

Chapter 571 - Let Her Go

"I'm not sure what you mean by that." Xiehan maintained his nonchalance as he denied her claim.

"It has to be you!" She insisted. "I asked Luna to find her location and she found that she is still in B City. Are you saying that Luna is lying?"

Lanni cursed inwardly while Xiehan clenched his fists. He would never have expected her to seek Luna's help first before coming to him. She probably already suspected him, which is why she went to Luna first and was only trying to trap him.

" Well, programmers can't always be accurate." He cooked up an excuse that even he found ridiculous.

"Just stop. Are you going to claim that since you are not as well versed in programming as Luna is, you cannot be as accurate as she is?" She laughed in ridicule. "Lies don't look good on you, cousin. This is the part when you admit everything."

He remained silent, which prompted her to push. "Is it because of the enmity between her and Lanni?"

"Shishi," Lanni tried to calm her down only to be interrupted.

"I'm not speaking to you right now, Lanni."

"I can't believe you would do this. I thought she was like a mother to you. Heck, I thought that no matter who was capable of hurting her, you would never do anything to harm her." She burst into tears.

"There is a reason why I held her captive. But I can promise you that she will not be harmed. I only want to scare her into admitting what she did."

"Admitting what she did?" Xiaoshi scoffed. "I can't believe you would even have the guts to say such a thing. She is your aunt, cousin!"

"And she tried to murder my child!" He raised his voice, which startled her. He didn't usually raise his voice at her, having doted on her all her life. Her tears fell continuously. Seeing this, Yue climbed onto her lap and used her tiny hands to wipe her mother's tears, mimicking the adults' actions.

Xiehan studied his niece and asked, "Shishi, if I were to threaten Yue's life, what would you do to me?"

"What do you mean by that?" She reflexively grabbed her daughter and held her protectively, glaring at Xiehan.

"The literal meaning." He continued studying the little girl. "If I were to try and feed her food that will harm her and possibly cause her death, constantly aim to kill her and have someone attack the two of you with the goal of killing her, what would you do?"

"Don't you dare do anything to my daughter! If you have something against me, let's talk it out as adults." Yue roared like an enraged tigress.

Xiehan sat back down and watched her try to leave before he spoke. "I only made a hypothesis and you are so angry. How do you think I felt when aunty tried to kill my baby so many times in just a few days?"

"What?" Xiaoshi stopped in her tracks.

"I don't know if you realized that Luna was injured. If you did, then you know what Lanni's state would have been if the henchmen got the right person."

Xiaoshi thought deeply about it. Luna had refused to tell her what happened to her and had brushed it off by going ahead to help her so she would stop asking. Who would have thought that the truth was so ugly?

"Mother orchestrated that?" She asked.

"It's hard to believe that your mother did such a thing but she did it. She wanted my wife to lose the baby. Of course I would be furious."

Xiaoshi broke down. "What she did was wrong."

"If you are about to beg for my forgiveness on her behalf, save it." Xiehan stopped her before she could get back to him.

That didn't stop her. She let Yue down and dropped to her knees.

"Cousin, I'm begging you. I will have her apologize to Lanni if you let her off. After that, I will convince her to go back to Australia and not bother the two of you ever again."

She looked up to Lanni. "Please. My father is already in prison. I can't stand the thought of both them being behind bars."

Lanni was helpless. If it was up to her, she would settle this peacefully. Xiaoshi meant well, but who was to say that Ji Meiling would keep her word? She might just return and seek revenge for being held captive by Xiehan.

"Shishi, there is a point of no return and aunty crossed it a long time ago. The most I can do is lighten her sentence."

She got up from her knees in despair, but who would blame Xiehan and Lanni? It was not their fault that they had been targeted.

"I understand." She picked up her daughter and left.

"Do you think she will try to target us for not forgiving her mother?" Lanni asked. The possibility of that happening was exhausting her.

"No. I don't think so." He reassured her. "She is a fair person. It will be hard for her but once she thinks about it with a calm state of mind, she will acknowledge that her mother made a mistake and needs to pay for it."

It was painful to think about it but Lanni was not a saint to be able to let go of the woman who tried to kill her baby. The thought of it still made her shiver.

They thought all was going well until Xiehan received a call from the Ji family household. Ji Huifen wanted both of them to go over.

"It seems like we thought too much of Xiaoshi." Xiehan's gaze darkened.

"I wouldn't keep my mouth shut if my mother was being held captive so I can't blame her." Lanni shrugged. She grabbed a cream colored dress and changed into it before they both went to the Ji mansion.

Seeing Ji Huifen, Wen Lin, Ruby and Xiaoshi in the living room, it was not hard to guess what had happened.

Xiehan shot a glare at his cousin, who shivered and turned to Ruby. "Why does he look like he wants to kill me?"

"Because he probably does." Ruby shrugged.

Xiaoshi frowned. But she didn't do anything wrong! All she had done was give Ji Huifen a call to let him know that her mother was alright. Earlier when she was panicking about her mother's possible

disappearance, she had told him about it. So she thought it would be great if she let him know that his sister was not actually missing. Who would have thought that Ji Huifen already suspected the truth?

"Xiehan, you have never been an unreasonable brat. Why did you kidnap your aunt?" Ji Huifen went straight to the point.

"Since you investigated this matter and found where she is, then you should know why she is where she is as well." He retorted.

Ji Huifen massaged his temples. "Misunderstandings happen all the time. We are family. Are you going to let the family fall apart just because of some misunderstandings?" He demanded.

"Misunderstandings, you say?" Xiehan was displeased. "Well, these 'misunderstandings' almost cost the lives of my wife and baby. I don't take them lightly. And the fact that I have to explain this to you is enough to question whether you care for your grandchild."

"How dare you insinuate such a thing? I care about my grandchild more than anything." Ji Huifen huffed. "But I care for my sister too. Why don't you let her go? I will reprimand her and make sure she leaves the country and doesn't bother you again."

Lanni felt uncomfortable at the thought. If Xiehan was pressured into letting Ji Meiling go, it would be freeing a potential murderer. She would never feel safe with her lurking.

Sensing her insecurity, he held her hand and leaned over to whisper, "Don't worry, I will not do anything that will make you uncomfortable."

She relaxed a little but knew that it was not entirely over.

"Father, I value family as much as you do. After all, aunt Meiling and I have lived together for long enough. However, I also know that she will not back down. Once her mind is set on something, she does not back down no matter what." He gripped Lanni's hand while looking at his father seriously. "And what she is set on this time is to destroy my family. So forgive me for wanting to protect my wife and child but I will not let her go."

"You punk!" Ji Huifen roared.

"Do you have any idea what she did? Did Shishi tell you?" He questioned.

Ji Huifen didn't respond, convincing Xiehan that he, in fact, knew what his sister had done. He just didn't want her to face the consequences of his actions.

"Father, I don't blame you for wanting to protect your sister. I would do anything to ensure the safety of Ruby and Shishi as well. But that doesn't mean I would let either of them escape unscathed if they do the wrong thing. I would let them face the consequences of their actions, which is what a law-abiding citizen would do."

"Don't give me that negotiation crap. She didn't actually hurt anyone!" Ji Huifen was enraged.

"Because she didn't get the chance."

"Xiehan has a point." Wen Lin supported her son and it had nothing to do with her dislike for Ji Meiling.

Ji Huifen glared at both of them. "If you don't give the order to release her, none of you is leaving today."

Xiehan shrugged. "Great. Let's call it a sleepover then."

"You ungrateful punk!" Ji Huifen was enraged.

In response to his words, Xiehan smirked. "Don't misunderstand, father. I am very grateful to aunty for everything. If someone wanted to kill you, would you let them go ahead just because they once saved you?"

"Your analogy is crap. Let go of your aunt right now! I said we would discuss the matter once she is here, didn't I?"

"Let's just say I'm not satisfied by your attitude." He wrapped his arm around Lanni's waist. "My wife and I need to go back and rest."

They left the fuming Ji Huifen and headed for their car, but Lanni couldn't stop thinking about it. She turned to glance at the mansion where she knew from the shattering of glass that Ji Huifen had lost his temper.

"Do you think he will try to do something to force you to let Aunt Meiling go?"

He helped her into the car. "He knows me better than that. But just in case he tries to 'invite' you over, you can't go anywhere on your own until she is behind bars."

She nodded. She was missing something, she was certain of it. There was no way Ji Meiling's hatred could emanate from nowhere. Ji Huifen's reaction somewhat proved it. There was no way he could be certain that his sister would agree to leave peacefully if this was something Ji Meiling had done before. Besides, Xiehan's reaction the day before was suspicious too.

"I want to talk to her." She spoke after a long spell of silence.

He turned to glance at her. "You are kidding, right?"

"No." She insisted. "I'm not going to meet up with her in person if that's what you are worried about. Can I give her a video call?"

"Of course. I'll have someone bring her on the phone when we get home."

"Okay." She closed her eyes for a nap. He studied her sleeping face for a few minutes and concluded that she was not actually sleepy. She was trying to get away from something, probably fear.

"Are you scared?" He gently asked.

"More or less."

He held her in his arms. "Don't be scared. I'm here."

"I know. I just have a bad premonition. Maybe I'm not ready for what she has to say."

"You don't have to talk to her if you are not comfortable doing so." He kissed her forehead.

"I have to." She insisted, so he didn't say anything else about it. He offered a smile which she once again thought was nothing close to a real smile. Maybe he really knew something and was keeping it from her.

Soon after they got into bed, Lanni received a call from Li Yuming. She frowned, puzzled at why her mother was calling her so late at night. Since she got married, Li Yuming rarely called her after 7p.m in fear of interrupting their alone time.

"Mom?" She answered the call nervously.

"Honey, were you already asleep? I hope I didn't wake you." Li Yuming asked.

"No, I was awake. Did anything happen?" She sat up, turning on the bedside lamp.

"Nothing out of the ordinary. Tomorrow, I'm taking Linhou and Mumu to the amusement park. Would you like to join us?"

"Sure. At what time?"

"4pm. We will pick you up from work."

She chuckled. "Mom, tomorrow is Saturday.. I'll not go to work."

"Right, that makes it easier. How about we go earlier? How does 11am sound? We can play and have lunch with the kids."

"Okay. Can you pick me up?"

"I'll get the kids and pick you at 10." Li Yuming hung up before she could ask anything else and she believed it was on purpose.

She placed her phone on the night stand and turned to Xiehan. "I think mother has something to say to me."

Xiehan laughed. "I bet half of our retirement savings that it has something to do with aunt. Maybe father gave her a call and asked her to convince you."

"That would be quite shameless of him." She was displeased.

"He would really do anything for his sister. I wonder why that isn't the case when it comes to his children." Xiehan huffed in ridicule. He hated to think about Ji Feifei but at times, he would wonder if Ji Feifei would have been different if Ji Huifen was a better father. Maybe they would have found Ruby earlier.

Lanni knew what he was thinking and she placed a hand on his shoulder. "If things were different, there is no guarantee that the results would have been better."

"You are right. Will mother rob you away for the whole day?"

She laughed at his way of putting it. "Mother is not robbing me away. I'll be back before you realize that I'm gone."

"Then you have to make up in advance for the time you will be away."

...

The following day, Lanni found an adorable purple dress, which was the color that Xiaomu liked the most. She draped on a white scarf to match Linhou's preference, and took out the toys she had asked someone to deliver early in the morning.

Xiehan was in the living room when she went downstairs.

"You look lovely. Are you going on a date?" He asked teasingly as he grabbed her for a kiss.

"Yes. I'm meeting a lovely little boy, his sister and their grandmother."

"Mmh. I'm jealous of the little boy." He exaggerated.

"You can't be serious, right?" She was amused by his jealousy. How could he be jealous of a two-year-old boy? Not to mention, that boy was his godson as well as his nephew!

"Of course I'm serious. You are mine." He claimed her.

"Of course I am. No one's trying to change that." Her phone rang and she pulled out of his arms.
"Mother is here. Do you want to say hello to the kids?"

He nodded and followed her out. The twins jumped onto Lanni as soon as they saw her and Li Yuming had to slow them down.

"Kids, your aunt can't take your naughtiness." She reprimanded, but they didn't hear her as they were busy kissing Lanni and asking for pats and praises. She let them be. When her gaze met Xiehan's, she turned to look aside and he immediately knew that his hypothesis had been right. She had been coerced to talk to Lanni and wouldn't say that aloud in his presence.

He pretended not to have realized anything and let them leave after playing with the twins for a few minutes.

Li Yuming was silent through the entire ride and only spoke for the first time when they arrived and she asked if Lanni wanted to try any rides.

"I think I'll just watch them." She didn't want to go on any ride that might trigger nausea. This was one of the reasons why she had been certain that Li Yuming wanted to have a chat with her and the amusement park was an excuse. She knew that Lanni would not want to go on any fast ride in case they made her dizzy, and she must have only wanted to have a chance for them to talk. Not that she minded it.

Hence, they helped the excited kids onto a train and fastened their seat belts, and watched the train take off. Lanni then looked at her mother questioningly. "Is there anything you would like to tell me?"

"It was quite obvious, wasn't it?" She caressed her face. "Here's the thing. I know what's happening in the Ji family lately."

"And you want to convince me to talk Xiehan into letting aunty off?" She frowned.

"You..." Li Yuming was slightly taken aback by the fact that she revealed what she knew right off the bat.

"I know, mom. But you saw what they did to Luna. You know how scared everyone was to lose Luna. You were too, and you couldn't get a wink of sleep knowing that your daughter was missing and something could have happened to her. Then the excruciatingly long surgery..."

"Honey, I know. I just don't want you to get hurt."

"Did they threaten to hurt me if Xiehan didn't let aunty go?" She asked directly.

Li Yuming knew that her daughter would not drop it so she told the truth. "He made it a point to let me know that some of the servants in your marital house have worked for the Ji family for years. He was subtly threatening your life!"

"Xiehan will not let him off." She sighed. She had not wanted this to happen. The Ji family was getting smaller and smaller and at this rate, it might soon be just her and Xiehan.

"I know. But that would only cause you more trouble. I don't want to risk your life." Li Yuming's heart broke. She had wanted to suggest having Lanni return to her house until she had her baby but that would only cause more misunderstandings.

"I'll speak to aunty first." She promised. She had been too uncomfortable to do it the night before but when she got back home from the amusement park, the first thing she did was ask to speak to her.

Xiehan had his men give Ji Meiling a tablet and soon enough, the two women were facing each other through the screen. Xiehan left the room to give them privacy.

"Aunty, why do you keep doing this?" She asked, straight to the point. "I didn't ever do anything to you."

"You didn't do anything?" Ji Meiling laughed like it was a ridiculous joke. "What right does that brat have to have a baby when he killed my child?"

"What do you mean by that?" Lanni's heart raced. Ji Meiling must be making up things to scare her, right?

Alas, the woman's expression was too realistic. She looked baffled by herself for letting out what she had just said and ended the call in a flash.

Lanni was left shocked and confused. Why would Xiehan kill her child? Was it something that happened accidentally?

She knew Xiehan well enough to be certain that he would never do such a thing on purpose but the point was, wasn't Xiaoshi the only child of Ji Meiling? Since when did she have a child that Xiehan apparently killed?

It was dramatic to imagine that someone probably messed with Xiehan and he ended their life, and they later turned out to be Ji Meiling's estranged child. It was no use speculating wildly on her own, so she decided to go upstairs and ask him.

The door of the study suddenly felt like it was made of thorns. She could ask him alright, but what would she do with the answer he gave her? If he really did kill Ji Meiling's child, what would happen?

She took deep breaths and considered the possibility. Maybe Ji Meiling was making up some random crap to force them into an argument.

She softly knocked on the door and pushed it open slowly. Xiehan was behind his desk, fiddling with an almost empty wine glass and looking lost in thought. She walked over to him and pried the glass out of his hand. "Are you okay, honey?"

"Yeah." He looked up at her. "Did she tell you anything?"

She sat on his lap after placing the wineglass on the desk. "You look like you think there's something specific she should tell me."

He supported her back with his arm. "From your reaction, she did. Some secrets are meant to be kept forever, while some are merely waiting for a moment to erupt."

She searched his eyes. "Tell me, did you really do it? Did you kill her child?"

He froze slightly, as though he had not expected her to actually ask.

Instead of giving her a yes or no answer, he forced a smile. "What would you do with the knowledge if I did? Would you hand me over to the police?"

"Hell no." She ran a hand through his hair in soft, calming strokes. "I just want you to know that I'm here with you. No matter what difficulty you are facing, we can handle it together. I just don't want you keeping it to yourself when you have such a heavy load over your shoulders."

He hugged her and breathed in her scent. He had not known how she would take it. He had always assumed that she would take him for a creep if she ever knew about that incident, so he didn't dare to bring it up. This time he knew it would be brought up by Ji Meiling. The woman probably didn't explain everything, which was within his expectations. He had thought that Lanni would run for the hills once he knew about it yet here she was, comforting him.

"Aren't you scared to say that to a potential murderer?" He teased.

"Don't call yourself that. My husband is not a murderer." She rolled her eyes. "And so what if you were? It would not dim my love for you and I think that's enough to keep us going."

"You are right." He breathed into her neck.

"Do you mind telling me what happened?" She asked, majorly because she wanted to help him let it out.

"Do you want to get some popcorn?" He chuckled and started speaking when she pinched his ear.

"It all happened when I was a little boy. Aunty had just taken me with her. The plan was for me to spend the holidays in Australia with her and she would take me back home once everything calmed down between my parents. It was soon after the argument broke out regarding how they were trying to bring me up."

"Oh," She nodded. That should be around the time when Xiehan spent a lot of time with Li Yuming.

"I was new in Australia and didn't have any friends there. Of course, I wasn't confident enough to approach the other kids and ask them to play with me. I would mostly play on my own unless my aunt or uncle were home." He recalled the past like it had happened a day ago.

"Aunty, Aunty, come and play with me!" The young Xiehan demanded. He had mud all over his face and clothes from playing outside and was carrying his equally dirty ball at his side.

"Why do you have mud all over you? Come on, I'll help you take a bath." Ji Meiling called him over.

"But Aunty, we will get dirt on us anyways. We are going to play ball." He protested.

"I didn't say I was going to play with you." Ji Meiling turned to head for his bedroom to run him a bath.

"Pretty please...It's only going to take a minute." He pleaded. As usual, Ji Meiling couldn't stand his pleading puppy dog eyes. She smiled and rubbed his head of silver hair that was now coated in patches of mud.

"Okay. Just one round of ball, then we come back and clean up for dinner."

"Yay!" Xiehan excitedly ran all the way out with his ball as Ji Meiling barely kept up. One round morphed into a few rounds and before they knew it, the sun had set.

"This is the last time." Ji Meiling held up one finger.

Xiehan kicked his ball towards her but this time, she didn't kick it back. Her face was contorted and her forehead sweaty.

"Aunty? Is everything alright?" He ran over to her worriedly.

"I'm fine. Let's go back to the house."

She barely managed to contain her pain as they went back to the house. As he was worried about her, he held her hand in an attempt to support her. Alas, they were barely at the doorstep when she noticed the small patch of blood at the front of her dress.

"Aunty, you are bleeding!" He exclaimed.

"Oh, uhm... I'll get a bandaid." She let go of his hand to rush away but couldn't take another step. She dropped onto the floor writhing in pain.

Lanni's eyes widened in horror.

"That was not her period, was it?"

"No." He looked down to mask his emotions as he continued. "I panicked. All I could think of was to call my uncle. Before he returned, I tried to help her to her room in vain. She was crying and I thought it was due to pain, until she was taken to hospital and the doctors confirmed that she was pregnant and had lost her child."

Lanni rubbed his shoulder. "It was not your fault. Even if you knew that she was pregnant, you were too young to know what to do with that information."

"She didn't ever blame me." He muttered. "She was worried that I would be traumatized so she made it a point to explain that it had happened because she had strained herself out and it had nothing to do with me, and that she was destined to lose that child."

It was still a painful moment and a boy that young would never forget it. Lanni took his hand and stroked it comfortingly.

"Does your family know?"

He shook his head. "No one knew she was pregnant. Not even herself. They decided to keep it to themselves to avoid making the entire family sad."

Her feelings were mixed. She would have said that they were kind to not blame a child for being part of the reason for the miscarriage, but at the same time, Ji Meiling was now using that incident as a reason to attack them for revenge. Why did she blame Xiehan? Besides, even if she blamed Xiehan, what had their unborn baby done wrong?

"It still doesn't make what she is doing right." She remarked.

"I know. She probably didn't think she would want to do this either." He grabbed her hand that was stroking his. "She didn't intend to. At first. Because she didn't ever have a reason to. When we announced that you are pregnant, her first reaction was to think that you had cheated on me."

"What the heck?!" She was shocked by her assumption. Who would even think that?

"The miscarriage affected her chances of having children greatly." He revealed. "Having Shishi was already a miracle. No matter how hard they tried later, they wouldn't have any other child. I like to believe that it's one of the reasons why she insisted on having me live with her permanently. I'm not complaining. She treated me exceptionally well, took me to the best schools and Shishi was like a sister to me."

"There is a huge 'but' at the end of it all." She looked into his eyes. "Isn't there?"

He nodded subtly. "When I was a teenager, I had a major injury in school and stayed in hospital for a few days. Aunty used the chance to bribe the doctors to perform a vasectomy on me."

"What in the freaking hell?!" Her jaw dropped.

"Luckily, the doctor didn't want to stain his hands by having made a boy sterile without his consent. He secretly told me about it and didn't go through with the procedure, but lied to her about completing it. All these years, Aunty thinks I can't have a child.. That was why she was shocked when we announced pregnancy, and her first assumption was that you cheated on me.

Chapter 574 - A Murderer's Child (2)

It was almost a ridiculous joke when Xiehan said it out aloud. "At first, her plan was to accuse you of sleeping around and getting yourself pregnant by another man. She would have achieved it and the posts about you and Lin Jian getting together behind my back would have proved her accusation right."

She hummed in realization. So that was the main reason behind the posts. She had wondered why Ji Meiling would use up so much effort and go into so much detail with it. It turned out, it had to convince one man who would probably be too furious to try and check the authenticity.

"She thought that if we had a DNA test, it would only prove that my baby is indeed not yours, right?" She guessed.

"That's right. When she realized that there is no way you would cheat on me and knew that I trust you more than anything, she switched tactics. She must have investigated and found that you were not unnecessarily close to any man around the time when you got pregnant, so she knew that it's my baby and started plotting ways to make you have a miscarriage."

She thought back to the day she had gone shopping with Luna and Xiaoshi, when she had revealed that she did not want to buy clothes before her baby was born as she was uncomfortable with the idea. Within five minutes, Ji Meiling came in and bought her baby boy clothes.

It had seemed like an awful coincidence before but now she was convinced that Ji Meiling had done it to upset her.

"But doing that will never bring her child back to life." She pointed out.

"It wouldn't." He sighed tiredly.

"And it still wasn't your fault. Even if you had hit her with the ball or anything, it would still be an accident. She did strenuous exercise on her own. I don't believe for a second that a few rounds of ball was enough to make her have a miscarriage. She would have felt some pain but that would be it. The fact that it died so easily could only mean that she had been straining herself for a while or the baby had not been healthy enough to begin with."

"Try telling her that. She is set on believing that it was my fault and I need to pay for my crime. No matter what happened, she will forever try to murder my child to get even for what I supposedly did."

"That sucks." She hugged him. "I'm sorry."

"Thank you."

"I think you should hand her over to the police already. They can restrain her. If you continue keeping her, father can break her out and that will be the start of a bigger conflict."

"Do you think handing her to the police would stop them? They would simply bail her out and later bribe the court to set her free." He dreaded.

She was furious. If only everyone would put the same importance on justice. It was hard to think about it but if everyone let their family pay for their crimes, the crime rate might actually decrease. Many

criminals had been in jail many times before and had either been helped to break out or had their ways with the court. It was hectic.

"What will we do?" She was suddenly worried.

"If father is going to bribe the police, I will do the same. Let's see who is capable of giving more money in the end and who will be listened to."

It was not a contest to be proud of having but she couldn't blame him.

...

In the end, Xiehan was right. They had enough evidence to make sure Ji Meiling was given a long sentence but even before she could appear in court, Ji Huifen tried to get her out while she was in police custody.

Xiehan had specifically stated that she was vengeful and would try to harm Lanni if they let her out on bail, which infuriated Ji Huifen all the more.

"She is your aunt!" The man yelled out the words that Xiehan had heard uncountable times in recent days.

"And I'm your son!" Xiehan retorted.

Ji Huifen had gone over to Feng Ji International and barged into the CEO's office to demand an explanation from his son.

Xiehan waited for him to calm down slightly. Of course that didn't happen because the man was on the verge of flying off in fury, so Xiehan told him what he wanted to say nonetheless.

"This is the last chance I'm giving you, father. In this matter, you have only sided with your sister and forgotten about your son who has been majorly affected by this matter, and your grandchild who was

almost lost. So I'm giving you an ultimatum. Stop trying to influence this case or you will never see your grandchild."

"How dare you threaten me?" Ji Huifen roared.

"I dare alright. This is about my family and I think I have every right to protect them. So, if you don't stop what you are doing, I will cut ties with you, move away with my wife and never let you see your grandchild. You will not lay your eyes on them even for a heartbeat. Don't tempt me."

Xiehan was only saying it to make his father back down but he had no idea just how true his words would turn out to be.

...

Ji Huifen left the office fuming in anger. He was about to go home when he bumped into Lanni in the lobby. His eyes narrowed at her.

"Father." Lanni greeted sweetly.

"If you truly saw me as a father, you would not stand seeing me this sad." He walked away after throwing her the words that made her eyes droop.

She could influence Xiehan's decision if she wanted to. But what would happen after that? If she had to choose between having a good relationship with her in-laws and saving her baby, it didn't take a genius to know what her choice would be.

She watched Ji Huifen leave after yelling at the receptionists for heaven knew what, and proceeded to Xiehan's office.

"Hi."

"Lanni? What are you doing here?" He was pleasantly surprised.

"I brought you lunch." She held up the food bag. She had made his lunch and had decided to drop it off on her own.

"His heart melted." Thank you. "But what about your work?"

"It's lunch break, blockhead. Lin Media group gives pregnant women two hours for lunch instead of the usual one hour for regular employees."

Xiehan was pleasantly surprised. No wonder it was rare for anyone to complain about the staff treatment at Lin Media Group. There were so many benefits and since Lanni started working there, he realized that he just didn't know if before. Most of the employees were given accommodation during their contract period and those who already had apartments of their own would have extra bonuses. It was a paradise for employees.

"Well, did you rush back home to cook?" He asked, hoping that was not the case.

"No. I packed it in the morning. I meant to have Lin Jian bring it over since he had a meeting with you earlier but in the end, I decided to just bring it."

She opened the bag and set the food flask on the table.

"I'll get back to work now."

Her words were barely out when she was pulled onto his lap. "What about dessert?"

He kissed her ear as he ran his fingers down her body to let her know just the kind of dessert he was referring to.

She wrapped her arms around his neck and kissed him. "Be good. You can have dessert at home."

"But..." He protested.

"I'll run out of time." She pulled out of his lap reluctantly. She wanted him too, but she didn't want to be late. It was already bad enough that her workmates thought she was receiving special treatment from Lin Jian.

She wasn't actually receiving more special treatment than any other employee in her identical situation would receive but the fact that her husband was the CEO's childhood friend highlighted her and made everything seem unfair.

"I saw father in the lobby. Is everything okay?" She popped a quick question."

"Yes. I settled him." He promised.

"Now, get back to work, Mrs. Ji. Otherwise I will not be able to let you go."

She chuckled and gave him a quick peck on his lips before hurrying away.

Who would have thought that bringing lunch to her husband would be so calming? She had wanted to do it just because she had extra time in her hands and had not expected that all the distress she felt in the morning would disappear in a flash.

She left the building and headed for the parking lot where the chauffeur was waiting for her. She was about to get to the car when she heard what sounded like the mention of her name. She wasn't certain she had heard it right so she stopped, taking cover behind another car to listen in.

"Ma'am went to sir's office a moment ago. She should stay there for a while before going back to her office."

She didn't hear what the other party said on the other end but the chauffeur's response baffled her.

"We will take Seventeenth Street."

Her eyes went wide and her jaw slacked. Who was he speaking to? More importantly, why was he telling her whereabouts to that person? Including the route they would take back to Lin Media Group?!

Chapter 575 - A Murderer's Child (3)

Her first reaction was to want to rush back to Xiehan's office and tell him about it but she stopped herself at the last moment. Something was not right. Why did he report her movements while outside the car when he could have done it inside? This was a very careful bodyguard from her memory of him and he couldn't have made such a rookie mistake.

Besides, he could have reported the movements via text. The fact that he spoke about it outside and on a phone call loud enough to be overheard was suspicious. Was it possible that he wanted her to overhear it in the first place? It was a wild assumption but more likely than him making a genuine mistake.

It took a while for her to try and figure out whether he had overlooked the possibility of getting caught despite knowing that she was merely in the building and him tricking her. She couldn't figure out a single thing that he would gain from making her believe that she had caught him, but that didn't mean she would simply ignore her gut feeling. She grabbed her phone and made a call to Xiehan, knowing that the bodyguard would hear her.

"Xiehan, I suddenly don't feel like going back to Lin Media Group on my own. Could you accompany me?"

She closely watched the chauffeur for his reaction. He didn't have any, which proved that he either knew she was there all along or was good at hiding his reactions.

"Okay." Xiehan answered. She walked to the car but only spoke to the chauffeur.

"You can go home. Xiehan will take me to the company and you can pick me up later." She instructed.

"But ma'am, sir is very busy." He protested.

She forced a smile. "I know. But there is no such thing as a husband being too busy in a pregnant woman's dictionary. What can I do about that?" She exaggerated, giving a remark that would definitely shut the other party up.

Xiehan hurried down immediately and led her to his car.

"Are you crazy?" He reprimanded her. "You knew something was wrong with him which I guess is why you called me, but you still stood that close to him? What if he kidnapped you?"

"He wouldn't do that right in front of Feng Ji International." She fastened her safety belt. "I think Xiao wanted to let me know that someone was trying to trace my movements."

"Why would you defend him?" He frowned. She had explained the matter and he didn't think there was anything right about what the chauffeur did. He had still revealed important information and it didn't matter why he did it.

"You don't have to go to work. I will be worried about you all afternoon." He made no move to fasten his own seat belt or start the car.

"I can't simply miss an entire afternoon without permission."

"I'll help you get permission from Lin Jian." He offered, which she declined.

"I can't simply do that. It will be unfair to the other employees if they have to work extra hard in the afternoon just because I couldn't go. But I'll be careful, alright? You will not need to worry about me." She promised, caressing his cheek.

"I'll pick you up from work." He said and finally started the car.

As soon as they were in the Lin Media Group, she kissed his cheek and rushed out of the car. "I have to go now, bye!"

She sure ran fast. He chuckled, glancing at his outstretched arm. She must have known that he would grab her to make out before letting her go which is why she had defended herself by rushing away.

He got back to Feng Ji International but the first thing he did was summon Xiao.

The bodyguard cowered before him. "Sir..."

"You know why I called you here. Do you want to save us both time and start talking on your own, or do you want to talk under different circumstances?"

Without having to ask, the said different circumstances were definitely torture. If he didn't state everything he knew on his own, he would be tormented into spilling everything.

"Well, sir, Old Master contacted me earlier today." He started, his voice trembling when he met Xiehan's glare. "He kidnapped my wife and told me that the only way to get her back was to tell him Madam's whereabouts. If I didn't report all her movements and if I told you about it, he would kill my wife."

Xiehan listened to the man as he continued, "But sir, I never intended to hurt madam. I knew it would put her life in danger if I revealed her whereabouts so I indirectly let her know. I had contemplated lying about everything she did but that would only raise suspicions because it would be too coincidental that everything changed after I reported it. So I deliberately said it out loud for her to hear and tell you."

"Where is your wife now?" Xiehan asked.

"She is still being held captive." He dropped to his knees. "Please forgive me, master. I should have reported this earlier. But please help me save my wife."

Xiehan massaged his temples. "Your wife will be okay. Make sure you report to me anything else he asks you to do."

"Thank you, master. I will."

As soon as he left, Xiehan's lips twitched. Who was Ji Huifen trying to fool? This man was the very one who would be used to kidnap Lanni once they let their guard down around him. He would not have been able to see through the man if he hadn't run a thorough background check on him before hiring him. His wife had been dead for years and although he had a girlfriend now, he didn't care for her enough for Ji Huifen to think it would get him to work for him if he kidnapped her. Besides, the man had a brand new diamond watch worth tens of thousands of dollars. His salary could not buy that. His savings might, but it was insane for anyone to save so much money just to buy a watch unless it was significant.

"Sir, your 2pm appointment is here." His secretary reported.

"Meet him on my behalf. Cancel my appointments for the rest of the afternoon." He stood to leave the office. He had some serious matters to deal with.

When he arrived at the Ji Mansion, Wen Lin looked nervous.

"Xiehan, you are home."

"You sound like there is a reason why I should not be here." He directly pointed out her nervous reaction, which she brushed off.

"What do you mean? Or course I want you to be here. This is your home." She probably realized she was talking too much because she changed the subject. "Didn't Lanni come with you?"

"She is at work." He dismissed.

"Then why are you not at work?"

"Are you sure you really don't know why I came?" He chuckled at her feigning innocence. She was awkward but he didn't stop.

"I want to have a word with Father."

"He is in the study but Xiehan, we need to talk." She intercepted before he could go upstairs to find Ji Huifen.

"What do you want to say?" He asked.

She insisted that he sit down, which he did, but he was impatient nonetheless.

"Speak."

"Honey, we care about you. Both your father and I. And well, he did something he probably shouldn't have done out of impatience. But you have to understand him. He did it with good intentions and that's definitely not the path he should have taken."

"If you know that he did not do the right thing, why exactly are we having this conversation?" He challenged.

She looked bummed.

"The last thing I want is for you to have a falling out with your dad. He ordered for Lanni to have been kidnapped as you have probably found out, but we talked about it and he is remorseful. He has promised not to do that kind of thing anymore."

He couldn't comprehend why she was so nervous if that was the case. "Then I'll talk to him." He stood and headed for the staircase, aware of how badly Wen Lin wanted to stop him.

Ji Huifen was in the study just as Wen Lin had stated.

"Father," Xiehan called when he opened the door to the study.

The man was sitting behind a computer looking like the sky was falling. It was probably about to fall.

"You must have found out." He guessed.

Xiehan nodded. It was because the bodyguard he had suspected of trying to gain his trust had revealed that he had fallen for their trap.

"Let his wife go." He demanded even while knowing there was no such thing that would happen.

"Well, let my sister go." He countered.

"And here mother was claiming that you are remorseful for what you tried to do." He was speechless.

"We have gone through this discussion over and over and my answer will remain the same, Xiehan. I just want to save my sister." He insisted.

"I see." Xiehan stood up. "Since everyone wants to save their family, then we cannot be the same family anymore."

"What do you mean by that?" Ji Huifen stood abruptly, shocked by his declaration.

"I came to let you know that your plot has loopholes. I know the truth about your plan and that's not all. I also came to let you know that I'm cutting ties with the Ji family."

He was speechless. "Because of a woman, Xiehan?"

"No.. Because of a man who won't spare his innocent, pregnant daughter-in-law, in the name of loving his sister."

Chapter 576 - A New Home

Song recommendation : All I ever need—Austine Mahone

"Did you really cut ties with your family?" Lanni asked when Xiehan picked her up from work. She had received countless calls from Wen Lin and when she called back, her mother-in-law expressed that she hoped she could convince her husband to go back home.

"I did." He confirmed. She was not shocked that it had happened. She had known all along that if Ji Huifen continued to push the matter regarding Ji Meiling, Xiehan might just decide to cut them off altogether. Even so, she was not comfortable with the thought of it.

"Is this the only way to solve things?" She placed a gentle hand on his back. "They did all the wrong things but isn't there a peaceful way? I just don't want you losing your family forever if it can be helped."

"I don't need a family who won't know when to respect boundaries. If they don't think my opinion matters even when they know where I'm coming from, then I really don't need them."

He didn't say it out aloud but she could tell from his voice that it broke his heart to have to leave the way he did. It was never a good thing to have to choose between your family and your parents, who could potentially cause harm.

She leaned over to kiss his face. "You have us."

His smile was full of love when he traced a hand down her stomach. "And you are all I would ever need."

She cupped his face and kissed him, using her lips to express her support. No matter what happened to his family, even if the world came crushing down on him, she would be by his side. On the other hand, it didn't matter what became of him. Even if he lost everything because of the feud with his family, he would be happy and content as long as he had her and the baby.

It was not a surprise that soon afterwards, Xiehan decided that it would be a good idea to move into a different house. He spent a ton of time searching online and it was only a fortnight later that he finally found one that ticked all the boxes. She thought he had too many requirements and didn't expect him to actually find a house that suited his tastes so soon.

"Why do you need so much detail anyway?" She asked as she looked at some of the pictures on his computer. He had shown it to her for her approval before they went to check it out physically.

"Well, I need it to be perfect for our family. We are having a baby soon." He replied.

"That explains the outdoor swings and all the play areas, but how on earth do you explain two swimming pools?" She didn't understand.

"Of course, one where our child can swim with us when we decide to. The other is for the adults. Just for the two of us and we will decorate it to suit our tastes." He leaned over to her flirtatiously. "And I know how much you love doing it in the swimming pool so we can't have our child getting the aftermath of that."

"Xiehan!" She blushed and punched him playfully, and continued checking out the house.

"These are pictures from three years ago. How can we trust that the house is still in the same condition?" She wondered aloud, recalling the first house they had checked out. They had not been careful with the date and when they arrived at the actual house, it was old, on the verge of collapse and nothing like what they had seen in the pictures. The owner all so righteously claimed that it was their

fault to not check the date of the pictures and they should blame themselves for expecting a house to be perfect after a decade. That was definitely not what any house should look like even after a century as long as it was taken care of, but they had to be more careful this time.

"I looked it up some more. The former owners are a respectable couple with five children and two pets. They only moved out two months ago so the house is still in perfect condition and since they had kids, the place was kept child-friendly." He sat on the bed. "Honey, will you look at the house all night, or will you look at me once?"

She turned to glance at him over her shoulder. "Did I just hear you whining for attention?"

"What if you did?"

She slammed the laptop shut and went over to him, straddling him. "Then I'll give you all the attention you want." She pressed her hands against his chest.

"When do we go to see the house?" She asked out of the blue, laughing when he looked deflated. "Don't get me wrong. I just remember that I saw so many places to get naughty in the pictures. The balconies, the terrace, the kitchen,"

"The music room," He added.

"Music room?"

"The former owners had a grand piano. We get it as a bonus for buying the house and I'd very much love to bend you over the piano and have you play some music."

They shared a laugh and she was embarrassed at the double meaning of his words. "You are naughty."

"You should be used to it, Mrs. Ji. But you still blush every time I tease you. It's so cute."

"I can be bad as well." She teased.

"Then I'd like to hear some "bad" music in advance." He pulled her up against his erection and groaned when she rubbed her core against it. She knew just what to do to drive him crazy.

"What should I do to you tonight, Xiehan?" His name was a whisper leaving her lips in the most seductive tone. It was the same way she said it out when in the haze of her climax and he couldn't have enough of it.

"Call me that again. In that voice." He pleaded in her ear.

"Ask me nicely." She pushed him to lie on the bed before climbing onto him. He held her head down and kissed her passionately.

"Damn, Xiehan, I wanted to tease you a little longer but I can't anymore. I need you."

He chuckled as he helped her out of her clothes. "This doesn't save you from having to pay for teasing me, little seductress."

And he did make her pay for teasing.

The following day, Lanni stretched her limbs when she woke up. She was in Xiehan's embrace, and he woke up thanks to her movements.

"Are you seducing me again?"

"It would have been great but we have to go. We set the appointment at 10am and we only have two hours." She shuffled off the bed only to be pulled back by him.

"That's enough time to fool around a little." His lips landed on hers. "I can't have enough of you. What should I do?"

"Keep having me. That's the only solution. There is no antidote to this addiction." She teased.

"I don't need an antidote. I only need you."

Countless kisses later, they finally freshened up and went to the agreed location with a few minutes to spare.

Peach Estate was in the outskirts of the city, a two and a half hour drive from the Ji Mansion. It was not too far from Feng Ji International but the Ji family couldn't possibly have enough time to keep trying to get to them. It was not nearly as accessible to their current residence which was only half an hour away from the Ji family mansion.

"This is a perfect distance away." She agreed. Lin Media Group was harder to get to, but that would not be much of a problem since she didn't need to start work early anyway. In the evenings, Xiehan would pick her up. It was the perfect arrangement.

"No one will ever bother us here." He kissed her happily as they looked around. The realtor arrived, apologising for being late, and offered to show them around.

"Which room would you like to see first?" He asked.

"The kitchen." He was quick to respond. He had initially thought that if he was going to cook delicious food for his wife, the kitchen would have to be perfect. But that was not what Lanni thought and she had to clear her throat to mask her embarrassment. Indeed, one would become a pervert if they stayed too close to one. Since when did she start having such dirty thoughts?

Xiehan held her hand and squeezed it meaningfully as they went to the kitchen to check it out. It was just as big as it had been described online and pretty much similar to the pictures. The few differences were additions they didn't mind. There was even a reading nook at one end and Xiehan thought it would be perfect to let her read or paint there while he cooked.

They proceeded to check out the bedrooms and bathrooms and were discussing how to make the swimming pools child proof when the realtor's assistant rushed over and whispered in his ear.

He excused himself to leave. "Please excuse me. I have to handle something but I'll be done in a jiffy."

"Go ahead. We will look around meanwhile." Lanni offered a smile before turning to Xiehan.

"It's mother." He said.

"Are you sure?" She was shocked, as they had only arrived a few minutes ago. How would Wen Lin know where to find them?

"Ruby told her.. Do you want to hear what she has to say?" He asked.

Chapter 577 - A New Home (2)

"I think we should speak to her." She suggested. "If she went to such great lengths just to talk to us, it might be important."

He didn't think it was anything aside from Wen Lin wanting to talk her into changing her mind but he didn't want to have any regrets so he agreed. "Let's go."

He was holding out his hand. She held it, letting her fingers slip in between his in a perfect fit as they went to the main entrance.

Seeing them, the realtor panicked.

"Sir, ma'am, I'm sorry. This lady showed up out of nowhere and claimed to be here for her son and daughter-in-law. I'll send her away as soon as possible. I'm sorry she ruined your experience here." He apologized vehemently.

"It's alright. We are the people she is looking for." Xiehan intercepted.

"Then, would you like us to let her in?" The realtor confirmed.

"If it's alright, we will have a quick drink by the swimming pool."

The man was relieved that his potential buyers were not upset, so he effectively prepared their request. The pool area already had a round table with rattan chairs around it under a large parasol, and it was customary for them to offer customers drinks and snacks, so he led them to the pool area and took it as an opportunity to please the couple.

"How have you been?" Wen Lin asked the two of them, focusing her gaze on Lanni. "Do you still feel nausea often?"

"No. I generally don't have any symptoms anymore." She knew the woman was stalling but she humored her. Obviously, Wen Lin was the first to know that she had not experienced much morning sickness. She had been worried about her and had made a point to tell her what to do to tone it down as much as she could. She was merely using the topic to buy herself time.

"Mother, you can go straight to the point." Xiehan asked, not intending to take up too much time here.

"I just wanted to see you. I miss you." Wen Lin ran a hand down the side of his face.

The longing was clear in her eyes but he didn't believe for a second that it was the only reason why she was here.

"Did you go through all the trouble asking Ruby to secretly find out what we are up to, and use two hours to come here, just to tell me this?" He called her out.

She sipped her juice nervously. "I do have something to ask of you."

"If you want me to call out the suit, forget it." He dismissed, referring to Ji Meiling's case. He had handed her over to the police after collecting enough evidence. Her court hearing was scheduled soon and they probably knew that there was no hope for her getting out of it. She was definitely going to jail where she belonged.

"No. It's not that." Wen Lin shook her head. "I know this is a lot to ask of you, but could you please let me be part of my grandchild's life?"

When Xiehan frowned, she was scared she would be kicked out so she pleaded.

"Please. I know your father and I have not been the best parents. We are to blame for how things turned out but I promise, I don't intend to harm the three of you in any way. I only want to be included in my grandchild's life."

Lanni stepped in. "Can you imagine how awkward it will probably be if we introduce the baby to their grandmother but leave their grandfather out? The two of you are one."

The mention of grandmother gave Wen Lin a straw. "What about your mother, Lanni? She will be heartbroken to be so far away from you. And your sister too."

"Stop trying to guilt trip my wife." Xiehan circled his arm around her shoulder protectively. "Once the child is born, I will naturally introduce you if I'm certain that you are not a threat. But if I feel for a second that you can potentially hurt my family, I will not recognize you."

"That's great." She was relieved by Xiehan's fairness.

"Also, if we end up living here, I hope you will not come over on your own. We will come to you if we feel comfortable enough to do so and if we don't, you are not allowed to make the first move." He declared.

Wen Lin was shocked but she nodded in agreement. "I understand."

She was then led out, leaving behind Lanni and her husband. She placed her hand on his. It must be hard for him. First, her parents were too incompetent to raise him and had to rely on his aunt for that, then the aunt he loved turned out to be the villainess who wanted to destroy his family. He must feel betrayed in more ways than her presence could make up for.

"Do you like it?" He asked.

"Huh?" It took a while for her to process his meaning. "Ah, the pool. Yes, it's beautiful." It was a square pool and from the constant color of the water, Lanni guessed that the pool didn't have a deep end. Besides, she had learnt from the information online that there was a child-proof barrier that could be activated using a remote control.

"I think it's good enough." She studied the blue waters. "But, what if an adult were to forget to activate the barrier? We can't risk anything."

She was not being too cautious. Heck, there was no such thing as too much caution when children were involved. He thought about it and found a solution. "We can have them install a swimming-pool fence for double security."

"That's good enough." She looked around curiously. "What about the other pool?"

"It should be at the end of the garden." He rubbed his chin. "By the way, if you don't like it, there is an option. The other villa has a balcony swimming pool on the second floor."

"Yeah, there's no way I'm swimming while suspended in the air." She shuddered at the idea.

He laughed. "Why not? I think it's beautiful and they are very safe or they wouldn't be a thing."

"Yeah, but no thanks. That's terrifying."

They shared a laugh at her reaction. She wanted to ask how he was feeling but he seemed to have forgotten all about Wen Lin's visit so she didn't remind him.

After finishing their drinks, they went to view the rest of the house which was everything they would ever want. Lanni gushed at the large painting studio which had been Xiehan's biggest reason for picking the villa.

"You have picked up the brush again, so you should have a beautiful place to explore that." He responded to her gasp of surprise.

"I don't know how to thank you." She was excited like a fangirl when she looked outside through the window. The other swimming pool was in her view and heavens, it was lovely. It was circular with a more detailed design, including floor lamps which she imagined would emit beautiful led lights at night, and his guess was right. It was at the end of the garden, which was equally beautiful. She would love to paint it some day. To be fair, there wasn't a single spot in this villa that she wouldn't love to put down on canvas.

The man had not thought it was enough for her to have a studio of her own. He had even made sure there was an office for her next to his own.

"I hope this is the place where you will spend your least time." He smiled when he showed it to her.

"It probably is. I'll be spending more time in your bed." She winked.

He playfully spanked her. The realtor had let them walk around on their own while noting down their opinion on every room.

They only needed a few changes made and both loved the house. They discussed their requests with the realtor and were both ready to move in as soon as possible.

"You know, I'd still want this villa even if we were not trying to move away from your family." She commented on their way to the parking lot.

"Me too, my love." He seconded. The villa was worth every penny despite costing a fortune, and the icing on the cake was the security. No one would be able to come barging in unless they let them. Besides, the neighborhood was less populated than the heart of the city. It felt like a breath of fresh air.

But of course, Luna was not happy to hear about their arrangement.

"You are leaving me." She complained dramatically when Lanni told her the news over a cup of decaffeinated coffee that evening.

"Oh come on Luna." She scoffed at her sister's reaction. "You know I'll let you visit me whenever you want. I'll visit you too."

"You have to promise me." Luna feigned a heartbroken sulk.

"I promise." Lanni played along for a moment before she expressed her worry.

"What's going on with you? You don't look alright." She pried.

Luna's hand reflexively rubbed her stomach. "We found out from the most recent checks that the incident with Ji Meiling affected my baby more than we thought."

"Is the baby okay?" Lanni asked, scared of her own words.

"Yeah." Luna's eyes drooped. "It's just...It's highly likely that I'll be having a premature baby."

"Oh..." Lanni moved over to her side. "Everything will be okay. You have to trust yourself on this."

"I know." She let her sister hug her, feeling the fear seep in all over again. What if her premature baby wasn't strong enough for the outside world? What if he developed complications related to premature birth?

Chapter 578 - A New Home(3)

While Luna didn't seem to dwell on the matter anymore, Lanni knew she was still worried.

"Mumu and Linhou don't have any complications." She reminded her that the twins weren't any different.

"That's a good point." Luna let out a sigh, almost relieved. "Xingyu and I have decided not to have any more kids in future."

"Why not?" Lanni asked. This was definitely not about three kids being enough.

"There's a chance we could have an autistic child." Luna rubbed at her temple. "We hope it doesn't happen to any of our children but we can't run the risk. Luckily, three kids is just as big as we wanted our family to be."

"Are you okay?" Lanni swooped over to her, taking note of her discomfort.

Luna shook her head, rubbing her temples. "My head hurts."

Lanni massaged her head gently. "You need to rest."

Downstairs, Xingyu was anxious when he arrived, and he sighed in relief as soon as she saw Xiehan by the swimming pool. "Is my wife here yet?"

"She's on the balcony with Lanni." He gave him directions on how he would get there, and he dashed for the staircase as soon as he knew where it was.

Luna was indeed with her sister, only sprawled out on the chaise longue, sleeping while Lanni gently massaged her head.

Lanni looked up when she heard the footsteps. "Brother-in-law."

He slowed down, letting out the breath he had been holding out of worry.

"I'm sorry to bother you. She has been overthinking lately and stressing herself out over everything including whether Linhou will have a stomach upset from putting random things in his mouth." He stated, looking down at his wife who had barely been sleeping lately. She would sleep for a few hours at most and she seemed to be alright but it scared the crap out of him. How could a human function on such little sleep and be okay? It was worrisome, even if the said human was Luna who didn't sleep much in the past.

Lanni found his words baffling. "That's what all kids do, right? You can't be there every second to prevent them from eating whatever is in their reach." She had persuaded the kids to spit out far more alarming things than she could count.

"That's what I've been trying to tell her." He was relieved that there was someone on his side. "I'll take her home with me."

"It's okay. Let her sleep for a while." She looked back down at her sister who looked peaceful in her sleep, contrary to her husband who was going crazy with worry.

"Mother is worried about her." He countered.

"I'm sure she will not want you to wake her up either. Why don't you put her to bed in the guest room? The bedding are fresh and clean." She suggested. "You can also give Aunty Xinghe a video call and let her see that Luna is sleeping so soundly. She will certainly be relieved."

She was right. When he had finally tucked her in without waking her, he let out a breath of relief and called his mother.

"Did you find Luna?" Was the first thing she asked as soon as the call connected. He responded by tilting the phone for her to see her daughter-in-law, cradling a pillow in her arms.

"She's asleep. That's great."

....

Later, Li Yuming dropped by to check on her daughter too. It turned out, everyone was worried about them moving so far away from home.

But when Lanni gave her a tour of the place, she couldn't help gushing in administration. "It's a beautiful place and everything you have ever wanted."

"Isn't it?" Lanni grabbed her arm excitedly as they circled the fountain. The sound of water was more calming than any kind of music she had ever heard.

She caught the worry on Li Yuming's face and knew just what the latter was thinking.

"I'll visit you often." She promised.

"I've never been worried about that." Li Yuming held her hands. "I'm happy for you. I'm just worried you might miss your old home. Since you are not really leaving it out your own will."

"It will be okay. We would have moved even if aunt Meiling didn't happen." She assured her. "We are calling our friends for dinner tomorrow. Would you like to join us? You can bring your boyfriend so he doesn't miss you."

"You naughty thing." Li Yuming playfully smacked her. "Sure. We will be there."

Xiehan joined her to walk Li Yuming to the garage and after she left, he held her hand.

"I still can't believe this is our new home." She took in the grand, beautiful garage with enough room for way more cars than they owned. They didn't have to worry about parking space for their guests when they came over, and when she learnt that there was an underground compartment, she was speechless. There was no way they could ever use all that space.

As if he knew what she was thinking, he leaned in to give her ear a light bite. "We can make use of the space for other activities."

Her cheeks flushed. Did he have to twist everything to take that direction?

"I'm ignoring you. I'm going to take a nap." She left him and went back to the house, which she was starting to feel familiar with. Their things would be brought over the next day so they didn't need to go back to B City, which was a relief because she didn't want to.

The following morning, Lanni woke up at 11am with a splitting headache. She had slept too much. She rubbed her temples as she headed downstairs for something to eat and was baffled when she saw the living room. Now that she thought about it, it was the whole house including the bedroom. She had not noticed it earlier. Everything was shock-proofed, the staircase lined with a fluffy mat and carpets covered most of the house. The tables had been replaced with ottomans and the large rectangular coffee table had been swapped for a round one.

Her jaw was on the floor. When he finally returned later in the afternoon, she couldn't help asking about it. "Did you have them add all these details? Practically everything looks fluffy."

"We can't take risks, can we?" He took off his jacket and sat on the fluffy couch, grabbing her onto his lap. "You can change the decoration as you please. It just has to be safe for you."

Her heart warmed. She didn't think she would be in any danger if the house wasn't fluffed up, but he cared for her and that was more meaningful than any decoration. She kissed his cheek. "Thank you my love."

He tickled her. "Is that really what you mean to say?"

"I love you." She pecked his lips. His hands ventured into her clothes impatiently.

"Our friends will be here soon." She reminded him.

He glanced at the time on his watch. "There's still about an hour before they arrive. That's more than enough." He kissed her lips.. He had every intention to make use of that hour.

Chapter 579 - Leaving (1)

Xiehan cupped her cheeks in his hands and kissed her lips gently. He had meant to take it slow but when she slid her fingers into his hair as a moan escaped her lips, he couldn't help himself. He ran his hands down her body and cupped her backside, carrying her off the ground like she weighed nothing.

She swallowed down a moan and wrapped her arms around him for support as he made a beeline for the living room. He placed her on the couch and his body covered hers soon after, as he kissed her neck.

He positioned himself between her legs, grinding against her core and she couldn't help arching her back.

"Honey, I need you." He spoke in a low, hoarse voice against her shoulder blade. "I can't wait."

"Then don't." She pushed him off her slightly to strip off her clothes, down to her underwear. His clothes were off his body faster than she could ever imagine possible and he pushed her back down, yanking off her panties.

"So impatient, huh?" Her tease morphed into a moan when he slid into her. He cupped her breast with one hand as the other held her waist. She wrapped her legs around his waist and as his thrusts quickened, she couldn't help grinding her hips to his rhythm.

He covered her mouth with his intense kisses as he slid in and out of her, riding them both to their climax. Her muscles clenched and she knew it was close, but then he slid out of her.

"Xiehan?" She whimpered his name desperately. He responded by sliding to her legs and burying his head between them. His tongue was on her core as he held her thighs apart, flicking and sucking on her clit like his life depended on it. She cried out his name over and over as his tongue slid into her entrance, and it wasn't long before her orgasm crashed down on her in waves of pleasure. Her toes curled over his shoulders as her eyes squeezed shut and her legs parted even farther.

"I wanted to have a taste of you." He got back up and held her leg on his shoulder, chasing his own release. He pressed gentle kisses on her face and slipped off of her to hold her in his arms.

She wanted nothing more than to bask in the moment. It would be great if they could drape a blanket over themselves and stay curled up against each other, watching a movie together or simply embracing each other. Alas, they had to get ready to meet their friends.

One warm shower later, Xiehan dressed casually in jeans and a navy t-shirt while Lanni opted for denim shorts and a silk top.

They finished dressing up just as the doorbell rang.

"Take your time. I'll get it." He kissed her cheek and left the room, but she tailed after him since she was done anyway.

Luna was the first to arrive. She hugged Xiehan briefly and walked past him to her sister. "You look so beautiful! Are you sure you don't have a secret I don't know of?"

"You want me to let you know, and watch you take the spotlight? Please." Lanni teased, and they both laughed.

"Luna is the most beautiful goddess anyway." Xingyu remarked when he entered the house just to witness this bicker.

Laughing at him, the sisters stood side by side to remind him that they were a copy of each other.

Lanni ran a hand down Luna's growing tummy. "Have you had enough rest?"

"I slept nine hours straight. I don't know why it was so hard before." She made way for Xingyu to say hello, then remembered that she had brought something.

"Right. Xingyu, did you bring the gifts?"

"Be right back!" He dashed off to get them.

"You brought gifts? It's already a big gift that I have you." Said Lanni, and Luna pulled her into a hug.

"Don't flatter me. I'm more used to bickering with you."

The rest arrived at the same time, and Lanni couldn't help teasing Cheng Yu. "Hey, I thought you wouldn't find your way."

"That's what Google maps are for." Cheng Yu retorted and placed a scroll in her hand. Lanni knew that it was a painting without looking at it.

"Thank you. You guys are so sweet." She hugged her emotionally and looked around suspiciously, noticing the missing guests.

"You didn't bring Mumu and Linhou?" She asked Xingyu who was carrying in a huge box.

"The little devils preferred to stay with their grandmother. Ow!" He winced when Luna hit his head playfully.

"Whose kids did you just say are devils?" She reprimanded him.

"I don't mean it literally. Ow! Hey, don't pull my hair."

"Are you sure Xingyu is not being abused?" Cheng Yu joked, and they all burst into laughter. Of course, they knew Luna was not inflicting actual pain on him and they were just playing around.

When Han Xichen, Xiaoshi and Cedric entered the house, Lanni finally led everyone to the dining area.

Li Yuming and Neil arrived just as they sat down. They had brought with them bottles of rare wine to celebrate, including one with Zero alcohol content for Lanni and Luna.

"Let's drink our hearts out!" Cedric yelled, and everyone else joined in to toast.

Soon, the dinner turned into wedding business. Lanni slapped her forehead. "I almost forgot I have a wedding to plan."

To be exact, the planning agency was doing most of the planning, but there were still details that needed her attention. Luna showed her the pictures that had been sent to her email, which showed how her top color choices would look on the venue.

She approved of it and turned her attention to Cheng Yu. "You have been silent all night. Is everything alright?"

"Yes." Cheng Yu placed her hand over hers. Lanni dropped it but it gnawed at her and she couldn't keep still anymore. "Actually, I have something to tell you." She glanced over at Luna, letting her know that the matter was for her to hear too.

"What is it?" Lanni probed.

"Cedric and I have decided to leave the country."

Chapter 580 - Leaving (2)

"Why? Don't you like it here?" Lanni asked, her tone dripping with worry. "Did somegnkng happen?"

"No. Everything is alright. Cedric and I just want some adventure for a while." She hurried to explain.

Luna rolled her eyes at her. "Right. My otaku Xiao Yu who would be happy to stay indoors for an entire week, doing nothing but drawing comics and watching movies suddenly wants to go out for some adventure. How believable."

"It's even more believable that her equally introverted boyfriend can't wait to travel the world with her." Lanni hummed along, both of them eyeing Cheng Yu in a way that reminded her that they were not born last night.

Since they had figured it out anyway, she decided to open up. "Fine. You caught me. But you have to promise that you will still love me, okay?"

"Okay, drama queen." Lanni hugged her. "Spill it already."

"Cedric's family still hates me as much. They have been going out of their way to make my life a living hell." She started.

"What do you mean?" Lanni's brows furrowed.

"Why didn't you tell us?" Luna added, looking like she wanted to punch someone.

"I couldn't, okay? You guys are pregnant. You certainly don't need to deal with any mother versus girlfriend drama." She was helpless. When they shot her a glare, she shrunk into her seat and recounted everything.

Four days ago.

Cheng Yu had just finished her part of the second volume. For the comic they wrote together, they did everything together at first. However, it had blown into popularity and they could no longer keep up with the demand of new chapters. With Luna's suggestion, they split up the work so he would do one part and she would do another. It had been working perfectly.

Since she had gone through it and was satisfied with everything, she grabbed her drawing tablet and went over to his apartment unit to check whether he was done. Besides, she missed her boyfriend.

She let herself in with his spare key which he left at her place and called out to him.

"Cedric?"

There was no response, making her chuckle. Was he still asleep?

She pushed open the bedroom door and froze when she got a clear view. Why was there a woman in his bed?

Her eyes stung as she pondered whether to wake him up and let him know that she had caught him. However, she decided against it and stormed out, banging the front door shut on her way.

Men were all players. She already knew this. To think she had believed that Cedric was different and even trusted him.

The last thing she wanted was to see him. She flopped onto her bed when she got back to her apartment and cried her eyes out, before getting up and proceeding to the next chapter. It wouldn't do her any good to cry over a cheating scumbag and the bills wouldn't pay themselves.

Alas, the man was a plague that could never be avoided. He knocked on her door frantically not even five hours later and when he realized that she was in but not opening the door, he resorted to blasting her phone with calls and text messages.

Frustration got the better of her. She flung the door open. "What do you want?"

"Whoa, easy there." He held his hands up in surrender. "I wanted to see if you are up for dinner. We could go to the new restaurant across the street and try it out. I heard their steak is to die for." He explained in one breath.

She was about to lash out when she remembered that he didn't know what she had found out. He still thought he had her where he wanted her—slotted in his life like a fool.

"See you in ten." She left him outside and returned to her room to change. There was no better way of dealing with a player than showing him who was better at the game. She chose a black dress that reached halfway down her thighs and let her hair down, then rubbed a pink lipstick on her lips. She didn't look over the top sexy but it was bound to get heads turning.

When she got back to him, he looked stunned. "You look amazing. But, did something happen?" He inched closer worriedly.

"Does it seem to you like something happened?" She threw the question back at him with sarcasm dripping in her voice.

"It does. First, you gave me that 'extra cordial' welcome then you made me stand here and wait for you. And your eyes look puffy."

She swatted his hand away before his fingers could reach her eyes. "If you think something's wrong, then maybe something's wrong."

"Okay." knowing her, the worst mistake would be to pressure her into telling him about it now. He knew that she would open up once she was comfortable so he led the way to the restaurant. It was killing him to not pull her into his arms and kiss her but he was not ready to die yet.

The restaurant was fairly busy but they managed to get a seat by the window, which she loved. The waiter came to take their orders, and she smiled at him.

"What's the most delicious meal on your menu?" She asked, bordering on flirtatious.

The waiter looked nervous. "Well, miss, we all have different tastes."

"Is that so? Then I would like a serving of your favorite dish. I believe one can't be handsome and not have a good taste." She winked slightly.

"Yu!" Cedric couldn't take it anymore.

Feeling the smell of gunpowder, the waiter made a quick dash and returned with the restaurant's specialty, which he claimed most of the customers rated highly after giving it a try.

"What a bummer. I wanted what you would rate highly." Flirted Cheng Yu. Cedric's chair screeched against the floor a heartbeat before he shot up and circled to her side, and his lips were on hers before she could make fun of his jealousy.

"Do I have to remind you that I'm right here?" He growled, nipping her lower lip as punishment.

"Are you here though?" She rolled her eyes and turned to the awkward waiter. "I'm sorry. I just... excuse me."

Then she bolted to the bathroom.

She washed her face and checked that she had not smudged her lipstick. A deep sigh escaped her. She had not meant to make it awkward for the poor waiter, she just couldn't help angering Cedric. Maybe then he would realize that she knew his secret. She was going to torture him with jealousy and humiliation before letting him know what she saw.

But when he kissed her possessively, all her resolve cracked. There was no way a man would cheat on a woman and kiss her with such passion. Besides, he didn't just look jealous when she flirted with the waiter. He looked...hurt.

But if he wasn't cheating on her, how could he explain the woman in his bed earlier? That she was a friend who needed a place to crash last night and he somehow couldn't offer her the guestroom? That would be bullshit, and if there was something wrong with the guest room, he could have let her have his bed and slept at his girlfriend's apartment which wasn't farther than a brief elevator ride away. Besides, if he didn't trust her to leave her alone at his house, there was the option to let her stay at Cheng Yu's as they were both women.

"There's a hotel down the street." She gritted her teeth when she thought of it. There was simply no excuse for what he did.

So she flung the door open and sauntered back to their table to demand an explanation.

"Who was the woman in your bed?"

"The woman in my bed?" He looked shocked. "Yu, what are you talking about?"

"Drop the act." She huffed. "I came to see you this morning. There was a woman beside you. Don't even think of telling me it was a mannequin or whatever lie you could spin. She was a living human being. I saw her clearly and she had her arm wrapped around your torso."

She took a deep breath. "And no. Don't insult my feelings for you by claiming you were drunk and mistook her for me."

When he continued staring at her blankly, she was frustrated. "Talk, will you?"