen Lin didn't think the idea of a workaholic honeymoon would be fun. "How about you leave the company to me and your father for a week or two?" She suggested, which Xiehan turned down.

"It's okay. I got this." He didn't want to bother his father with the company when he had already taken over. Besides, it was nothing that he could not handle.

Hence, the couple left for Italy the following day.

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"Italy is beautiful." Lanni couldn't hold back her awe as they had a walk down the street, a few hours after their arrival. She had taken a short nap and couldn't wait to explore Rome.

"It's calming as well." He seconded. "We can use this trip to check out possible destinations for our honeymoon. Of course, that's not limited to Italy. We can go to France too, or Belgium... anywhere you want to go."

She thought about all the destinations in her mind and ended up shaking her head. They all seemed like a blast. "I can't seem to decide yet."

"We have five months to figure it out." He kissed the top of her head and took her hand in his.

"Is your meeting starting soon? And do I need to accompany you to the meeting?" She asked, looking up at him and almost bumping into a biker with her eyes away from the road.

He smoothly pulled her closer to him. "Yes and yes. We are meeting in Ristorante Six for Brunch. Mr. Ricci is bringing his wife along so I don't think he minds me bringing mine."

"Okay."

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Just as he predicted, Mr. Ricci was thrilled to see Lanni—because his wife could make a friend and would not be bored. She paid attention to their discussion but halfway, she had to go to the bathroom. She was just in time to bump into someone she would never have expected

"It would be an understatement to say that you are everywhere." She shook her head.

"Am I? I don't think we have met for the past two years and a couple of months." Flynn grinned, crossing his arms.

"What are you doing here anyway?" Lanni asked.

"The same thing you are doing here. I'm on a business strip."

"How do you know I'm on a business trip?"

"You don't randomly travel the world and if you were on your honeymoon, you would be in your room rolling in bed with your husband, not here in a restaurant." His unfiltered words made her uncomfortable. He chuckled and added, "Congratulations."

"What?" She raised her eyebrows.

"On your marriage. I mean, it's quite natural for a brother to only find out that his sister is married from social media." He huffed sarcastically.

"I'm sorry." She had really forgotten about him since they didn't once communicate in the past couple of years.

"It's okay. I'm messing with you." He gave an odd smile. "Say hello to our niece, will you? And our nephew too. Make sure he doesn't eat your hand when you pet him."

She laughed. "You can go and say it yourself, you know."

"I would, but I'm chasing a girl. If I step away for a second, the hungry wolves will steal her away." He winked.

"Then she must be gone. Follow her, quick." She laughed at his antics. He was still crazy. That might never change.

Just as she was about to enter the ladies room, she heard him call after her. "Lanni,"

"Yeah?" She turned back to face him.

He was silent for a long while and she was about to probe what he wanted to say when he spoke with what seemed like a forced smile. "Take care of yourself and of Luna, okay?"

She nodded. "Take care of yourself too."

"Will do." He smiled, and then he was gone.

Chapter 533 - Business Trip (3)

Lanni stared off in the direction that Flynn had gone for a while. Something about his words felt odd. It was not just his words, but his face too. It was almost as though he was implying that she would not see him again. Was he going to permanently keep a distance? It would not be surprising since he had kept his distance in the last two years, and because she was Li Yuming's daughter. It would be surprising if Li Yuming felt comfortable with him near her daughters.

However, she would be lying if she said that it didn't sadden her. He had been her trainer for a while after all, and he was her brother. She cared about him more than she thought. But it would be for the best if they didn't keep close.

She was lost in thought for a while. By the time she jolted out of it, she realized that she had taken quite some time. She hurried and returned to their table. As expected, Xiehan was relieved to see that she was back.

"You took a while. I was starting to miss you." He pulled her back to her seat beside him with his arm on her shoulder.

"Now that's a side of you I never thought I would see before dying." Mr. Ricci stifled a chuckle when he saw Xiehan fawning all over his wife like she was a treasure.

"The side that loves my wife?" He looked at the man across them with a raised eyebrow.

"Not just love. The side that glared at any man who tried to take a second look at her." He made fun of him. While they were discussing, he still left a sliver of his attention to Lanni and stared off the men who were blatantly ogling her.

"But I totally understand how you feel." While he spoke, he pulled his own wife to his side and wrapped his arm around her shoulder.

Watching them, Xiehan was glad he brought his wife along. Mr. Ricci didn't say it out loud but one of the reasons why he chose to collaborate with Feng Ji International was because of his interaction with Lanni. Loyalty was one of the qualities he looked for in a business partner and he believed that a man who wholeheartedly loved and was loyal to his wife was the best choice.

They were pretty much, and they only had a few details to go over. Ricci pecked his wife's cheek.
"Honey, you don't have to sit in this meeting if it is boring. Do you want to take a walk?"

Mrs. Ricci looked relieved. "I'd love to. Lanni, would you like to join me?"

Understanding that there might be something personal that Mr. Ricci wanted to discuss with Xiehan, she nodded. "Sure."

"Don't wander too far." Xiehan urged her.

The women walked out of the restaurant one after another, before Mrs. Ricci turned to face Lanni.

"I'm Philomena, by the way. You can call me Mena."

"I'm Lanni." She responded although Philomena had already heard her name earlier.

Philomena was friendlier than expected, and they hit it off within a few minutes. Surprisingly, they found that they had a lot in common.

"Would you like to hop for a quick pizza?" Philomena whispered like it was a secret between them.

Lanni snuck a peek at the restaurant they had just left. "I'd love to! Xiehan doesn't let me have any."

"Urgh me too. Arnold says it's unhealthy." She complained about Mr. Ricci.

Lanni laughed and grabbed her hand. "Too much of it is unhealthy, yes. But grabbing it once when they are not looking is not going to hurt, right?"

"I swear, we think alike." Philomena led Lanni to a pizza hut and they quickly decided on a flavour that they would both enjoy. They ordered a small one and devoured it as soon as it was brought to their table.

"Are you alright?" Lanni looked worriedly at Philomena who looked uncomfortable.

"I think my period has started." Philomena sighed sadly.

"Does it hurt? I will get you painkillers and I have some..."

"No, it's alright." Philomena stopped her, but tears started to gather in her eyes which she refused to let fall.

"Mena, are you okay?" Lanni placed her unfinished piece aside, going to Philomena's side in panic.

"Yeah...I'm sorry I got you worried." Philomena received the handkerchief that Lanni handed her and dabbed at her eyes. "I just think... periods is not good news to a woman trying to conceive."

Lanni paled. "I'm so sorry."

Being patted on her back, the tears that Philomena had been holding back came flooding out. "We did several checks and we are both alright."

Lanni patiently listened as the latter narrated their bumpy road to marriage and how after finally settling down four years ago, they couldn't have a baby no matter how hard they tried.

"Then maybe you need to loosen up? Perhaps you are so stressed." Lanni suggested. "Go on an adventure and have fun."

Philomena wiped her eyes and smiled. "Maybe you are right. I'm ready to try anything right now."

"Good luck." Lanni wished her. After waiting for the latter to wash her face and get changed in the bathroom, they returned to their husbands.

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After shopping around, Lanni and Xiehan returned to their hotel room. He pulled her in his arms.

"Something happened when you went out with Philomena and put you in a bad mood. Did she bully you?"

"No, no. We just talked. She is a good friend, actually." Lanni forced a smile.

"Is that why you snuck off and went eating pizza?"

"Huh? How would you know?" She was shocked. There weren't any bodyguards following her around when she checked.

"Don't I know my little wife best?" He pulled her onto his lap, facing down. "So, tell me. How do you want to be punished?"

She knew what he was about to do but he made a dramatic turn and presented her lips to him. "With a kiss."

"You have the nerve to ask for a reward?" He asked sternly.

She chuckled and kissed him. "You will reward me anyways. Because you can't bear to punish me. You love me too much."

He laughed and tickled her. "What will I do with you?"

"Xiehan, I..." She took a deep breath and wondered whether it was too soon to broach the subject.

"Mmh?"

On second thought, she smiled. "Do you have any meetings scheduled for tomorrow?"

He did a mental check of his calendar. "No, but I will meet Mr. Ricci to sign the contract the day after. Will you accompany me?"

She shook her head. "I think it's better if I stay. I can pack up and when you return, we will have time for some more fun before I leave."

"That makes sense." He kissed the top of her head. "But that's not what you were about to tell me."

Having been exposed, she knew that she would not be able to weasel her way out of it. She took a deep breath and looked at him. "I didn't think about it before but, what if it's not easy to have babies later?"

Chapter 534 - Quite The Charmer

Her question threw him off guard. Why was she suddenly asking this? He looked down to meet her gaze and she was dead serious about it. It was not a prank. He gathered his thoughts. "Then we adopt. Isn't that obvious?"

Relief washed over her face which confused him. "Honey, we haven't even started trying yet. Why are you so tense about failing?"

His wife fluttered her eyelids and looked like she was holding back something that must be difficult for her to bring up with him. He made a guess when she opened her mouth and closed it without saying a word.

"Is this about Philomena?" He guessed, since she had been off since she and Philomena returned from their little pizza adventure.

He had made it much easier for her, since she was uncertain whether it was alright to discuss another couple's matters with her husband. She nodded and decided to not go into too much detail. "She made me realize that not everything comes by so easily."

He patted her back. "Ours will be easy. With the way we screw like bunnies, it will be surprising if I don't knock you up within two months."

"You pervert." She attempted to jab him only for her elbow to be grabbed by him.

He chuckled and kissed her ear. "Aren't we, though? I'm getting aroused just talking about this."

He teased her earlobe as he spoke. "If it makes you feel at ease, we can book an appointment with an obstetrician and go for some checks. I'm pretty sure everything will turn out to be normal."

"Okay." She hooked her fingers around his. It did make her feel more peaceful about this whole situation.

Li Yuming was cooking lunch when the doorbell rang. She turned off the stove and went to check, just in time to see the housekeeper leading someone in.

"Neil?" She was pleasantly surprised to see him carrying a bouquet of pink roses as he walked towards her.

"I figured you would be on your own. Lanni is on a business trip, and Luna and her husband have their hands full and cannot accompany you so I decided to stop by."

"Thank you for stopping by." She smiled and received the roses from him. "Thank you."

He took in her gentle smile and was once again mesmerised by her beauty. She looked much younger than she actually was. "I spent hours trying to find a flower as beautiful as you but in the end, I found none so I settled for this." He said, referring to the flowers.

"Aren't you quite the charmer." She took a sniff of the roses and found a vase to put them in.

He watched her actions with a smile. "Does that mean you are charmed by me?"

She cleared her throat. "Once Lanni is back, we will go to try out our outfits for her wedding. Do you want to come with us?" She invited him, then realized that the idea was stupid. "Actually, forget it. The men will go with Xiehan in about nine days. If you come with me, you will be surrounded by a pool of women. Not even Linhou will tag along to keep you company."

"It doesn't matter. As long as I get your company once you are done trying out." He quickly grabbed the opportunity. He didn't have many reasons to hang out with her and wasn't going to let one pass right under his nose. "When is that? I'm sure I will be able to make some time for it."

"Over the weekend so everyone is present." She responded.

"Okay." He nodded before taking a long snuff in the air. "Whatever you are cooking smells delicious."

"It actually is. It'll be done soon." She stood when she remembered that she was cooking before he came in. "Do you want to keep me company in the kitchen?"

"I'll keep you company wherever you want." He stood to follow her and watched at the side as she cooked, occasionally helping when she needed it.

Goldenwing Apartments.

"How's the most beautiful girl in the world?" Cedric pushed open the door to Cheng Yu's room, which also doubled as her study. She was sitting behind the desk with her hands intertwined under her chin and didn't acknowledge Cedric when he came in.

He stalked to her side and nudged her. "Why is she also the grumpiest?"

She was not saying a word to him, which made him worried. He sat in the chaise longue and tried to get her to talk. "You should be happy, right? You finally managed to get full custody of Xiao Ying." It had been a long battle that took much longer than expected. It had taken two years and a couple of months for the court to prove that Cheng Ying's biological mother was abusive and was not in the right mind to

take care of her son. It had also taken Cheng Yu a lot of effort to prove that despite being so young herself, she was stable enough and capable of taking care of a teenager. They had almost sent him to a social home but luckily, he was living with her in the end.

So, Cedric didn't understand why she was sulking instead of doing a happy dance.

She finally spoke. "I was just thinking about everything that he and I have been through and it threw me off the mood." She let out a sigh.

Before he could probe further, she wheeled her chair back and stood. "Are you hungry? We can order something to eat."

"I'm in the mood for Japanese." He knew that she would not talk about whatever was bothering her so he temporarily gave up. He would find ways to make her comfortable and willingly open up.

"Okay. Give me a minute." She left the room and he was uncertain where she went.

Her phone vibrated. He didn't want to pry at first but he had a strong gut feeling that it had something to do with her bad mood. So he stood up and glanced over the lit up screen. The message was hidden since the phone had a password lock but the sender information was displayed on the screen. It was an unsaved contact number that he recognized better than anyone.

His mother's contact number.

He frowned when he recognized the digits. Why was his mother contacting Cheng Yu? The two women had only met a few times and from their stiff interaction, he knew that they didn't hit it off. In the entire family, Cheng Yu only got along with his sister Natalie. The rest seemed to dislike her for some strange reason and she was not comfortable around them either. So it made no sense for them to contact each other and send each other private messages. He thought back to her expression when he walked in.

He couldn't help questioning her reason. Was she really upset because she had suddenly thought about hers and Cheng Ying's past? Was it because of another reason and was that reason related to his mother?

Concluding that it must be because his mother had been contacting her and probably not telling her anything that was pleasant, he took out his phone. He was just about to give her a call when Cheng Yu returned.

"I just checked the fridge. I was hoping that I had enough ingredients to cook instead of ordering food. Unfortunately, it looks like we have to order after all." She smiled as she teased him.

It was not that he disliked food from restaurants, but he preferred her home cooked food even though she was not nearly as good in the kitchen as the chefs from those restaurants.

He looked gloomy.

She interpreted it as disappointment. Sitting on his lap, she tousled his hair. "Don't worry. We can go grocery shopping later. I will definitely cook you a sumptuous dinner."

Usually, he would tell her that it didn't matter whether she cooked, ordered food or shoved him into the kitchen to cook unrecognizable meals for himself. As long as he ate it beside her, it would be delicious. Realizing that he didn't say it or anything along the lines, she lowered her head to check on him.

"Are you alright, honey? What's wrong?"

"Yu, why didn't you tell me that my mother has been bothering you?" He asked, trying to maintain his calm even though he was on the verge of exploding. He was not mad at her. He was mad at his mother

for secretly bullying her, but he was also disappointed that she didn't think it was important enough to tell him what was going on.

She glanced at her phone that she hadn't realized was in his hand when she had left it on the desk.

"Honey, you know that I would be upset if you checked through my phone." She said in a low voice, trying to change the topic.

"I know." He ran a hand through his hair. "I know. I didn't check through. I accidentally saw that she messaged you." He wrapped his arms around her. He knew that it was disrespectful to pry into her phone although she had nothing to hide. Except, she did have something to hide. He looked at her. "Don't try to change the topic."

She let out a breath. "It wasn't anything serious. She couldn't get through to you and contacted me to know that you are doing alright."

"Is that really it?" He asked, glancing at her so sternly that she could no longer hide it.

"She doesn't like me. Trust me, the feeling is mutual so I didn't think it was worth mentioning." She stated. If she complained about his mother's dislike when she felt the same way or probably even worse, wouldn't that be hypocritical?

He didn't buy it. "That's understandable. It would have been alright if she stuck to her territory but why did she seek you? I only want to hear the truth."

She knew that it might morph into an argument if she tried to brush it off so she sighed. "She made it her business to let me know that your family has an arranged marriage with some aristocratic family. Apparently, you will soon marry the mayor's daughter and will no longer have anything to do with me."

The frown on his face deepened. "That's not for them to decide for me."

"I know." She kissed the side of his face. "I know you will not give in even if they make the mayor's daughter throw herself at you, which is another reason why I didn't think it was worth mentioning. I would not be jealous of an arranged marriage that I know you have no intention of acknowledging. "

His features softened into a smile. Unknowingly, she was no longer the skeptical young woman who was afraid of ending up with a broken heart if she fell in love. She had grown into a woman who was willing to give her whole heart to love her man, and she trusted him with her entire being. He could not let his family ruin that. Heaven knew how hard he had worked to gain her trust.

He kissed her neck. "Leave it to me, okay? I will have a word with her."

She smiled but shook her head. "I can handle her. If you get involved, our horrible relationship with each other will only become incorrigible."

"But I can't let her continue to bully my girlfriend." He frowned.

"I will not give her the chance to bully me. Do you trust me?" When he nodded, she ran her fingers through his hair. "Let's handle this as women who love the same man."

He slid the fabric of her shirt down her shoulder and pressed a kiss on her boobs. Whenever they had arguments or talked about something unpleasant, they would always somehow end up in bed. This time was no different. He ripped their clothes off and pinned her down on the bed, his hand grasping hers together to secure them above her head as he took her hard.

On Saturday, Lanni felt the butterflies fill her stomach as she led her friends to the wedding boutique that they had chosen. It was the same feeling she had when Xiehan proposed. Even though they were already married, the wedding had a different feel to it and she was both nervous and anxious.

"Why are you lost in thought again?" Xiaoshi nudged her. She had not flipped a page of the bridal gown magazine that she had been holding for ages. She was merely staring at the cover as if the happy bride on it could help her decide what to choose for her own wedding.

"I don't know what I'm feeling." She confessed. "It's just so mixed up. I'm ecstatic, so nervous and scared at the same time."

"What are you scared of?" Probed Cheng Yu, who had just finished circling the numbers on the pages of gowns she thought would look good on Lanni.

"I don't know. You have definitely heard of runaway grooms, right?"

Xiaoshi frowned at her. "Yes I have. But I have never heard of a married groom running away from his wedding. I mean, what is he running away from? If he is chickening out from getting married or is having an affair with someone else and is not ready to settle down, it would make sense but Xiehan is different. He is already your husband. He has no reason to chicken out when he didn't before he married you."

"And he loves you so much." Cheng Yu added.

"Don't get me started on how he has been filling our ears every time he calls home to check on us, telling us how eager he is for the wedding." Ruby added with a slight chuckle. "He almost makes me want to get married myself."

Lanni knew this too, but that didn't make her less anxious. "I'm sure you have also heard about wedding wardrobe malfunctions. A gown ripping apart at the altar, when walking down the aisle or during the reception... or flying above the bride's head because it is too windy."

"Uhm... honestly, I have never witnessed it." Xiaoshi had a frown.

"Me neither." Ruby added.

Cheng Yu placed a hand over her mouth and tittered. "I have heard of a few, seen none in real life but I wrote about one in one of my comic scenes. The villainess's dressmaker decided that making her gown a bit breezier than desired was perfect punishment. She accidentally stepped on it while walking down the aisle and that was it. It snapped at the waist and gave everyone an awkward view." She laughed. "And I'm guessing Lanni read that comic which is why she is so worried."

It made sense.

Xiaoshi glared at Cheng Yu though she thought the villainess deserved it, since she had also read the said comic. "That must be it. But Lanni, wedding gowns are usually treated with so much care. Wardrobe malfunctions do happen but we will make sure it doesn't happen to you."

Chapter 536 - Little CEO Linhou

Luna arrived about an hour later than the agreed time and she was greeted by this oddly tense scene as soon as she walked in through the door. "I'm sorry I'm late. I had to..." She stopped speaking and took in the women's expressions. She shifted her gaze over them. "Did something go wrong?"

Cheng Yu slapped her forehead. "Lanni is scared the wedding might go wrong." She explained Lanni's comical fears even though it was nothing to laugh at.

Luna sat down and made fun of her for a while before placing a hand on her shoulder. "Weddings never go exactly as planned. I thought you would know that from mine. But just because they don't go as planned doesn't mean you will not enjoy the day."

"I know just what you need. Let's go watch a movie later. For now, forget the wedding. Let's tick off what looks pretty." She suggested and the others agreed. The latest gowns were all so beautiful that they ended up ticking almost everything on the magazines.

"Where's Mumu?" Lanni finally asked when she noticed the girl's absence. Luna was carrying a tiny jacket with her which meant that she had come with Xiaomu but left her somewhere.

"She clung to her grandma because she overheard her say that she was leaving to go somewhere." Luna chuckled at her daughter's antics.

"The girl does love adventure." Lanni laughed along. As long as one mentioned that they were going somewhere, Xiaomu would cling to them—and that included making a trip to the bathroom. Xingyu would often joke about her growing into a constant traveller who will explore all the countries of the world.

"Is mom coming?" Lanni asked.

Luna nodded before adding, "With Neil."

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

Grabbing the chance, Luna pulled her into a sudden hug of exaggerated excitement. "We will be sisters soon!"

Ruby chuckled as she pulled back. "Why do you seem too happy about this?"

"Is there anything wrong with having two sisters?" Luna countered.

"I wouldn't complain either." Lanni added. She was just joking since she knew that she and Ruby could never treat each other as step sisters. They were not step sisters to begin with, and Ruby was her sister-in-law.

Cheng Yu took a glance at them and turned to Xiaoshi. "They're flaunting their sisterly affection. Hey, do you want to ditch them and create our own family? I will be the elder sister and dote on you."

Xiaoshi laughed at the suggestion. "Ultimately, they're my in-laws."

"Hey!" Cheng Yu complained and the others laughed at her in unison.

"Sorry, Xiao Yu. We still love you." Luna hugged her exaggeratedly.

"You are horrible people." She grumbled.

"I'll get you chocolates." Lanni attempted to bribe her.

"Me two." Xiaoshi added.

"Me three." Ruby raised three fingers.

"I'll get you a box full of lipsticks." Luna added.

"Deal." Cheng Yu laughed and waited for them to bring what they promised.

As they ticked through the bouquet arrangements that they liked, an adorable voice announced Li Yuming's arrival.

"Momma!" Mumu called out cutely.

"Ah! My cute niece is finally here!" Lanni looked over in excitement.

Hearing her voice, Xiaomu toddled over as Li Yuming called for her to be careful. She was just about to jump into Lanni's arms when once again, she was confused when she saw Luna. Her gaze shifted between the two.

"Poor thing. I'd be confused too. She'll get used to it when she grows up and be able to tell the difference." Xiaoshi giggled at the cute scene. This time, she finally got her mother right and clung onto Luna's legs.

"Finally. I was starting to think that Linhou will laugh at you in future." Luna smiled. Linhou had never had trouble recognizing them; while he also seemed confused about them being so similar to each other, he had always known who his mother was and who his aunt was.

"Sweetheart, I got candy especially for you. Come to Aunt Yu." Cheng Yu opened her hand to reveal a colorful candy.

Xiaomu ran over in her small steps and flashed a cute smile. "Aunt Yu!" She called.

"You're so cute!" Her heart melted as she picked the toddler up.

Ruby looked over to coax her. "Don't you love Aunt Ruby anymore? Come, let's play."

"Come to Aunt Shishi. I'll buy you toys." Xiaoshi added.

Luna looked at her friends and sister fawning over Xiaomu and her heart melted. "Now I know why my daughter is so outgoing." It was expected with so many people showering her with love and presents.

"Where is Linhou anyway?" Cheng Yu asked as she let Xiaomu play with her fingers.

"He followed his dad to the company. Wait. I took a picture of him." Luna took out his phone to show them.

"How cute! He looks like a little CEO." Lanni zoomed the picture to take

a closer look at the little boy in a black suit similar to his dad's. He would surely harvest the hearts of all the employees in Jiang Corporation.

"Uhm, Luna, you may need to be prepared. In about twelve years, there will be countless teenage girls fawning over him. You may have to confiscate a hundred letters every day." Xiaoshi remarked.

Luna shook her head with a slight laugh. "I'm more worried for the little boys his age. Xingyu is prepared to kick their butt when they start ogling at Mumu."

The atmosphere brightened up when Xiaomu arrived, making Lanni less nervous than she was earlier. She finally chose a venue and narrowed her selection of dresses to five choices.

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On Monday, she finally returned to work.

"You could have a few more days off." Lin Jian spoke as soon as he saw her leaving the elevator.

"Thanks boss, but my brain will stop functioning if I break for too long." She couldn't help noting that he was in a good mood. He was especially generous with his days off. Things must be going well between him and Ruby.

"I'm glad you said that. Because there is a task awaiting you." He scratched the back of his head.

"Okay...?" She cocked her head to the side in curiosity. He led her to his office to discuss it.

"The Oracle has been a bit slow lately. Our competitors managed to get this piece of news and publish it before we did." He showed her the headline on his tablet. It was about a rockstar who murdered his wife and newborn baby. Apparently, his wife had confronted him regarding his drug abuse and suggested that he go to rehab, which ended up in the fight that took hers and her baby's lives.

She frowned. What a scumbag. It was shocking, which was why Oracle Daily had been affected by the fact that their competitors released it before them. She rubbed her head. "That's okay. I will scout for a more explosive piece as soon as I can."

"I know you can do that but we should dwell on this first." Lin Jian tapped his desk.

She didn't understand. "If we publish it, we will be too late. We might even get criticism for copying other agencies."

"I didn't say we should publish it. Go and investigate it." He instructed.

"Huh?" She was stunned before she understood it. "Wait. You don't believe that what was published was the entire truth?"

"If it turns out to be the entire truth, then I will have to count on you to find something that will drown this."

She nodded but added, "If we drown it, what about the innocent wife and child? They will never get justice."

Lin Jian raised an eyebrow at her. Was she seriously thinking along those lines? "Justice does not bring the dead back to life, Lanni. It is why I think it's just a load of crap. Anyway, the police already know about this matter. If they didn't before, they do now and are probably investigating it. You don't need to worry about it anymore."

She nodded. "Then I'll get to work immediately."

Chapter 537 - Back To Work

"I will give you as much help as you will need. Just tell me when you need it." He offered.

She nodded and thought about it. "I will probably need a small team. I'll go through the details and tell you who I need."

He approved of it, so she got to her office and started reading all the articles she could find about the news. It was not too detailed but it explained that not only did the rockstar, Storm, traffic drugs, but that he also heavily abused them and often wrote songs under their influence.

She scoffed when she read the criticism and insults he had faced when this detail was revealed. It was wrong of him to traffic drugs if he did do such a thing but what was wrong with writing under the influence of drugs? She was not saying that was right either but that didn't erase the fact that his songs were still great nonetheless. It was hypocritical of the people who loved his songs and were almost obsessed with them to suddenly act like they hated them just because they were written when he was drunk or high.

She noted down the details and read through them at least five times before she found a loophole. He had been married for two years and had supposedly been a drug addict for at least five years. Why did his wife marry a drug addict if she was so strongly against it?

She looked the woman up. Annie Tian. She had died young—she would have turned twenty-five in two months. Her family information was not revealed but when Lanni investigated further, she found that Annie had grown up in an orphanage and had no family. Not even distant relatives—at least none that she knew of. There was no information about her late parents either.

When she saw what kind of case she was dealing with, she decided on her team. She called over Lin since she trusted her, a young man called Star who was one of the agency's expert investigators and a young woman called Skylar. She printed the information she had written and gave them each a copy.

"Let's check the reports one at a time. Skylar, check for anything Storm did that makes him a scumbag or suggests that he was cheating on his wife." She instructed as she gave Skylar her copy of the articles.

The latter was confused. "Why do we need to do that? There is already enough evidence. Didn't you see the pictures that were taken of Storm and other women in compromising positions?"

Lanni shut her eyes for a second. "How long have you worked here?"

"Two years." Skylar responded in a tone that aimed to remind Lanni of her position. She had only worked in the agency for two years and was already ordering people around. She had only gotten her position because the CEO was best friends with her fiancé. Who didn't know about that?

Lanni caught on the hidden meaning in her eyes and scoffed. She had only chosen Skylar because the latter was skilled. But this kind of attitude... She looked at the woman sternly. "If you have worked in the media industry for that long, you should know that not everything that is reported is the truth."

Skylar looked down.

Lanni shrugged slightly. "If you are not willing to be part of the team, you can leave. But if you do not leave, I will expect you to collaborate with us as best as you can."

Skylar thought about it for a while and sighed deeply. "I don't like you but that doesn't mean I will not do my job to the best of my ability. This is about Storm, not you."

Lanni smiled. "Good. Then go ahead and investigate what I asked. Check how many of those pictures are real and tell me of any inconsistency no matter how tiny you think it is." She instructed, to which Skylar nodded.

"Lin, investigate the part about his drug trafficking. Find out if there are any drug lords he is in association with, and his clients if you can." She handed another sheet to Lin.

"Understood." Lin accepted the task without any qualms.

"Star..."

She was yet to speak when Star did so first.

"Miss Li,"

"Mrs. Ji." Lanni interrupted him politely. "I'm married. My husband may not like it if I continue to use my surname instead of his."

Star nodded and corrected himself. "Mrs. Ji, I would like to know if you are planning to do this kind of investigation in collaboration with the police. They will definitely be onto this case as well since he has been arrested."

Lanni nodded. It was a reasonable question. "We are not going to take matters into our own hands, definitely. We have legal permission to investigate. If we get any evidence that is relevant to the case, we are obliged to submit it to the police." She explained and handed him a sheet of paper. "Your role is to find all the motive he had to murder his wife and baby. You can start by investigating the baby's paternity. Meanwhile, I will compile all the information in other aspects including his family, friends and competitors."

When she was done discussing with them, Skylar and Star left but Lin remained.

"Do you have something to say?" Lanni asked.

"Do you think Skylar will be obedient? She might try to sabotage the investigation since she doesn't like you."

Lanni rapped her finger against the desk. "That's a possibility but she is not stupid. If she were to be caught doing that, not only would she lose her job, but she may never be employed in any media agency in future. She will not risk that for a moment of satisfaction if she has a brain. But if I were to make her leave, she would form another team and try to compete with us." Ultimately, they were all competitors and the probability of that happening was quite high.

Lin smiled. "I hope this goes smoothly."

"It will." She stretched her arms. The intercom rang, it was her secretary.

"Chief Editor, you have a call from HOH Hospital on line one."

Chapter 538 - Call From The Hospital

Lanni's heart sank to the pits of her stomach. The last word she wanted to hear was 'hospital' right now. Or ever. Her pulse picked up its pace as she asked to confirm that her secretary had gotten the right name and the hospital had asked for her. The worst kind of imaginations ran through her mind even though she tried to control them and by the time she received the call on line one, her palm was sweaty and her voice a frail mess.

"Li Lanni speaking."

"Hello, this is Dr. Su from HOH Hospital. I'm calling about the appointment made for Mrs. Ji. The meeting starts in a couple of hours and I wanted to confirm whether you are coming."

Lanni's brows dipped for a moment as she gathered her thoughts.. HOH Hospital?

"Oh! It's Dr. Su!" Her voice uncontrollably pitched when she finally comprehended it.

When she accompanied Xiehan to Italy, a series of events including the heartbreak of Xiehan's business partner's wife had made her uncontrollably start to question whether they would have it easy having kids. Convinced that it might not be as easy as it was for some people, it had been impossible for Xiehan to convince her otherwise.

So, he had set up an appointment with an obstetrician to have them both checked for any complications that might hinder or delay conception, and get advice on what to do to make it easier.

Ultimately, Xiehan had left it up to her whether she wanted them to go through with the tests. She had wanted to, but she had been so busy thinking about the wedding when she got back that she forgot about it. No wonder their call gave her such a scare!

"Mrs. Ji? Are you still there?" Dr. Su probed when she remained silent for too long.

"Yes. Sorry." Lanni cleared her throat. "I'll confirm my husband's schedule and we will both be there if he doesn't have anything on. If he does, I will come on my own."

When the call ended, she tried to get back to her work but was much slower. Her mind would be filled with countless thoughts every few seconds. She would imagine herself heavily pregnant with Xiehan's arms around her even though they wouldn't be able to circle her. He would rub her belly, listen in on the sounds the baby made and talk to her belly... do everything excited husbands did when they were about to become dads.

Then the image in her mind would change to one of her, Xiehan and an adorable toddler between them. They'd be holding the toddler's tiny hands and playing together as a happy family of three.

Her smile must have been pretty obvious because Lin Jian commented on it when he caught her staring off into space with her lips curled into a happy smile.

"Those must be valuable castles." He teased.

"What castles?" She jolted out of her thoughts and tried to resume her work.

"The ones you are building in the air." He pointed at the empty air before her. "I dropped by to let you know that you can leave whenever you are ready. Your husband helped you take the afternoon off in case you needed it."

Her lips curled into a happier smile. She no longer needed to ask whether he would make it. If he had gone so far as to help her take the day off, then there was no way in hell that he was going to let her take a test that involved both of them on her own.

She thanked him but continued to work. She was invigorated and made more progress in an hour than she had the whole day. When she was ready to leave, she carried a stack of documents with her and stuffed them into her oversized purse.

She ran into Skylar on her way out.

"I got something you might want to know." Skylar spoke. "But seeing as you are in a hurry, I will write it down in detail and send it to your private email."

Lanni smiled. She was now certain that she had made the right choice regarding Skylar. The girl might be condescending and a b*tch at times but when it was required of her, she was good at what she did—which was why Lanni had not chewed her off too much when she spewed nonsense earlier. She thanked her and headed for the elevator.

Dr. Su was ready to meet Lanni as soon as the latter arrived. She was more than ten minutes early and Xiehan had arrived too, so the doctor thought it would be best to get the meeting done earlier instead of waiting around for ten minutes. Her last meeting had ended earlier too.

She gave some brochures to Lanni and Xiehan and let them read through.

"We will go through the details today. If you are ready to undergo the necessary tests, we can do that during our next appointment. I just want to make sure you know everything you should that will be relevant before, during and after your pregnancy."

Lanni nodded to thank her for the brochure and looked through the summary of what looked like endless paragraphs of articles encouraging couples to not give up just because they couldn't conceive and that there were several other ways to have kids, which had been listed. Not that she thought she needed it.

"Are you on the pill, Mrs. Ji?" Dr. Su asked as she noted something down in her large notebook. When Lanni shook her head, she proceeded to ask, "When did you last use it?"

"I didn't ever use it." She responded. The doctor nodded and took down her response before asking several other questions including their diets and allergies. At the end of the session, Dr. Su gave Lanni a diet plan to follow for two days before coming to have the tests done after those two days.

Lanni let out a sigh when they left the building. "I'm so nervous!"

That makes two of us. He wanted to mumble but he held her instead.

Chapter 539 - Appointment

"What do you think of the idea of going for IVF right off the bat?" She asked when they entered his car. It wasn't because she thought it was a better option than natural conception. She was just curious.

"I don't think it's any different from doing it the natural way." He glanced at her. "Of course, there is a big difference that makes the latter better. I want to look at your curved belly months later and be able to remember how it felt like on the night when we conceived our baby."

Her face heated up. "You are such a pervert." He somehow managed to make everything about sex and she must be a pervert too because it didn't bother her. On the contrary, she felt a tingle down her spine and between her legs every time he made a dirty comment when the last thing on her mind was sex.

He started the car and shifted his gaze back to her. "How am I a pervert? We are only talking about making babies. Making love is the most obvious part of the process."

She blushed.

He had been right about her feeling calm after a visit to the obstetrician. She felt more at ease even though they were yet to go through with the tests. The tests were scheduled for the following day. He would have his first and she would be next. It was a little more complicated for her with the checks that she didn't understand but had been given information on, which she was supposed to go through but didn't think she would because she had a lot of work to go through before sleeping.

"What are your plans for the night?" He asked as he got the car on the road.

She hated to spoil whatever plans he had in mind for them. "I'm investigating a case that involves a supposed serial killer and drug addict who just happened to be a superstar. I will probably have my hands full for a few nights. I'm sorry my love."

"You don't need to be. I was actually thinking we'd stay home tonight. I'll cook dinner and you are in charge of looking pretty and warming the bed. We can save Netflix for next time."

"Really?" She looked forward to it even though it was nothing but a night full of work.

He nodded. "I have a conference meeting to attend later."

Because they would both have work to do and might end up staying up too late, they unanimously agreed to only work for two hours after dinner and get to bed.

It was only ten when she slid into the bed beside him. She felt she could definitely go for a while more but his gaze told her that he was not going to let her. He was right—even though he was yet to open his mouth. She needed time to think.

"If you look at me like that, I'm going to have to pin you down so you can only look at me from under me." He warned.

"How did I look at you?" She blinked. The look in his eyes told her that he was making things up. He probably only wanted an excuse to pin her down, and he did. But he was yet to do anything more than kiss her boobs when her phone rang.

"Ignore it." He groaned.

She wanted to, but she didn't know anyone who would call her at ten. It had to be an emergency. She grabbed the phone off the nightstand and tried not to gasp when Xiehan bit her nipple through the fabric of her nightdress. She glared at him and he grinned in mischief. The pervert was enjoying it. He was definitely doing it on purpose.

"Skylar?" She spoke when she realized who was calling.

"I'm so sorry. I only realized what time it was after dialling your number. Hanging up after a ring or two would have been awkward so..." Skylar sounded uncertain what to do.

"It's okay. What's up?" Lanni sat up and tried to ignore the man between her legs. He had pulled her nightdress up her waist and was currently blowing hot air onto her core through her panties. She sucked in a breath and coughed at the end of it so it didn't come off as a moan. She glared at him and he smirked, then he buried his head between her legs.

"I found some information on Storm." Skylar explained. "I only confirmed it now and was still riding on the shock of what I'd found out, which is why I called you in a frenzy."

"It's okay." She shifted her position to lean against her pillow.

"I can report it to you in the morning in your office." Skylar stated.

They had little time and she would be unable to sleep thanks to the anxiety so she interrupted before the latter hung up. "No, hold on. Please give me the gist of it."

The man between her legs knew when to stop. He teased her a little and let her speak to Skylar peacefully though she was certain that he would be ready to jump her as soon as the call ended. He was definitely going crazy and she was running down the road of insanity along with him.

A rustle of paper from the other end brought her back to her senses, followed by Skylar's voice as she explained the events that had transpired before Storm supposedly murdered his wife.

"Storm was once part of the band 'NV'. Did you know this?" Skylar asked.

"Yes." She had done her homework.

Skylar hummed. "There are many reasons why he left NV. The current members claim it was because his drug addiction surfaced and he couldn't keep up with the team which made him leave, but I recently found out that it was because he had a feud with one of the members, Axel. I also found out that Storm has been to a rehab centre but he had been thrown there because someone pulled the strings. Tests showed that he had only had a single use of drugs. Hell knows that could have been forcefully injected in him. You may need to know that Axel's family is quite influential in the capital."

Lanni processed the words over the next minute. "That was fast. Thanks Skylar."

When the call ended, Xiehan nipped her ear. "I don't know much about the case you are handling but if the truth is unfolding too fast, you need to be careful.." He warned.

Chapter 540 - Chemistry

She thought about his words and had to agree with him. She was still dealing with Skylar after all, and the woman had already expressed her disdain right off the bat. She would not work with Lanni if she had a choice. While it was highly possible that she had stayed because she wanted to be part of the team that would uncover the biggest scoop, it was also possible that she wanted to wreck their progress while giving the real information to her real team if she was standing on two boats.

This was not a competition and it didn't matter who uncovered the truth. The only thing that was important was for the truth to be uncovered, but it was not certain that everyone had the same thoughts. Betrayal would hurt no matter what she thought.

"You are right." She turned and cupped his face, kissing his cheek.

"Be careful, okay? Tell me if you need any help." He pecked her lips

"I will." She nodded even though she was not planning to. He already had a pile of work to deal with every day. She wanted to help him decrease his work and if she couldn't do that—because he definitely wouldn't let her tire herself—the least she could do was not let him have to worry about her.

"Don't just say it." He spanked her backside out of the blue, earning a sudden gasp from her which prompted him to kiss her deeply.

"Don't make such sounds near me." He warned as he kissed her neck.

"I didn't do anything. You are just insatiable." She chuckled and hugged his shoulders.

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The following day, the first thing Lanni did was check the credibility of the information that Skylar had given her. Surprisingly, it was true that Axel had pulled strings to kick Storm into rehab. No matter how she thought about it, she did not believe that it was necessary to use any under the table means to get a drug addict into rehab. All that was needed was to take them to the centre and everything else would proceed normally.

The fact that Axel had to do anything aside from the required formalities made the whole situation suspicious. Storm was not a drug addict.

She dared not think further than that. She needed to prove it first. Pulling strings to get him into rehab was not sufficient evidence on his own. There could have been other reasons.

Besides, it was baseless. If they were to try and dispel the rumors using this sole piece of information, Axel could very well claim to have paid the rehabilitation centre to take care of Storm. He could even pretend to be the caring friend who was stabbed in the back for trying to do what was best for his friend. In the worst case scenario, he could sue them for invading his privacy.

A knock on the door pulled her out of her thoughts.

"Come in." She said and looked over. Lin came in with Star in tow.

"Did the two of you find something out?" She asked them. They looked like they were here to report the same thing, which they must have discussed. Her gaze was focused on Star so he spoke.

"Storm has never been a drug addict. He is not a drug trafficker either."

Her brows scrunched up. "That's suspicious."

"We found all the evidence we could." Lin explained. "We even tracked down one of the people who was supposed to have bought drugs from him and although he insisted that he and Storm had been doing the business for a while, we found it suspicious so we beat him into telling the truth. He doesn't even know who Storm is."

Lanni tapped her chin. That sounded possible. If any of those traffickers were to be found out and they found a chance to implicate someone else, they would grab it and it would have nothing to do with personal grudges. It was more about self-destructing with someone else.

"Forget about him. He is not part of our case at the moment. Besides, if you seek him on your own again, he might hurt you." She warned.

"We understand." They said in unison.

She explained her suspicion. "Skylar told me the same thing you just said. I was worried for a moment that it might be a trap set by whoever is trying to frame Storm. Giving us a little information to bait us into his trap so he may get rid of us."

Lin raised an eyebrow and glanced at Star. The two were on the same page. This time, Lin spoke for both of them. "Star and I will look into it a little more."

She smiled at them. It looked like a much needed chemistry was brewing between them. It did a lot to lighten the mood.

She shook her head. "Actually, you don't need to. I found out who Storm's lawyer is. I have contacted her and will meet up with her later."

"That's awesome. Do you need company? Lin and I will accompany you just in case." Star looked at Lin as he spoke for both of them.

She once again smiled at the dog food they didn't know they were shoving in her face. She knew that they were merely workmates and just happened to work well with each other but she needed a distraction to make work more interesting. Not that it was boring.

They were looking at her and wondering why she was smiling so widely, so she cleared her throat. "Thanks for offering but I will be alright on my own."

"But..." Lin was worried. "You know that many people don't like reporters. Especially not people whose reputation has been tarnished by the media. What if his lawyer is waiting to attack you?" If anything were to happen to Lanni, they all knew that Xiehan would kill Lin Jian, and he would kill all of them before dying.

"Relax." She chuckled.

Letting them proceed with their tasks, Lanni went to meet with Storm's lawyer.

Xu Fangyang was much younger than Lanni thought, she looked to be in her early twenties. As expected, she was not happy to see Lanni after learning that she worked in the media industry. The two of them had met at a cafe and Xu Fangyang looked like she was ready to leave as soon as she learnt about Lanni's occupation.

"I'm not here to get you to say something that I will twist and publish for sales." She tried to convince the other. "I only want to know the truth."

"Which you will publish at the end of it all." Xu Fangyang crossed her arms sarcastically.

Lanni didn't deny the claim. She ordered coffee when the waiter brought the menus. She took a sip when their drinks arrived, glad that the latter had not stormed off. "The thing is, I'm Storm's fan. I know this has nothing to do with anything and might appear as baseless crap meant to convince you but have you taken a look at past records? There are many stars who were forced to retire from the entertainment industry for similar reasons. There would be a scandal about them and by the time it was discovered that they were innocent, the public would have long forgotten about them."

Xu Fangyang flinched and Lanni grabbed the chance.

"This is why you need the media on your side. Most of the media agencies don't care about the truth. They only care about what sells best and lies are usually more dramatic which makes them sell better."

She had stricken where it hurt most and Xu Fangyang looked displeased. "What's your point?"

"Lin Media group cares for the truth. And well, uncovering conspiracies sells better than lies do. We will make sure the truth is let out to the public before it's too late for Storm and in return, we will get our explosive headline. It's a win-win situation no matter how you think about it."

Xu Fangyang took a small sip of her cappuccino before she looked at Lanni. "You are wasting your time. It's not going to be easy. Your explosive headline might be outdated."

Lanni smiled. That kind of statement meant she had caved. She slid a portfolio on the table to Xu Fangyang. "There are many private investigators who are affiliated with Lin Media Group. If you let us, we can help out and make it easier."

Seeing that she was hesitant, Lanni added, "You love him, after all. Can't you do him this favor?"