

Chapter 61 - Fireballs

"Perhaps... I should help you take it off?" As she said, her hands inched to his neck.

"Get out!" Ji Xiehan suddenly snarled, startling her.

She retreated a meter away, cowering in fright.

But the fright only lasted a second. Qiao Luna had been working for Ji Xiehan for only a few weeks. But this while she had learned to read his mood and understand him.

If she wasn't prepared, she wouldn't have dared to make such a move on him. She dared to so, only because she was completely prepared.

Alas, she didn't even have a chance to execute her second move before the man flared up. "Why are you still here? Do you want me to call security?!"

Qiao Luna maintained her composure and left the office as though she hadn't been chased out.

She puffed out a sigh.

Well, the mission failed.

But she knew that no matter how enraged he was, he would never fire her... and she precisely knew why he wouldn't.

If it wasn't for this reason, she would have been fired seconds ago.

So, this was considered half 'mission accomplished,' right?

Wait. It was at least 80% mission accomplished.

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At the same time, in B City University

The three hours of voting went by very fast.

In the blink of an eye, there was only one hour left.

"I'm so nervous." Cheng Yu said with sweaty palms."

Li Lanni hugged her gently. "You are already so talented. Such a thing as nervousness shouldn't exist in your dictionary. You should believe in yourself." Of course, Li Lanni didn't believe in any of those great things they kept saying about Cedric of Hun He Art School. If he was really that great, he wouldn't have to fight with small fries like them for an opportunity to join Star Art International.

Even if it was just a gimmick, he would find it below himself.

Speak of the devil... Cedric's entourage just happened to overhear their conversation yet again.

"Tsk." A girl sneered. "They really think they have a chance to win. How naive!"

"Forget it. They're not worth our time." Cedric spoke for the first time.

Surprisingly, his voice was deep and seductive, the kind that could make one's imagination run wild.

Paired with his handsome face, it was no wonder so many girls stuck to him.

Too bad, he was annoying and arrogant. What a waste of good looks! Li Lanni sighed.

The voting finally concluded. It was finally time to announce the winner.

The Hall of Legends was filled with students. Even those who were not usually interested in art wanted to know who the winner would be.

"Please be number 20. Please let the number 20 win!" A student frantically whispered.

"What's so good about number 20? Number 46 is the real deal, okay?"

The two of them broke into soft discussions.

When a girl behind them heard them arguing, she almost wanted to go beat up these ignorant students.

"All you amateurs know nothing. Have you taken a good look at the paintings? If you have even the slightest interest in such things, you would know that number 15 is the best. That roaring dragon is just too lifelike! At first glance, I almost thought it was moving!"

Both of them were shocked by the stranger's sudden outburst. But, when the two students looked at the paintings again, they indeed felt that number 15 seemed too real.

"Urgh... I voted for 20. Can I take it back?" She really regretted not voting this one. She wanted to vote for this one. But time waits for no one, and it was already time for the host to announce the results

"Students, it's time to announce the winner." The host said very excitedly.

The entire hall fell into a hush. It was so quiet that Chen Yu could almost hear her own heart beating loudly.

"I would like to request Si Yulin to come on the stage and announce the winner of this contest. Welcome, Vice CEO Si Yulin!"

A buzz followed.

Si Yulin? The Vice CEO of Star Art International?

The winner was so lucky! Not only would they receive such amazing awards, but the awards would also be presented by Si Yulin!

An elegant woman made her way to the stage. She looked so young and stunning.

She didn't waste their time: they were already anxious.

"In third place, seventeen wonders by number 11." her sweet voice filled the hall.

As she announced the third winner, the screen behind her displayed the votes. Seventeen wonders had won 300 votes.

Instantly, everyone waited to see who 11 was.

Of course, the students from other universities didn't hope for anything. 11 would definitely be from Hun He Art School, and so would the second and first.

But in the next moment, they were shocked. The person who stood up was Ah Chen.

"Ah, ah, ah! It's our Senior Ah Chen!" A student from B City University screamed in excitement.

What followed was a wave of cheers.. Li Lanni and Cheng Yu also stood up to congratulate him.

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Meanwhile, on the other side, Cedric's entourage was at it again. "It's just third place. Do they have to look like they won an Oscar's?"

"They're lousy. Of course, they would be happy about such lousy achievements."

But was it lousy, really? Even though the reward for the third place wasn't that impressive, it meant a lot to many people, especially Ah Chen, to whom art was just a minor he was doing to pass the time. In fact, no matter what prize he won, it was inferior to a single word of congratulations from Li Lanni. Why would he mind?

"Next up, the second place is number 24." The screen displayed number 24's 301 votes.

Cedric sneered. Damn it! How could he only get one vote more than Ah Chen's? That was worse than losing, alright?

His streak of bad luck was going a little overboard, huh.

To evade his humiliation, he didn't stand. He would rather forfeit his award than go up the stage and accept that he just got one more vote than Ah Chen. It was second place anyway, and he didn't care about anything that wasn't first.

Si Yulin looked displeased by Cedric's rude behavior. But when she saw the winner's entry, her face lit up.

"The grand winner is Fireballs by number 15! Congratulations." The screen showed number 15's 605 votes. The votes actually doubled!! Cedric was infuriated. It was like a slap across his handsome face.

As the grand winner was announced, the screen also displayed the painting 'Fireball.'

Instantly, the hall was filled with the gasps of the viewers.

"Whoa! Too beautiful!! Too lifelike! How can a painting be so beautiful?!"

"I almost thought I saw that dragon coming at me!"

"Which grandmaster painted that? Is it the legendary Cedric of Hun He?"

When Cedric heard this, he almost fainted from anger. What Cedric?!?! That person got double votes than him, okay? In fact, the worst part was that he had to admit that 'Fireballs' was indeed worthy of being the winner.

Li Lanni was still absent-minded when the girl beside her saw her number; she excitedly nudged her.
"Lanni, it's your number! Go!"

"Huh?" Lianni was shocked. She was... the winner?

Was this a dream of sorts?

When it sunk in, her first reaction was not to go to the stage, but to glance at Cheng Yu.

Cheng Yu bit her lip. She knew it!

She knew she wouldn't win. She had been so nervous that she couldn't complete her painting on time and submitted an incomplete entry. She knew that no matter how beautiful it was, no one would like anything that wasn't complete. Why did she still hope for it?

"Excuse me; I need to use the restroom." She fled right after saying this.

Li Lanni glanced at Chen Yu's fleeing back, then at the stage. After hesitating for a few seconds, she walked to the stage.

When the audience saw a beautiful girl walking up to the stage and receive the award, they were stunned.

"It's a girl?!"

"Such a bold painting, I expected the artist to be a guy. I even thought it was Cedric from Hun He."

Ah Chen overheard the chatter and snorted. "Please, how could you even think of comparing Lianni with Cedric. Are you blind? I told you Lanni would surely win." His goddess was the best, okay?

The competition officially ended after Li Lanni received the contract for the first prize.

When she was getting down the stage, she was called out by Si Yulin.

"Hi, Li Lanni. Your painting was so stunning and lifelike. I have no words to describe it. The moment I saw it, I fell in love with it. If you are willing, can you sell it to me? I can fulfill all your demands as long as

they are reasonable." Li Lanni was shocked by Si Yulin's sudden proposal. She didn't think that her painting would attract Si Yulin's attention to this extent. She was flattered, but she had to reject the offer. It was rare that she could paint so nicely, and she had even won an award for it. Of course, she had to bring it home and show it to her mother.

"Ms. Si, I am flattered that you have taken a liking to my painting. But I apologize I can't sell this painting."

Si Yulin looked disappointed. "You really can't? Please think about it for a few days?"

"I'm sorry. I really can't." Li Lanni was firm.

Si Yulin was a little unhappy that she couldn't have the painting, but thinking about how Li Lanni would soon be a trainee at Star Art International, she felt better.

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Li Lanni couldn't possibly reject the award on stage since it would be slapping Star Art International in the face.

So, she waited until it ended and approached one of the organizers.

"Little girl, do you need something?" The middle-aged man inquired when he saw Li Lanni coming to him.

"Yes." She chose her words carefully and decided to be straightforward. "Can I forfeit my prize?"

"What did you say?" The man was first shocked, but then his shock turned into anger. Many people were willing to do anything to go to Star Art International, and that wouldn't even grant them half a chance. This little girl wanted to give it up just like that?!

Li Lanni understood why he would be angry. This year's winner wasn't from their subsidiary school, Hun He Art School. How could he be happy? Not everyone was like Si Yulin, who didn't care who the winner was as long as they had the talent.

But she was still determined. "I'm really sorry to trouble you. My current conditions don't allow me to do anything aside from going to class. On the other hand, my friend has been working hard to get this chance. She is very talented, much more talented than me. Please take a look at her paintings. You will surely be satisfied."

The more Li Lanni spoke, the more enraged the man became. In the end, he simply sneered. "Give your chance to the second place if you want to. Otherwise, don't waste our time. Training lessons begin in one week."

Li Lanni clenched her lips. She had already expected this reply. It wasn't easy to give away such a chance.

But the problem was that she didn't need it! Although Art was her major, she didn't truly like it. At least not after losing her memory. She had entered this competition just to accompany Cheng Yu.

But for Cheng Yu, this was her life. She had even fought with her parents over it, and heavens knew how great she was. Li Lanni couldn't figure out why she didn't complete her painting.

"Lanni?"

Li Lanni turned to see a walnut-eyed Cheng Yu. She looked down to hide her swollen eyes.

Previously Cheng Yu felt very disappointed and heartbroken. But when she saw Lianni's painting, she was shocked and felt in awe. This painting truly deserved first prize. But she didn't even congratulate Lianni for winning.

In the next second, she threw her arms around Li Lanni. "Congratulations on winning! Sorry, I lost my cool that time."

Li Lanni hugged her back. She felt terrible when she saw Chen Yu's sad face. "Forget about the competition. Just go and complete "Moonlight. I believe in you." Its value would definitely raise leaps and bounds in the future.

...

At the same time, in Feng Ji International.

An extremely displeased Jiang Xingyu barged into Ji Xiehan's office.

"You promised a nice surprise if I changed the rules of the contest. Where's the surprise?"

Ji Xiehan shot a look at his best friend, wondering just how on earth this fool managed to be his friend. "Can't you tell? Star Art International's trainee this time will be genuinely the best." Wasn't this a double win?

"Just this?" Jiang Xingyu was displeased. Who cared about a trainee?

Ji Xiehan sighed and shook his head, wondering whether it was right to think that this fool might help him protect Li Lanni in Star Art International. He then tilted his laptop to his friend. Several pictures were displayed on the screen.

"What's this?" Jiang Xingyu asked curiously.

"Are your eyes merely ornaments?"

Jiang Xingyu clutched his broken heart and clicked on the pictures.

They were all paintings, and he instantly understood that they were entries for today's competition.

Ji Xiehan was extremely competent. He had even found out their real owners.

"Urgh. Hun He is so disappointing. Their level keeps on falling for every passing year. They are not just letting me down but the whole Star Art International and Jiang Corporation. Just what kind of students do they recruit? They have no talent! I'll immediately replace the principal."

They even dared to claim that they were creating the next Li Yuming? Could they even hold a candle to her with these measly paintings? Even Cedric's abilities had pitifully dropped! He groaned and complained each time he saw a painting from Hun He.

Actually, they were not all that bad. They were just not as good as those from previous years. The quality was dropping significantly.

"This 'fireballs' is really amazing. The dragon hovering over the earth and breathing fireballs.... such a novel idea and the artist was also able to depict it perfectly. Eh? Li Lanni? It's from that girl who called you a pervert?" Jiang Xingyu burst into laughter before giving his friend a meaningful look. "No wonder you made me change the rules. I was wondering why you were suddenly interested in Star Art International. It turns out, it's for your little beauty."

"Give me back my laptop." Ji Xiehan's expression darkened.

"No, no, no, wait!" Jiang Xingyu hugged the laptop and moved away. Knowing Ji Xiehan, he wouldn't show him these paintings if there was nothing in it for him.

And indeed, he stopped in his tracks once he saw the fifth painting. "Moonlight 1.0?"

He looked like he had just seen a ghost.

His hands trembled as he zoomed the painting to check at a certain inconspicuous spot naturally. There were several words scribbled in Arabic. [Eyes like the moon, soul like the stars but a personality like a sun.]

He took out his phone and found a picture of a different painting, then compared the hidden words. They were in French, but it was a perfect match! Moreover, the painting on his phone was also called Moonlight!

Chapter 64 - I Don't Want To Help You. Bite Me!

This was no coincidence. It had to be the same artist!

Ji Xiehan watched as Jiang Xingyu's face turn pale from shock, then red from the excitement. Jiang Xingyu was genuinely excited, "I found her... I finally found her!"

Wait, who painted it? There's no name on it."

Ji Xiehan leisurely reclined in his chair and replied languidly, "That's the interesting part. This is the only painting whose owner I couldn't find out."

Actually, he had only looked for those paintings because he wanted to take a glimpse at Li Lanni's entry. But when he was scrolling through the paintings, he happened to see "Moonlight." He then recalled Jiang Xingyu telling him about Moonlight so many times that his ears almost grew calluses. But to his

disappointment, the painting was incomplete, and its owner seemed to very mysterious and had vanished into thin air. It piqued his interest. He wondered if both were the same painting.

Jiang Xingyu's excitement dimmed when he heard that even Ji Xehan couldn't find him.

"Wait. We can ask the other contestants. They will surely know. How about we ask your Lanni?"

"She wouldn't know. Even if she knew, she wouldn't tell." It would be good enough if she didn't ignore him. Most importantly, he didn't want his Lanni to be bothered.

Jiang Xingyu had known his friend for over two decades. He would be a fool if he didn't understand that expression on his face. "Damn you, Ji Xiehan. You just don't want to help me, right?"

Ji Xiehan rolled his pen, completing ignoring him. His expression seemed to say, "I don't want to help you. What can you do? Bite me if you dare."

Jiang Xingyu was almost angered to death when he saw his expression. Just let it be. He should have been used to it by now...

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That night, Li Lanni shyly presented her painting to her mother.

Li Yuming felt her heart fill with warmth when she saw her daughter's painting. "You're giving this to me? Thank you, it's beautiful." Lianni's eyes sparkled with joy, which she hadn't felt even when she was receiving the award on the stage this morning.

Li Lanni hugged her mother's arm, and joyfully said, "I also won first place in the competition."

Li Yuming rubbed her daughter's hair, not looking surprised. "As expected of my Lanni. I'll take you out to celebrate tomorrow."

"Mmh."

"What's wrong?" She could tell that Li Lanni had something on her mind.

"Actually, mom, I don't want to go to Star Art International."

Disappointment flashed in Li Yuming's eyes, but she continued tousling Li Lanni's hair. "Then let someone else go instead. Many people would die for that opportunity."

"I wanted to. But they would only let me give it up to the second place. I wanted to let my friend go."

"It only makes sense. If you were to directly give it to your friend, how would it be fair competition? Besides, I still think it's your hard work, so you shouldn't give it up."

Li Lanni sunk into contemplation. It seemed like she wouldn't be able to convince her mother to help her this time. She really wanted Cheng Yu to go! Unfortunately, she was just a student, and paired with the fact that she had to be always on the lookout, her abilities were limited.

Obviously, not everyone was happy for Li Lanni.

Elsewhere at the same time, a dozen or so glasses met their end.

A beautiful glass table, as well as a human-sized jade vase, were not spared either.

The unfortunate bodyguard, Fang Xu, cowered at some distance away, but he still had to report the matter entirely so he could only grit his teeth and endure the sufferings.

"What do you mean by Li Lanni won? That b*tch! How can you let her win?"

Fang Xu was speechless. What was he supposed to do?

Was he supposed to steal the talent away from Li Lanni to prevent her from winning?

But this was the path he had chosen. He had been very fortunate to be Ji Xiehan's assistant, but he stupidly followed Ji Feifei instead.

It even happened at such a time that he really needed the money and hence couldn't quit. Was this his karma?

Ji Feifei was boiling with anger. She threw the remote control over at the cowering bodyguard. "Get out! You nauseate me!" He evaded it narrowly and scurried away in the blink of an eye.

Ji Feifei was so angry that her head almost exploded.

It had only been a few days... how did that useless sl*t progress so far?

She was now going to Star Art International?!

One had to know that although she was from the Ji family, her father couldn't manage to get her into Star Art International.

It was not that he wasn't able to... he just didn't want to pull strings for her. She had to work hard for it, and this was supposed to be her once in a lifetime opportunity!

If she didn't get expelled, she would have participated in the competition and won it.

Yet because of that c*nt, she didn't even have a chance to try out!

Worst of all, no matter what she tried to do, her plans would somehow fail. It was as though that b*tch had someone protecting her!

Damn it! If it wasn't because she was being watched by her father and couldn't afford to make huge moves, she would personally strangle that b*tch!

After calming down a little, she took her phone and dialed a number. As soon as the other side lifted the phone, she hurriedly spoke: "Ruby, help me do something."

The voice on the other side sounded sleepy. "What is it now?"

Ji Feifei sighed before ranting. "Damn it! Cheng Yu didn't win that competition."

"Isn't that what you wanted?"

"Yeah... but Li Lanni won! How dare she?"

In response, Ruby mumbled something incoherently about being tired and not being able to promise any help before she hung up.

Ji Feifei's was bristling with anger.

As expected in the next moment, a clang resounded as Ji Feifei's phone broke into the television.

This was getting out of hand! Even Ruby was hanging up on her now.

Li Lanni, you b*tch! Just wait for it. I will fry you alive.

Madam Ji was unsurprisingly awoken by the chaos downstairs. Her husband didn't bother as he was pretty much used to his daughter's temper.

"Feifei, what happened this time?" Mrs. Ji rushed out of her room and asked in concern.

Ji Feifei shed off her anger in an instant and jumped into her mother's arms, sobbing pitifully. "Mother, I've been wronged."

Madam Ji patted her daughter's back, her heart breaking for her. "Hush... Baby, don't cry. Tell mother who wronged you? Your mother will help you."

"Who else could it be? It's a girl from my school. Her name is Lanni. She used all sorts of lies and tarnished my name through and through in school." She sighed, dramatically wiping the tears that had fallen in an instant. "Isn't it enough that she has ruined my life? I have been expelled already, but she..... why won't she let me off? I can't believe I once thought of her as my best friend."

Mrs. Ji's heart melted when she saw her daughter crying pitifully. "Mother will definitely help you find justice. But... Lanni? Why does this name sound familiar?" She fell into deep thought, recalling where she had heard this name.

Ji Feifei sneered in her heart. Forgetful old hag.... Li Lanni is the daughter of Li Yuming...Of course, she sounds familiar. Not to mention, Ji Xiehan was currently pursuing her.

Heh. Li Lanni, I just created a new enemy for you. Are you grateful?"

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Unaware of all the drama unfolding in the Ji family, Li Lanni slept peacefully in her room. Even if Li Lanni had known, she would have just shrugged it off.

That night she had a long dream.

In her dream, a little girl held a pendant and ran to a man joyfully saying, "Daddy, daddy! Look, mommy gave this to me. Isn't it beautiful?"

The man looked at the childish pendant. The picture on it was the cartoon version of the little girl. "Uhm. It's very pretty."

"Daddy, help me put it on!" She said, her eyes full of stars from her joy.

The man took the pendant from her small hands and helped her put it on, then added a compliment. "You look even prettier with it on."

The scene suddenly changed, and again little girl appeared before the same man, looking shyly at him. "Daddy today, mommy taught me a dance."

The man chuckled. "Really? Show to daddy."

And so, the girl broke into animal dance moves. Because she was short and was wearing a bear onesie, she looked extremely cute and earned a cheer from him. "As expected, my Lanni is so talented. Come, daddy will reward you with a big hug." The girl broke into a peal of cheerful laughter and fell into his arms.

The scene changed yet again, and this time, the girl was bawling her eyes out. "Daddy, don't go.... please don't go. Please..."

She kept crying and shaking her head, even kneeling and begging the man to not go. But all she saw was the back view as the man disappeared into the distance.

Li Lanni suddenly woke up in a daze. The corners of her eyes were still wet. The birds were chirping, and the sun was spilling through the curtains. It was a pleasant morning. A gentle wind through the opened window woke her up from a daze. The turmoil in her heart calmed down a bit.

'What was that all about?' She wondered.

She knew that she would regain some of her memories through dreams, but this somehow didn't feel right.

According to what her mother had said, her parents had a divorce soon after she was born. It wouldn't make any sense for him to leave when she was old enough to know what it meant.

Also, in one of her memory fragments, when she was eight, the man had appeared before her in the guise of her mother's friend. But in her dream just now, she should be four or five.

Urgh... why was it so hard to regain one's memory and comprehend one's past?

Tossing her messy thoughts aside, she freshened up and went downstairs.

It was the weekend, and she didn't need to go to school, but her homeschooling tutor would drop by in the afternoon.

"You look pale. What happened?" Li Yuming was concerned when she saw her daughter listlessly coming down. Li Lianni saw her mother flipping through a fashion magazine.

She cheered up and hurried over, hugging her mother's arm. "Nothing mom, when is my next hypnosis session?"

Li Lanni didn't realize it, but sadness flickered through Li Yuming's eyes for a second. She took in a deep breath and tousled her daughter's hair. "Are you rushed about it?"

"Of course, I would be rushed. Ever since the last time, I haven't remembered anything. Even the school environment couldn't help me. I only keep feeling some familiarity with some people, but I can't remember who they are."

Li Yuming kept her eyes glued to the fashion magazine, her other hand flipping it clumsily. "Don't be anxious about it. Didn't the Doctor say that being anxious would only make it more difficult?"

"I'll try to be calm... but you didn't answer me, mom."

"When you are ready, I will book an appointment with the Doctor. Can you get off me now?"

Li Lanni pretended to be hurt and whimpered, "Am I that annoying?"

But she was immensely happy. The only way to understand the situation was to regain her memory.

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Li Yuming was quite efficient, and the appointment was set for the next day.

Li Lanni was a bundle of nerves and excitement when she entered the Doctor's office. It was the same Doctor Zhao who had hypnotized her the last time.

"Hi, Li Lanni! How have you been?" Dr. Zhao asked her cheerfully.

"Hello, Dr. Zhao! I am fine."

"Are you anxious? You should know that you need to be calm for hypnosis to work.." Doctor Zhao reminded her patiently when he saw her replying rigidly.

Chapter 66 - It Is Ah Chen?!

Li Lanni took in a deep breath. Of course, she was nervous! She had realized that the more she lived, the more she felt she didn't know herself well enough, and no one actually knew her.

There were too many things that contradicted what her mother said about her past... And her mother wouldn't lie to her. Right?

To put it bluntly, every new fragment of memory proved that she had lied to her mother or hidden things from her, or both. And some of those things... might be more serious than they appeared.

Why would she do such a thing, when her mother loved her so much...

She wondered just what shocking memory she was going to recover this time.

Before this, she would never have thought that one day she would start developing fear towards herself. Was this even normal?

If she had a choice, she would select to remember only the sweet and honest memories and forget all about the lies.

But soon, she realized that she had nothing to worry about. At least not for now.

Because hypnosis failed.

That was right. Although she was already calm and didn't have a tough psychological barrier, hypnosis still failed.

Doctor Zhao was stunned. As one of the most proficient doctors in this field, this kind of failure was a first. He looked at the little girl before him. "What have you been doing since the last hypnosis session?"

Li Lanni thought for a moment and then replied, "Does going to school count?"

The middle-aged doctor nodded slowly. There was nothing wrong with going to school. A person's daily activities shouldn't actually have any effect on their chances of being hypnotized. It still didn't make any sense. Unless... the girl herself didn't really want to recover her memory.

"For now, continue taking your medication on time and take care of yourself. Don't overexert your brain."

Li Lanni nodded and left the office in a daze, leaving Doctor Zhao and her mother in the room to discuss about her condition.

"What do you mean hypnosis failed? Is my Lanni going to have amnesia forever?" Li Yuming was worried about her daughter.

"At the moment, nothing is predictable. If she continues...."

The voices slowly faded away as Li Lanni's attention was piqued by something else in the distance.

At the end of the corridor, a thin man was facing her direction. He had a cap on his head and a scarf bundling him up tightly to purposefully cover his face.

Li Lanni frowned as she looked at him. Did he transmigrate from winter? Seriously, such clothes in summer should be inexplicable torture.

Then there was that strange feeling... the paranoid alertness she always had when that stalker made his weird moves. Wait! This man was clearly not here to seek medical treatment. And he was looking at her absentmindedly. Was he the stalker?

When he realized that she was looking at him, he was startled and ran away, practically disappearing in two seconds.

Li Lanni's first reaction was to run after him. Alas, she couldn't even find which direction he ran off to. But she wasn't disappointed as she saw that the man had dropped his watch in a hurry.

Li Lanni took out a handkerchief as a natural reaction and picked it up.

Her eyebrows scrunched up. She had seen this watch before.

Not once but many times. Who did it belong to...

Never mind. It wouldn't hurt to get someone to check the fingerprints.

"Lanni, what are you doing? Why did you simply run off?"

Li Lanni heard her mother's footsteps, so she quickly wrapped the watch in her handkerchief and kept it away in her purse and looked at her mother pitifully, "Nothing, mom. Are you done? Let's go home. I'm famished... I want to eat your yummy delicacies."

Li Yuming smiled at her daughter's spoiled tone. Fine, she had spoiled her rotten. "Okay, mommy will cook something delicious for you. Let's go."

After distracting her mother's attention successfully, she followed after her mother calmly.

Never in a million years would Li Yuming know that her spoiled little daughter was only trying to shift her attention.

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In the end, Li Lanni didn't need to get a fingerprint check. She remembered the owner of this watch on her own.

She had seen it several times on someone's wrist, and that person was Ah Chen!

She had a deep impression of it because it was a limited edition custom made watch, the one and only of its kind. She had even heard Cheng Yu rumble on about how Ah Chen's brother owned a jewelry and ornament brand, and that he had especially made that watch for Ah Chen.

Simply put, there was no way anyone else would have an identical watch. It had to be Ah Chen's.

Anger flickered in her eyes. That damned fellow!

...

Lianni sauntered to Art Classroom 1 in annoyance first thing on Monday morning.

Ah Chen was surprised to see her; it was not every day that Li Lanni would come to meet her on her initiative. He stood excitedly and greeted her, "Goddess, do you need something?"

Pa!

A slap echoed in the air.

Ah Chen was struck dumb by that slap. Half of his face was numb by the slap.

"Was it fun?!"

Ah Chen rubbed his cheek. It hurt so much that he almost got angry. "Was what fun? Goddess, I don't understand."

Li Lanni threw the watch at him.

Ah Chen looked surprised, then he smiled. "My watch! How did you find it?" Wait, what did this have to do with the slap?

He was yet to register this thought when another slap came assaulting the other side of his handsome face. He had been backhanded mercilessly.

"Come on! Why did you hit me?"

His feigned ignorance only riled up Li Lanni. "Acting innocent? You perverted stalker! You have the guts to stalk people but you don't have the balls to admit it? You dare to act innocent?"

Was it fun messing with me? Do you know that because of you, I spent several nights in fear? Do you know how threatened I felt? Do you?"

Chapter 67 - I Don't Know What You Are Talking About

With each word, Li Lanni's anger increased. Even she hadn't known just how significant the stalker's impact was. Now that she was facing him, she wanted to bite him to his death!

Ah Chen had been slapped witless. At that moment, he didn't know whether he should be angry or not.

No one had ever dared to lay a finger on him. Not even his mother. Yet now a girl dared to slap him not once but twice, and she was even yelling at him! It was unacceptable even if he liked her.

The few students in the classroom shivered on Li Lanni's behalf. Did this girl lose her brains along with her memory?

By slapping Ah Chen, was she tired of living?

Ah Chen struggled with himself for a few seconds before he swallowed his anger and looked at the raging girl. "Did someone hurt you and frame me by dropping my watch in your vicinity? This kind of thing happens quite often, and I lost my watch two days ago. So I have nothing to do with the stalker you speak of."

Li Lanni paused her outburst, rapidly calming down.

Could it be that she had suspected the wrong person?

But when she recalled Cheng Yu's incessant rumble, she was upset yet again. "I know that you never take that watch off. Don't try to slither your way out of it!"

Ah Chen was boiling with anger. He was being accused of something he knew nothing about. He wouldn't have bothered if it was someone else. But the one accusing him was his own goddess. He was anxious to clear his name, and if he didn't handle this matter properly, Li Lanni might be mad at him forever.

While it was true that he rarely took off his watch, he did take it off two days ago to try on another, but that was precisely the moment he lost it. It was as though it was premeditated.

He was still thinking whether to offer his help in tracing the real culprit when the girl made an impatient turn. "Ah Chen, I don't want to have this conversation again. You know what I mean." With that, she sauntered away.

Ah Chen remained in the same position, standing stiffly.

That was clearly a threat. Next time, she would directly seek legal measures.

Bloody hell! For the first time in his life, he was being warned, and he didn't even do anything.

The few students who were watching the spectacle hadn't managed to overhear their conversation, but when they saw a helpless Ah Chen cursing, they were stunned.

...

As soon as Li Lanni got to her classroom, Cheng Yu plastered herself onto her. "You hit Senior Ah Chen? What the hell did he do?"

Li Lanni slumped onto a seat, giving Cheng Yu a sidelong glance. "News does travel fast."

Cheng Yu sat beside her. "It's such a piece of explosive news, so it's not surprising. Anyway, you didn't answer me."

"It's personal." Li Lanni threw three words over and kept silent with 'Don't ask me anything else' written all over her face

Cheng Yu really wanted to know, but she knew better than anyone what Li Lanni's taboo was. She hated it when people asked about her personal matters, so Cheng Yu could only keep her curiosity in check.

Even so, she stuck to Li Lanni all day, rattling on like a broken recorder about how Ah Chen was a good match for her and that she should give him a chance.

At the end of the day, Cheng Yu's curiosity was finally satiated, and she got an answer to her question. One of the students from Ah Chen's art class, who had caught a few words from Li Lanni's accusation this morning, let it slip to the other students. Apparently, Ah Chen had been caught stalking Li Lanni!

Everyone was displeased about their goddess being bothered by Ah Chen, but they only dared to gossip about it in hushed tones. By the end of the day, Lanni also heard all versions of stories about how Ah Chen stalked her. Although stalking of that level shouldn't really be considered a crime, Li Lanni felt that her safety was threatened. He wouldn't get away with it again if he crossed her bottom line.

Cheng Yu was surprised. Ah Chen stalked Li Lanni and was caught while doing so?

Really? She will not believe it. Anyone could be fooled but not her.

—

Today, Cheng Yu wasn't the only person sticking onto another.

In Feng Ji International, Jiang Xingyu wouldn't let Ji Xiehan go.

Why? It need not be asked. He was here to annoy Ji Xiehan into helping him find that person.

"Are you an elementary school kid?!" Ji Xiehan was angered by this man's antics. How could a grown man be so annoying? He was usually reasonable most of the time, but today, he was even more annoying than Lin Jian, that blabbermouth. Ji Xiehan really wanted to know what kind of deeds had he done in his past life to deserve such friends.

This was the effect Jiang Xingyu wanted. He hopped over in triumph. "If you don't tell me, I'll continue to stick onto you like the strongest kind of glue!"

Successfully pissed, Ji Xiehan tossed a name over. "Cheng Yu."

Jiang Xingyu was speechless. This bastard knew it all along? What happened to their friendship? "Wait. Cheng Yu? I don't know this name. I've never heard of it."

Ji Xiehan languidly leaned in his chair and shrugged off, "Your little angel might have lost her memory. Either that or she is intentionally evading you."

Jiang Xingyu glared at his friend. "She would never avoid me. She doesn't have a reason to."

"Whatever. You have a starting point now."

Jiang Xingyu thanked him profusely then peered at Ji Xiehan cautiously. "You wouldn't be this kind-hearted."

"I'm glad your brain started functioning.." A slight smirk appeared on Ji Xiehan's face.

Chapter 68 - Retribution

"You business-minded profiteer! You won't even let your own friend off!"

Ji Xiehan gave a smug look. What could he do? "There's no such thing as friendship in business."

"Fine. What do you want?"

"Two bodyguards. The most professionally trained."

Jiang Xingyu raised an eyebrow. "Let me guess. This is for your little beauty, too? You sure are going all the way for her. But doesn't the Ji family have bodyguards too? As a matter of fact, there should be at least hundreds of them, and every single one of them is fiercely trained."

Jiang Xingyu's insistent rambling was cut short by the knock on the door.

Ji Xiehan knew who it was, so he let her in.

Qiao Luna looked like she wanted to report something, but she snuck a glance at Jiang Xingyu.

"Jiang Corporation is Feng Ji International's major partner." He said when he saw her proceed with caution upon seeing Jiang Xingyu

Qiao Luna understood what he meant. He meant that she could say whatever she had to say as Jiang Xingyu was not considered an outsider.

Compared to other days, Qiao Luna was significantly nervous. She delivered the documents before rattling her report and scurrying out of the office.

Once she left, Jiang Xingyu raised an eyebrow with a "tut." "Your assistant... is rather strange."

"I have an old man at home to thank for that." Ji Xiehan couldn't hide his disappointment.

Initially, Qiao Luna had been a very competent assistant, and most importantly, she didn't harbor any kind of thoughts that employees shouldn't harbor.

But thanks to his father, she was now no different from those delusional women who tried to find excuses to throw themselves at their bosses.

Jiang Xingyu didn't know what to say. Why did Ji Xiehan make it sound like she had seduced him?

He didn't know whether he was overthinking it, but that woman's gaze on Ji Xiehan... was more like she was looking at a foe.

Not only that, the second before she scurried away, she also snuck a glance at him. He could swear that he felt chills from that gaze. It was as though she was threatening him too.

And it wasn't only about that...

Maybe he was overthinking it?

—

That very night, at a high-end apartment in the capital.

Cheng Yu rang the doorbell incessantly.

A long while later, a youth who looked not a day older than twenty opened the door. The youth was clad in homely clothes but had put on dramatically huge sunglasses and a scarf. The scarf was crooked, obviously it had been worn in a hurry when the doorbell rang.

"Cheng Yu? Please come in." Cheng Yu's arrival was unexpected.

Cheng Yu walked in. Seeing that the guest was only Cheng Yu, V took off the disguise before hurriedly going about serving her snacks and offering wine, but Cheng Yu wasn't even in the mood to stay.

She shot a glare at V. "You have seriously crossed the line this time!"

V instantly understood what Cheng Yu was talking about. "I'm sorry. I didn't want things to unfold that way."

"Sorry? That's all you have to say?"

"I didn't think Lanni would have such a huge reaction either."

Cheng Yu, who was always cheerful and kind, was very angry this time. "So you really purposefully framed Ah Chen? Are you crazy?"

Her words sliced into V's heart. It was hard to explain when no one really understood. "Listen, I wasn't ready to face Lanni, and I knew she was going to interrogate Ji Xiehan. You know what that would mean... that man has immense connections. Finding me would only be as hard as lifting a pinky finger for him...I had to shift her suspicion to someone else."

"And you just had to pick Ah Chen..." Cheng Yu was unhappy. "When will you be ready? Haven't you been getting ready for ages already?"

"When she trusts me."

When Cheng Yu heard this, she didn't know whether to laugh or cry at his words. She had never heard anything so laughable. Since when can someone trust a stalker?

"Listen, I'm done collaborating with you if there's any collaboration between us." Cheng Yu stood up as soon as she said her piece. She was extremely furious and annoyed.

"How can you say that?! Aren't we friends?" V desperately grabbed her arm.

"And I will no longer be your friend if you keep this charade up." She shrugged that cold hand off and walked out.

Even she hadn't known how Li Lanni truly felt. Now that she thought about it calmly, it wasn't funny. How could anyone be at peace with some unknown person sending creepy messages?

V had protected Li Lanni a few times behind the scenes. For example, if V hadn't appeared at the site of Li Lanni's accident months ago, Li Lanni would have died. The situation was even more risky for V than it was for Li Lanni. That was the only reason Cheng Yu was willing to trust and help V get close to Li Lanni.

Though Cheng Yu couldn't help but wonder. Since V had saved her, this should have been enough to gain Li Lanni's trust, right? Only an idiot wouldn't grab such a chance.

Why would one save someone they obviously cared about but then choose to make it seem like someone else had been the one to dangerously take her out of the car?

But no matter what the reason was, it couldn't change the fact that this method of acting creepy was scaring Li Lanni. And it was not clever... it was freaking stupid!

Seriously, there were many other methods of getting close to people. V just had to choose this... there must be something wrong with the way that person's brain was wired.

It was even more stupid that she, who was Li Lanni's closest friend, had played a role in this. Cheng Yu clutched her heart, guilt sweeping in. She couldn't continue this for a long time.

But as she exited the building, she felt as though a pair of eyes was watching her, and when she turned back, she saw no one.

Her blood ran cold. Was she just being paranoid?

She turned again, but this time she clearly saw a shadow disappear behind a wall.

Her first reaction was to run into a busier place.

She had helped someone stalk Li Lanni. This must be her retribution, right?

Or could it be that Li Lanni had found her out as the stalker's accomplice, and now she was returning the favor?

....

That night, Cheng Yu was restless. In the end, she knew this wouldn't do.. She took out her phone and drafted a long text to V.

Chapter 69 - Cupcakes For A Broken Heart

The following day.

B City University

Ah Chen had expected the misunderstanding to last at least a few weeks. He knew that even if he explained until his mouth bled, Li Lanni still wouldn't believe him.

Hence he had decided to speak with his actions. He would help her track the real stalker and prove his innocence.

But, the thorniest problem was that he didn't have a starting point.

He didn't expect that just after his first class for the day, Li Lanni would look for him again.

When he saw the beautiful girl walk towards him, he felt it was over. He must have been framed again.

Who would do this to him? What kind of animosity did they have against each other?

Was it Yu Guang?

That idiot was pursuing Li Lanni too, but lately, he was all over Ruby Chan, so Ah Chen had assumed that he had given up on Li Lanni.

Perhaps he had not truly given up and was trying to strike his opponents down before approaching the goddess?

Ah Chen had killed himself in his heart several times for being such a fool and being unguarded by the time Li Lanni reached before him.

"Senior Ah Chen, hello." Li Lanni greeted him politely.

Ah Chen was more shocked than excited. Did she just greet him?

It was not that Li Lanni didn't have a sense of basic etiquette, she just didn't ever spare him a glance much less say hello. His ears flushed scarlet. "H-hello."

Li Lanni took out a small box from her bag and stuck it out to him. "I'm sorry, I misunderstood you yesterday. These are cupcakes I baked to apologize. Please accept my apology." She sincerely apologized to him with a soft smile on her face.

That smile struck Ah Chen straight at his heart. He felt like he was in a dream. Who am I? Where am I? Why is my goddess smiling at me? And she even personally baked cupcakes for him.

He only recovered his sanity after pinching himself so many times that his skin was sore.

He held out his hand slowly, as though afraid the box would disappear along with his goddess.

Seeing that he had accepted the cupcakes, Li Lanni sighed in relief. "I'll get going then. My literature class is about to start."

"Wait." Ah Chen suddenly said.

"Is there something else?"

Ah Chen set the box of cupcakes aside carefully and looked at her thoughtfully. "Not only did you hurt my charming face by slapping it terribly hard, but there are also rumors around the school about me being a stalker. Do you think cupcakes are enough to apologize for that?"

Li Lanni felt immensely guilty. This time it was completely her mistake. She wouldn't be so impatient in the future. "Anything I can do to make you feel better?"

Ah Chen pretended to spin his brains for a long time before finally saying, "Having a dinner with me will be able to compensate for the emotional damage."

Li Lanni studied his expression before carefully asking, "What about the other damages?"

Ah Chen was startled. What a smart girl. He was going to bring up other weird damages such as psychological and physical damages to guilt-trip her into having more meals with him. But now that she brought it up, it would sound like he was taking advantage of her remorse to make unreasonable advances.

He could only ask the question that had been hounding his brain for weeks. "Lanni, just which part of me do you find deplorable? Why won't you spare me a second glance even when you know I love you very much?"

Li Lanni knew this question would come sooner or later. "Are you sure you want me to answer this?"

Ah Chen felt the chills down his spine. "On second thought, forget it. Let's have the meal this evening if it's okay with you."

But Li Lanni still answered him with a blank face. "Are you blind, or are you just pretending to be blind?"

I have a fiancé already! Are you really going to continue pursuing another man's wife?"

Ah Chen looked like he had swallowed a fly. In just a few seconds, he went to hell from heaven. "What did you say?"

"I said I'm engaged. Is this reason enough?" She walked off, leaving behind a heartbroken Ah Chen.

Little did Lanni know that her small lie would soon become a reality. If she had known, she wouldn't have used her tongue so carelessly.

Behind her, Ah Chen looked like all his life had been a lie. How could Li Lanni be engaged?

Wasn't she just nineteen? She wasn't even twenty yet!

But then again, it didn't seem impossible. Some people even got engaged in their childhood. Perhaps Li Lanni's so called fiancé was someone her family match made her with when she was still a child?

But that didn't make sense either. If Li Lanni had a childhood fiancé, she wouldn't have dated Senior Yang.

He had witnessed their lovey dovey ways when Li Lanni was still a freshman.

A thought crossed his mind. What if Yang Su was in fact, Li Lanni's so called fiancé? But didn't the rumors say he was in a vegetative state?

Now that sounded worse. Perhaps that was why Li Lanni was not close to any man. Maybe she was just being loyal to her unconscious fiancé.

He felt like he was going crazy from all the wild thoughts. Why was it so hard to woo a girl?

Forget it. He would just eat his cupcakes to heal his broken heart.

Chapter 70 - Try Another Joke

"Ah Chen, what are you eating?" A lad from his class asked, puzzled. Since when did this guy eat cakes?! Had he gone crazy?

Ah Chen, who was munching on the second cupcake, glared at him in defense. This was from his goddess. No touching!

The guy wasn't initially interested but when he saw how Ah Chen savored it like it was from the kitchen of the gods, he couldn't resist the urge to steal one away when Ah Chen wasn't paying attention.

The result was...

"Urgh.... how do you even manage to swallow this?!"

It was incredibly bland!

As for the guy who was immersed in enjoying the bland cupcakes like they were a rare delicacy, he was crazy! Perhaps his tongue was laced with figurative honey so everything he ate would be sweet.

Actually, Li Lanni had received one of those anonymous messages late the previous night. The dumb stalker had apologized for making her misunderstand Ah Chen. Li Lanni had thought that this might be Ah Chen's way of getting out of trouble but when she thought about it clearly, she felt that Ah Chen didn't look like he was lying when she confronted him. Besides that man from the hospital looked thinner and frailer than most men. Although Ah Chen was also on the slim side, he wasn't that skinny.

Now, her desire to kill that stalker surged even higher. He had made her misunderstand an innocent young man!

She knew that she wouldn't take back those slaps but she still had to apologize. A verbal apology definitely wouldn't suffice.

So after thinking about it, she decided to bake him cupcakes. She would have asked the chef to do it for her but to show her sincerity, she baked them herself using a recipe book.

Sadly, she didn't know it but although the end result looked yummy, their taste was anything but.

...

When Li Lanni parted with Ah Chen, she took a few of Cheng Yu's drafts.

The girl obviously bombarded her with questions since she had seen her speaking to Ah Chen. Li Lanni ignored them and went to Feng Ji International.

Her training lessons would start on Thursday. Although she couldn't give her chance to Cheng Yu, she could still help her get into Star Art International. It would be even better if they became classmates.

Hence she said politely to the receptionist at the lobby, "I would like to meet Ji Xiehan."

The woman at the reception scrutinized Li Lanni from head to toe and frowned when she saw that she was wearing B City University's uniform. "Little girl, do you have an appointment?"

"No, but..."

"You cannot see him. Master Ji is a busy man and will not just see anyone simply because they want to see him."

Li Lanni hadn't expected it to be too easy. She had deleted his contact number before and didn't want to ask her mother for it. She knew that Li Yuming's imagination would run wild. Wild enough to picture herself as Ji Xiehan's mother-in-law at the very least. So she could only ask, "Can I make one now?"

The receptionist didn't look friendly. "Sure. But Master Ji's schedule is full for the next two months. I'll book you in in two months."

Li Lanni almost couldn't hold back her chuckle. Booked for two months? He must be busier than the city's surveillance system.

How could she not understand? The receptionist was obviously deliberately making her give up.

"Forget it. It's an urgent matter. Please call Ji Xiehan's office and tell him that Miss Li is here to see him."

The receptionist was annoyed now. "Who do you think you are that I should make an exception for you? And how dare you directly call our Master Ji's name?"

How hilarious! In the end, you just want to seduce him with your vixen looks, don't you? I have seen many like you! Underage girls who shamelessly want more than they can get."

Li Lanni almost wanted to pick her ears. Underage girls? "And I have seen many like you as well. Receptionists who rudely assume the power to make decisions for the boss. Aren't you afraid that if I turn out to be someone of importance, I will have you fired?"

The woman was stunned for a moment then laughed in the next. "Important? Try another joke. Why would Master Ji know someone like you? You are only being shameless! Doesn't your school give you enough homework?"

"Oh?" Li Lanni raised an eyebrow, it was fun to irk the brainless receptionist. She wondered just how the famed Feng Ji International could hire someone who didn't know to be polite.

But since it was fun to irk her, she didn't mind. "Since you doubt me, why don't you confirm it? It's as easy as calling Ji Xiehan."

The receptionist was about to explode when hurried footsteps were heard. For a reason, Li Lanni had a strange feeling.

"Miss Lanni, are you here for Master Ji?" Qiao Luna asked with a respectful bow.

Li Lanni nodded.

Qiao Luna glared at the receptionist. "Go and receive your final payment and leave!"

The receptionist was shocked to the core but kept a confident front. "Since when does Miss Qiao hold such authority in the company?"

Qiao Luna was the epitome of seriousness. "You have gone against a basic work policy of respect. Not only that, you have also offended an important guest. I'm only asking you to resign. Of course, if you want to wait for Master Ji to find out what happened and kick you out like a stray dog, be my guest."

Qiao Luna then turned to Li Lanni. "Miss Lanni, I apologize for that. Please follow me, Master Ji is in his office."

"Okay." Li Lanni followed her, wondering why she felt something weird about this woman.

Was it because she was Ji Xiehan's assistant and was therefore close to him?

Gah! Why did she just think about that?