

Chapter 91 - Apprentice

"Who is that girl?" Madam Ji asked curiously. Who was that girl that could make her son fall in love and declare loyalty?

"The name is Lanni. Anyway, we will get married when the time is right."

Old Master Ji harrumphed. "I bet that girl doesn't even exist, or I would have seen her."

Madam Ji frowned as she held her chin between her thumb and index finger in thought. "I think I've heard this name before. I wonder why I can't recall it."

"There's no such girl. Don't let this punk fool you!" He said to his wife before glaring at his son. "Xiehan, you must get engaged. I'm giving you one month. If you do not bring that girl you speak of and introduce her to us, or if she is not good enough to hold up the name of our Ji family, you will have to marry Gu Tianxi or Feng Ci."

"What?" Ji Xiehan was stunned. Old man, we have been friends for years. How could you just throw an ultimatum at me? What the heck is this?

When Ji Feifei saw the drama unfold in front of her, she secretly sneered.

Oh, I thought it wouldn't happen.

She knew better than anyone that Madam Ji would never let Li Lanni into the Ji family.

For starters, she had already created a bad impression of Li Lanni in Madam Ji's mind. Aside from saying that Li Lanni had bullied her many times, she had also 'accidentally' let it slip that Li Lanni had a messy private life.

The most important fact was that Li Lanni was from a broken family. Would the Ji family really accept a woman with no proper upbringing?

Obviously, once Li Lanni got rejected, Ji Xiehan would be heartbroken. Then she would step up as an excellent younger sister and comfort him. It was common knowledge that men would easily fall in love with the women close to them.

Besides, who could reject a beauty like her?

Tsk tsk. Just the thought of it made her anticipate. She couldn't wait so long. Old Master Ji should have given him one week!

No one knew what was happening in Ji Feifei's delusional mind, but Ji Xiehan had a bad feeling about her gaze. What was this brat up to?

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Meanwhile, in Li Yuming's villa,

On reaching home, Li Lanni brought Cheng Yu to her studio. Li Yuming liked to have her personal space when painting. So, for her comfort and convenience, Li Yuming had two studios in the villa. The smaller one she had given to Li Lanni since she didn't use it too often.

Cheng Yu couldn't hold back her awe as she looked at the neatly arranged easels, paint, brushes, and palettes. Everything in this studio, even a single graphite pencil, must be expensive and of the best quality. Li Yuming really loved her daughter.

Even though her family was also a wealthy one, they wouldn't ever do such a thing for her. It would be good enough if they didn't throw away the equipment she had bought from her odd jobs' salary.

Li Lanni noticed how awestruck Cheng Yu was and smiled slightly.

She had never seen anyone so obsessed with art. Thanks to her amnesia, she was like a blank sheet of paper, with no dreams. Sometimes she felt empty inside. She didn't have particular interest in anything and only did things because she should. She didn't understand the feeling of being so obsessed with a dream and pursuing it at all odds. But she did like the brightness in Cheng Yu's eyes when she painted. So she would do anything to support Cheng Yu's dream.

Wordlessly, she set up everything they needed for practice. When she was done, she turned to look at Cheng Yu, who was still busy exploring her studio. She calmly went to look for her mother in her room.

Luckily, Li Yuming wasn't doing much. She was only folding her laundry.

She looked up when she heard a knock on the door, "Come in."

Li Lanni walked in and sat next to her on the bed. "Mom, can I ask for a favor?"

Li Yuming paused what she was doing and looked at her daughter with a gentle smile. "Go ahead."

"I brought my friend with me so we can practice painting together. Could you help us out?"

Li Yuming had a smile blooming on her face. She loved art. But she knew that her daughter didn't like it as much. So when she actively suggested such a thing, Li Yuming couldn't possibly say no to her. Most importantly, she couldn't say no to her daughter even she asked her to pluck the stars from the sky, let alone such a simple favor. "You guys wait for me. I'll be there in a short while."

"Thank you, mom." Li Lanni nodded happily and left her mother's bedroom.

On the way back to the studio, she passed by the kitchen and brought some snacks for her friend.

"My mom will be here in a short while. Why don't we have snacks first?" Li Lanni saw Cheng Yu arranging her precious art tools and said to her.

Cheng Yu's joy was beyond words. She was really going to be taught by Li Yuming!!

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By the time Li Yuming arrived, the girls had eaten their snacks and had started sketching.

She quietly crept up behind them and studied their sketches.

"Loosen your hand a little."

"Huh?" Cheng Yu was startled by the sudden gentle voice before her ears flushed. Was Li Yuming speaking to her right now?

"The way you hold your pencil is too tight. It will be easier to sketch if your fingers are as free as possible."

Cheng Yu adjusted her hand immediately. Li Yuming smiled in approval. The girl probably knew what to do already. Perhaps she had a lot on her mind.

Li Yuming looked at Li Lanni's sketch and then looked at Cheng Yu's.

Chapter 92 - Apprentice 2

Although she was Li Lanni's mother, she liked Cheng Yu's sketch more. This young girl was so passionate that her sketches looked like they would come to life. It was hard to imagine just how wonderful they would look once she completed them.

Li Lanni, on the other hand, seemed to do it just because she didn't want to let her down.

While both of them were excellent, Cheng Yu's passion was more encouraging.

Since she didn't want to distract them, she let them do their thing as she sat aside.

The more she looked at Cheng Yu's painting, the more she felt that Cheng Yu was born to paint. When she saw that she was almost done with her painting, she slowly asked her, "Little girl, you are so talented. Which family are you from?"

Cheng Yu paused and nervously replied, "Aunty, I'm from the Cheng family."

Li Yuming was familiar with this name. "Then you must be Cheng Yu. I've heard Lanni mention you before."

Cheng Yu was once again flattered. She had thought that like the Ji family and Ruby's family, Li Yuming would look down on her after learning her identity. But, as expected of her most admired artist!

She broke into a smile.

"Little girl, do you love art very much?" Li Yuming asked, trying to make her voice as friendly as possible.

"Yes, aunty." Cheng Yu stuttered.

"Then, do you want to be my apprentice?"

"Eh?"

Cheng Yu's first reaction was to be shocked. She felt that just she heard something incredible.

What did Li Yuming just say?

Li Yuming smiled gently. "I'll let you think about it."

Cheng Yu was dizzy with sudden excitement. Master, I don't need to think! I'm ready!

Li Lanni, who had been ignored at the side, could only smile helplessly.

Cheng Yu had managed to steal her mother's heart so easily.

One had to know that Li Yuming's love for art was only second to her love for her daughter.

Now that she had found someone who loved art as much as she did, how could she let her go?

She even looked like she almost wanted to adopt Cheng Yu.

However, Li Lanni was not jealous. On the contrary, she was relieved.

If she were to be honest, it was not that she disliked art but she somehow felt it was a responsibility for her. Not a passion. She had always been afraid of letting her mother down. As the daughter of a famed prodigy, who didn't expect her to be a prodigy?

Now that her mother had found a disciple, she wouldn't be under so much pressure anymore.

Cheng Yu was overjoyed as she officially became the first apprentice of the great Li Yuming. This was the happiest day of her life! She couldn't wait to tell Luna the good news.

Li Yuming gave the two of them several points to take note of. Filled with new knowledge and happiness, they slept in Li Lanni's room that night. The next day, both of them left together to the institute. Cheng Yu was walking on clouds all day.

As soon as she was back at Xia Luna's apartment, she jumped onto Xia Luna's back and exclaimed. "Guess what?! I have become an apprentice!"

Xia Luna looked at her over her shoulder with a smile. "As expected of my Xiao Yu."

"Guess who my master is?"

"My mother?" Xia Luna guessed effortlessly.

"How did you know?" Cheng Yu looked awed. "Did Lanni tell you?"

Xia Luna laughed. "Of course not. It's not hard to guess. Not many people can make you so happy."

Cheng Yu sat down and smiled. "You're so lucky... to have her for a mother."

Xia Luna smiled and kept quiet. Yeah, lucky.

"What is it?" Xia Luna asked when Cheng Yu suddenly looked down.

"I..."

Cheng Yu thought about it, then just sighed. She didn't want to spoil the mood, "It's nothing. I just recalled something unpleasant."

Xia Luna knew she had changed the topic, but she nodded silently. And since they were on the topic of parents, she could pretty much guess what Cheng Yu was thinking about.

So she suggested it instead. "On a side note, Xiao Yu, can you move in with me?"

"Huh?" Cheng Yu was taken aback.

Xia Luna languidly sat on the sofa and said to her, "It's quite boring to be on my own."

"But...." could she really just move in?

That was not the most important part because the most important part was the cost.

This was a luxurious apartment. Even if she worked her head off, she couldn't afford half of one month's rent. So she really couldn't share the cost.

A while ago, she was only thinking of asking Xia Luna to let her stay for a few more days as she looked for a new job. And now Xia Luna was asking to live together?!

Looking at her crestfallen expression, Xia Luna knew she had misunderstood. "I don't need you to pay for anything."

"How can that be? This is your house." Cheng Yu protested. She hated freeloading on others.

"You're doing me a favor by keeping me company."

After saying this, Xia Luna realized she didn't make any sense, and Cheng Yu was feeling more and more awkward, so she just became straightforward. "Fine. Once you get a well-paying job, I'll let you help me. For now, you just have to concentrate on your classes."

Cheng Yu was embarrassed. Xia Luna was obviously trying to help her out yet she was the one persuading her.

Two days ago, she had had yet another fight with her parents for the same reason as always: they wanted her to quit the art classes.

But how could she quit? That was her dream! So she outrightly refused to listen to them.

Since she refused to yield, they had threatened to kick her out. She couldn't take their daily yelling anymore. So she packed her essentials and left home on the very same day.

Luckily, she had friends like Lanni and Luna.

She didn't know how to express her gratitude.. She knew they didn't need it, but once she became self-sufficient and wealthy, she would thank them properly.

Chapter 93 - Damned Idiot

And as for whether she would become rich or not, of course, she would. She was an artist. She just needed to work hard and qualify to be employed by Star Art International as a comic artist. Then becoming rich would be only a few steps away for her.

After hesitating for a while, Cheng Yu finally accepted her proposal.

Xia Luna sighed in relief. She was not very good with words; if Cheng Yu stubbornly rejected her again, she wouldn't know how to convince her.

Xia Luna liked spacious apartments, so although she lived alone, there was an extra room in her apartment.

Since it was decided, Cheng Yu quickly moved into the extra room. She would bring over the rest of her things the next day.

Now that the issue about her housing was resolved, she felt a huge burden off her shoulder. It was only then she saw that Xia Luna looked troubled.

Xia Luna was so good at hiding her feelings that one had to be extremely keen to realize that she had something bothering her.

Even then, she didn't like talking about her troubles and hated being questioned about her private life. This was one of the many similarities between the twins.

But Cheng Yu couldn't watch this anymore. She carefully asked, "Did something happen?"

Xia Luna realized that Cheng Yu had noticed her unstable mood. So she sighed and told her with a tinge of annoyance in her tone. "Someone's trying to investigate me."

She hated it when anyone tried to step into her personal space. Even though she knew that person would not be able to find anything significant about her, she still felt irritated.

Cheng Yu was startled. "Someone saw you? This is the only way they would know about you." She then had a sudden thought. "Could it be your mom? Lanni might have told her about you. Perhaps she doesn't trust you and wants to know what kind of person you really are? You know how anxious your mother is when it comes to Lanni's safety."

It was only after she had finished voicing her thoughts that Cheng Yu realized she might have poked at a wound. Her words had directly implied that Li Yuming only cared about Li Lanni and was wary against Xia Luna. While it was true, it would still hurt.

Luckily Xia Luna didn't actually care. "She's not the one investigating me."

"Then who is?"

"Ji Xiehan." Xia Luna said.

Cheng Yu felt her head spin. "Well, now that's not funny."

Because Ji Xiehan was Jiang Xingyu's friend. If he investigated Xia Luna and found out that she was Jiang Xingyu's girlfriend, he would obviously tell Jiang Xingyu.

But, "Are you still unwilling to speak to Jiang Xingyu? He has the right to know, don't you think?"

"What right?"

"As your boyfriend, he should know why you left him, shouldn't he?"

"I don't like him. That's all he needs to know."

Xia Luna realized that Cheng Yu was looking at her like she was a scumbag, so she shrugged. "So what if I meet him? I cannot force myself to love him."

"Then why did you date him?" Cheng Yu couldn't help asking.

Xia Luna didn't want to answer that. It would make her a true scumbag in Cheng Yu's heart.

How was she to say that she momentarily liked a man because he accompanied her when she was lonely, but she had to slip away because she realized that although the man was so deeply in love with her, she didn't actually love him?

That being said, she knew she should have properly broken up with him.

But some things couldn't be changed.

Or maybe.... she should meet up with him and break up properly.

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Meanwhile, Ji Xiehan was now sure that Li Lanni had a twin.

So he started investigating the other girl.

However, it was strange that he couldn't get any records of that girl. If he hadn't seen her with his own eyes, he would think his mother had made up a story.

She seemed to have locked away or deleted everything related to her.

That girl must be a programmer and an excellent one at that.

But it did prove one thing.

Li Lanni's twin was Jiang Xingyu's girlfriend.

Because when that girl disappeared, Jiang Xingyu couldn't find any information about her either. Now he knew why that girl disappeared.

No wonder when they thought of Li Lanni as Xia, many things didn't make sense.

Now they all made sense.

'Damned idiot! He actually mistook Lanni for his girlfriend?

He scared my little beauty for nothing.' Ji Xiehan cursed his friend mentally until he felt better.

At the same time in Jiang Xingyu's villa, Jiang Xingyu, who was reading a newspaper, sneezed suddenly and wondered who was cursing him.

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After coming to this conclusion, Ji Xiehan wanted to tell Jiang Xingyu about it in person as soon as possible.

But he had a pile of unfinished work to complete and when he was done, it was already late at night.

The next morning, Ji Xiehan went straight to Jiang Corporation. However, Jiang Xingyu wasn't in his office. His secretary said that he had gone over to Star Art International for inspection.

Star Art International?! Ji Xiehan jolted.

That idiot was going to 'inspect' his little beauty!

He couldn't wait anymore.

Ji Xiehan wasn't wrong.

In Star Art International, Li Lanni was about to break down.

Jiang Xingyu had been waiting for her arrival at the entrance of Star Art International. As soon as he saw her, he dragged her to the employee's cafeteria on the first floor and took her to the corner most table.

As if that wasn't scary enough, he started giving her various gifts as though they were a very intimate couple.

Li Lanni was dumb stuck when she saw a small pile of gifts of various sizes on the table. Her face darkened.

"Xia, this bracelet is from Amanda Lin's latest creation.. Isn't she the jewelry designer you like the most?" Jiang Xingyu, unaware of Li Lanni's mood, started showing her the gifts one at a time.

Chapter 94 - Inspection

"Uh..." Li Lanni looked at the beautiful purple bracelet in his hands and was speechless. It was beautiful, and she liked it, but she was not Xia!

Looking at her expression, Jiang Xingyu thought that she did not like the present and eagerly but gently said, "If you don't like it, I can ask her to design a custom made one just for you, okay?"

"Well..." Li Lanni was having a hard time. She was on the verge of blurting out, "I'm not your Xia! Your Xia is in Goldenwing Apartments!"

Jiang Xingyu didn't give up. He whipped out a small case containing a gorgeous pearl necklace, the most beautiful pearl necklace Li Lanni had ever seen. "What about this? Don't you like pearl necklaces the

most? This necklace was crafted very carefully, and it's even..." Li Lanni didn't hear the rest of it. She was glancing at the box beside him. It was probably full of presents, each one more valuable than the last.

And the man was coaxing her to accept them like he was coaxing a little girl to accept toys.

Li Lanni couldn't take it anymore. "Well, CEO Jiang, you..." She was just about to say that he had mistaken her for her twin when someone barged in angrily.

"Jiang Xingyu!!"

They both turned towards the entrance.

Ji Xiehan walked in, staring daggers at his friend. Without saying one more word, he dragged him out by the collar.

"Hey! Let go!" Jiang Xingyu protested. This was utterly humiliating!

Li Lanni was surprised by Ji Xiehan's sudden entry. She then sighed, she had to thank Ji Xiehan for his timing. If he arrived a second later, she would have revealed to Jiang Xingyu about Xia Luna.

On a side note, Ji Xiehan wasn't going to beat him up, right? Anyways, it had nothing to do with her.

Li Lanni was about to leave when Ji Xiehan came back.

His previous anger was gone and he looked like nothing had happened just now, even smiling at her charmingly. "Lanni."

Li Lanni was captivated by his smile. The way his lips curled upwards, the gentleness in his blue eyes as he looked at her... how charming!

She snapped back as soon as this thought surfaced.

What was happening with her?!

Why did she keep thinking about him at random?

How could Ji Xiehan not see her dazed expression when she saw him? But he was amused by how she adjusted her expression in a flash. He chuckled lightly before sitting opposite her.

Li Lanni was still uneasy, though she had to admit that she wasn't as repulsed with Ji Xiehan's presence as she was with Jiang Xingyu.

Perhaps it was because she knew that everything Jiang Xingyu was doing was meant for another woman... or perhaps there was another reason she didn't know of.

"Can I pick you up after school today?" Ji Xiehan asked with his signature smile on his face.

"Okay." Li Lanni replied in a daze. Her attention had been stolen by a mere curl of his lips.

When Li Lanni realized what she had just said, she bit her tongue. What was that? Why did she say okay? Had her brain been possessed?

But she couldn't take back what she had said, and the pervert had already heard it, so she could only bite the bullet.

She glanced at the time; her class was almost starting. "I'll go to the studio now."

"Okay." Ji Xiehan flashed yet another bewitching smile, and Li Lanni almost gasped from how handsome he looked.

She literally ran out of the cafeteria to avoid embarrassing herself. That pervert must have already figured out that there was something about his smile that made her brain stop functioning. He must be doing it on purpose! Damned pervert.

"What was that all about?" As soon as Ji Xiehan left the cafeteria, Jiang Xingyu asked him, whining. "Didn't we have an agreement?"

Previously, they had agreed to pursue her fairly and let Li Lanni choose who to like.

But this unreasonable guy had suddenly dragged him and thrown him out of the cafeteria then replaced him?! How could he accept that?!

He couldn't rush back in and fight either because it would cause a ruckus and make his Xia despise him.

Ji Xiehan glared back at his friend, who was glaring at him. "She's not your Xia."

"Is your brain fried?" Jiang Xingyu exploded.

"Your Xia is her twin."

"What did you say?!"

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Because Li Lanni had run all the way, she arrived before the class begun.

As she arrived in her classroom, she couldn't help but wonder why Ji Xiehan was angry with Jiang Xingyu.

He was that angry when Jiang Xingyu interrogated her but she couldn't help thinking beyond that. Could it be he had found out the truth about her and Xia Luna? Don't ask how she figured it out. When she saw that the way Ji Xiehan dragged Jiang Xingyu out of the room, she had a feeling that it was not because of some trivial dispute. It must be something bigger than that.

She didn't want to meddle in matters that weren't part of her business, but Xia Luna had said that she didn't want to be discovered yet. She wondered whether she should call Xia Luna and inform her that she might have been discovered. Thinking so, she went and sat in her place.

Cheng Yu was waiting for her, looking bright and cheerful. "There you are!"

Her cheerfulness infected Li Lanni. "What's the good news?"

"Nothing, I just had a good night of sleep."

Li Lanni cocked her eyebrow. "Xiao Yu, are you... are you in love?" What's with all the good nights?

Cheng Yu almost dropped the pencil in her hand when she realized that her friend had misunderstood and quickly defended herself. "Hell no! I just moved in with Luna, and I'm peaceful, that's all!"

Li Lanni chuckled and looked her with doubt screaming all over her face. "You and Luna..."

Cheng Yu smacked Li Lanni's head. "Don't give me that look. And don't say such frightening things, jeez!"

Both she and Luna were straight, okay?

"Also, stop reading girl romance novels already!"

Chapter 95 - That Should Be Illegal

Li Lanni laughed. Fine, she needed to stop reading such novels already.

Maybe she should focus her energy on the task at hand.

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After class, Cheng Yu went to Xia Luna's, and Ji Xiehan took Li Lanni to best restaurant, and she didn't protest.

For a reason she didn't understand, however, she was nervous.

Ji Xiehan noticed her nervousness and started chatting with her to lighten up the mood.

He cleverly didn't mention her twin. Although he was sure that Li Lanni knew about her, he thought it better not to ask her about it. Especially not at such a time. She might just think the only reason he took her out for lunch was to get information from her.

"Lanni, do you think you could ever date?" As they were chatting, he suddenly asked out of nowhere.

"Huh?" Where was this coming from?

Ji Xiehan laughed lightly at her shocked expression. "I'm just asking. You don't need to answer if you don't want to."

"Oh..." Li Lanni was relieved for some reason.

Ji Xiehan was wondering when it would be time to confess to her. He was initially planning to wait for her to regain her memory, but now, he was under some crazy ultimatum. If he didn't manage to get her to be engaged with him within one month, he would have to marry either of those girls.

Damn! The old man must have done it on purpose!

Seriously, the girl wasn't even particularly friendly with him. How could he get her to agree to marry him within one month?

That was impossible even if he had the magic of a love potion.

But thinking about it, his parents must have loose screws in their heads. What were they implying by suggesting marriage with Gu Tianxi?

Even if all the women in the world died, he would rather die lonely than marry that woman.

Putting her pride and arrogance aside, she was obviously an ambitious woman with one goal in mind: using the Ji family for her selfish benefits.

The Gu family wasn't doing well in business in recent years. It wasn't that he had a problem against the company, but the family wanted to use the Ji family to revive their own company.

The betrothal gifts they were going to ask for were obviously going to be astronomical. It would be shocking if they didn't ask for half of the Ji family's shares in Feng Ji International. Not to mention the woman was a spoiled brat.

Li Lanni might have been spoiled by her mother too, but unlike Li Lanni who was kind and sweet, that woman looked like she could do anything to get what she wanted. Most importantly, anyone who got along with Ji Feifei must be just as evil.

As for Feng Ci, seriously, his parents were even more blind.

Many years ago, the Feng family was in an economic crisis. To save their family, they sold off all their shares in Feng Ji International to the Ji family.

While it looked like a win-win situation, the Feng family couldn't possibly be happy about it.

What decades worth of friendship?

They were obviously finding ways to recover the company, and from the moves they were making, they were not just trying to take back their shares. They were planning to swallow the whole company.

How could his parents want him to marry such a woman? If they didn't use their daughter to make Ji Xiehan give them back the company, they wouldn't be the Feng family. Seriously his parents must have become muddle-headed with old age.

Li Lanni realized that at some point, Ji Xiehan's mind had drifted and he was thinking about something. What was he thinking about so seriously?! He looked quite handsome though...

"You didn't have a good night of sleep? You have dark circles under your eyes." Unconsciously, her voice became gentle with slight concern in her voice.

Her sweet voice jolted him back.

When he heard what she had just asked, his ears flushed with a pale scarlet color and joy flashed in his eyes, "Are you worried about me?"

"What? No..." It was Li Lanni's turn to blush. Indeed, her question sounded like she cared about him.

His dark circles were so slight that one needed to pay attention to notice them. But even then, she somehow found them an eyesore on his handsome face.

She quickly defended herself. "I'm just worried... that my mom would be worried about you."

She scolded herself once she said that.

Now it sounded like she was bringing him home.

Ji Xiehan didn't mind her words. They were a good sign. Perhaps in her heart, she was starting to care about him even just a tiny bit.

His lips curled upwards to reveal a sliver of his snow-white teeth.

Li Lanni looked aside with a cough. Her heartbeat had accelerated slightly. Someone tell this man that what he's doing is illegal!

Ji Xiehan looked at her blushing face and couldn't resist the urge to tease her a little more.

In all the twenty-seven years of his life, he never would have thought that his heart would be stolen by a little girl seven years younger than him. And she was so innocent that it felt like puppy love.

Neither of them knew that at this time, trouble was brewing in the Ji family mansion.

Madam Ji had finally figured out.

"That girl called Lanni. I think I remember her now. But isn't that the name of the girl who bullied you in school? Xiehan couldn't have fallen for that girl, right?" She asked Ji Feifei worriedly.

Ji Feifei shrugged, putting on a wronged expression. "I don't know. I don't know if brother would like such a girl..."

Madam Ji frowned. She had a bad feeling, especially about the surname Li. What if that girl was the person she was thinking about? It wouldn't be fun if his son fell for such a girl.

Chapter 96 - Teaser

Ji Feifei was happy to show it. And of course, she had always had Li Lanni's photo. She was waiting when her mother would ask for it. Finally, her mother remembered about Li Lanni!

She quickly showed her mother a photo of Li Lanni with Yang Su.

Just as she expected, Madam Ji frowned. "She has a boyfriend? If that's the same girl, Xiehan shouldn't chase her.

But once she took a good look at the girl, she frowned in displeasure. "This girl bears some resemblance to Li Yuming."

It had been many years, but she couldn't forget that woman. And from Li Lanni's face, anyone could tell that they were mother and daughter.

Ji Feifei's role was to make Madam Ji sure of it. She pretended to think hard about it then 'remembered' and said, "Her mother is called Li Yuming."

Madam Ji's frown deepened.

Well, the girl looked pretty.

But she had taken her mother's surname.

She personally didn't have anything against that, but she didn't want to give anyone a reason to talk about the Ji family.

Besides, this girl clearly had a boyfriend.

How could she let her son marry someone else's girlfriend? Not to mention, Ji Feifei had said that this girl's personal life was a mess.

Ji Feifei watched Madam Ji's displeased expressions gloatingly.

But then she shrugged helplessly. "Mother, perhaps we are mistaken? It's just a name after all. Brother only said her name is Lanni. He didn't say the surname is Li. Perhaps it's another Lanni. There are many girls called Lanni anyway.

While she put on a caring and optimistic act, she was only making Madam Ji become hopeful only to get that hope crushed harder.

The day they would meet Li Lanni would be quite entertaining.

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The oblivious pair had a delicious lunch before Ji Xiehan offered to drop her off.

Li Lanni didn't reject the offer, and she scolded herself for accepting this so fast.

Could someone tell her why she was getting more and more brainless?

The entire car ride was almost silent, with only slow, soothing music playing in the background.

Even though the entire ride was a smooth one, for some reason, she felt a bit nervous. Nowadays, in the presence of Ji Xiehan, her heart suddenly starts beating loudly. Once they arrived, Li Lanni got out of the car and dashed off like a scared rabbit.

But just a step later, her hand got caught from behind in a firm grip.

Her face went red as she felt him close in on her. She couldn't dare turn to look at him.

"Is... is something the matter?" She stammered.

Ji Xiehan was now right behind her. He was so close that if he moved forward just a little more, their bodies would touch.

Ji Xiehan loosened his grip on her hand a little, but he did not let go. And for some weird reason, she didn't shrug it off. Neither did she try to put some distance between them.

As far as he could remember, they had never been this close to each other.

For a moment, everything he wanted to say flew out of his mind. He was standing so close to her that his senses were filled with her scent.

From his angle, he could see that her face was flushed all the way to her ears, and he knew that he wasn't any better off.

He watched as her other hand tightly gripped her shoulder bag in nervousness. How cute! Her tiny actions tickled his heart.

How he wished time would freeze at this moment.

But, it was just a wish.

Li Lanni recovered from her embarrassment and asked, "You want to say something?"

Ji Xiehan snapped back too, but his voice was hoarse as he spoke. "Star Art International is holding its 9th-anniversary banquet tomorrow. Can we go together?"

His warm breath gently brushed against her face, making her heart flutter like a warm breeze had swooshed against it. Li Lanni unconsciously bit her lip, scolded herself for doing that, and stuttered. "I...I have an invitation." The tutor had invited them to be a banquet in today's class.

"Then let's go together." He said as though it was the most natural thing to say.

Li Lanni pondered about it a bit, at the same time wondering why he wasn't letting go of her hand. If anyone saw their current position, they would misunderstand it. But she couldn't bring herself to remove her hand. She knew she was being silly for thinking this but it felt nice to have her hand in his big and warm hand. Thus they maintained an ambiguous position even though she was feeling a bit awkward. After a moment of hesitation, she answered passively, "I haven't decided whether to go yet."

A smile threatened to surface on Ji Xiehan's lips. That meant she wasn't against going together, right? "Tell me when you come to a decision."

"Okay."

He was glad to hear this answer. This meant that if she was attending it, they could go together. Even better was the fact that whether she was going or not, she would have to contact him to tell him her decision. He bit his tongue in his mouth to avoid smiling.

But somehow he felt that he forgot something important.

Meanwhile, Li Lanni was wondering whether to tell him to move away when he naturally let go of her hand and created some distance between them. She sighed in relief. Her heart was beating so loudly when they were so close that she felt she was losing her mind.

When she looked up to distract her fluttering heart, she found her mother was walking towards them.

Her mother was home? Then had she seen their awkward position earlier? How embarrassing. Li Lanni blushed even harder than she did a moment ago when she almost felt his body against her back.

"Mom..."

Li Yuming glanced at the two of them then glared at Ji Xiehan when Li Lanni wasn't looking.. It was a warning of sorts.

Chapter 97 - What Kind Of Child Upbringing Was That?

Li Lanni didn't know what to say to her mom, so she fled to her room.

Once she left, Li Yuming shot Ji Xiehan a look of disapproval. "I know how you feel towards my Lanni, but it doesn't mean you can take advantage of her. I don't want any shady business."

Ji Xiehan felt awkward. Without a doubt, the 'shady business' Li Yuming was talking about was obviously premarital sex and having children before they got married. Having such a discussion with his mother in law was really... "Auntie, I understand. I will only be with Lanni when she's my wife."

Li Yuming was pleased with his confident and genuine answer, and she even invited him in for a drink. Of course, she would. She liked Ji Xiehan as she would like her own son. She was even happier that he was going out of his way to ensure Lanni's safety. So she didn't have anything against him getting close to Lanni as long as he didn't do anything to hurt her.

Ji Xiehan didn't stand on ceremony. Well, that was one of the perks of having a future mother-in-law who liked you.

Li Yuming personally brewed coffee for him and they had a long, pleasant chat.

Ji Xiehan looked at Li Yuming secretly, trying to assess whether he could ask her about Li Lanni's twin.

Since she was their mother, she would surely know better than anyone.

That idiot Jiang Xingyu had spent all morning trying to get Ji Xiehan into helping him investigate Xia.

Well, he could retrieve the information that the girl had deleted, but he didn't want to go deeper into the matter. Because she was Li Lanni's sister, he respected her privacy, and retrieving her information might just violate that.

All he wanted to know was where she was and what her name was.

But looking at the calm Li Yuming, he decided against it. The fact that Li Lanni's twin didn't stay with her mother and sister was enough to state that they didn't have a good relationship. Besides, that girl went by the surname Xia. It was likely that Li Yuming had not seen her since she had a divorce, and it was likely that deep within her heart, she missed her daughter.

He had already poked a huge wound in Li Yuming's heart the last time. He didn't wish to poke another.

If both he and Jiang Xingyu really reached a dead end, he would ask her. But he had to try his best first.

Of course, he was only doing this because if he didn't, that unreliable friend of his might think he was lying about Li Lanni having a twin and start wooing his little beauty again.

What a headache.

The future mother-in-law and son-in-law duo talked about a few things, and in passing, he even mentioned Star Art International's banquet.

While they were at it, Li Yuming asked about Ji Feifei once again. "How is Feifei? Lanni always avoids the topic whenever I ask her. Is Feifei back in school?"

Ji Xiehan couldn't remain silent about it anymore. Li Yuming genuinely cared about Ji Feifei, but that brat obviously hated her daughter. She didn't deserve it. So he took a deep breath and said it. "Actually, all those things she was accused of were true."

Li Yuming put her coffee cup on the table; it had almost slipped off her hand in her shock. "How can that be? Feifei is not that kind of person!"

Ji Xiehan shrugged. "Well, you don't know her that well."

"But she is Lanni's friend." Li Yuming mumbled.

Ji Xiehan sighed. Li Yuming probably didn't know that it was in fact Li Lanni who had brought the truth to light.

She was the only one in the dark. But he understood her point of view. Ji Feifei had managed to fool even their parents. It wasn't a surprise that she had deceived Li Yuming too.

But for Li Lanni's sake, this couldn't drag anymore. "Well, I don't know about that, but she's good at putting on an act."

Li Yuming trusted Ji Xiehan's judgment, but she still wondered, "But she's your sister. How can your sister be such a person?" It wasn't possible for people who grew up in the same household to have different characters, right?

Ji Xiehan reminded her of one colossal point. "Our parents didn't really spend much time with me when I was young. If that's how they brought her up too, I'm not shocked that she turned up like that."

Li Yuming couldn't refute this. Indeed, how could parents understand their children if they didn't spend time with them? Now that she thought about it, Ji Xiehan had always been left in the care of nannies and tutors when he was little. He was even scared of his parents as a child. Eventually, his aunt couldn't watch anymore and took him with her to Australia.

Seriously, what kind of child upbringing was that? Then wouldn't her grandchildren be in trouble?

"But I'm different because I was taught by you, aunty." He quickly defended himself when he saw that she was on the verge of reconsidering letting Li Lanni befriend a man from the Ji family.

Li Yuming looked relieved when Ji Xiehan said that. "When you have children in future, you must pay attention to them and make sure they grow up the right way."

At the same time, Li Lanni was just descending the stairs to grab a glass of water when she overheard this statement.

She almost tripped on the stairs. What kind of topic was that?!

If it wasn't for the resemblance between her and her mother, she would start doubting who, between her and Ji Xiehan, was Li Yuming's real child.

And the pervert replied in all seriousness. "I will definitely bring them up in a proper way."

Not wanting to be part of that awkward conversation, Li Lanni sneakily went to the kitchen making her presence as scarce as possible and when she was done, returned to her room in a similar way.

Chapter 98 - Banquet With The Pervert

The next evening.

In the end, Li Lanni had decided to attend the banquet.

It was majorly because her mother thought it was beneficial for her to socialize and make friends.

As the most famous artist, Li Yuming had been invited too, but she had an exhibition during the day and would be too tired to attend a banquet in the evening.

By the time Li Lanni finished dressing up, Li Yuming was yet to return from the exhibition. But she still made a phone call and nagged her endlessly about what to do and not to do.

Li Lanni laughed at the last 'don't'. "Don't get too drunk, and do not trust anyone. Not even if it's Ji Xiehan. I know he isn't immoral enough to take advantage of a woman but you're such a beautiful girl after all."

Turned out her mother did have some reservations towards Ji Xiehan after all.

To avoid wasting time, she went to wait at the entrance of the villa. Just as she ended the call with her mother and kept her phone in her purse, she saw a silver bugatti chiron swerve in.

Ji Xiehan had arrived.

She had to hold her breath as the man opened the door and stepped out elegantly, like a superstar stepping onto the red carpet.

His dark blue suit highly contrasted his silver-white hair and for a moment, Li Lanni almost fangirled over how handsome he looked.

He walked over and gave a slight gentlemanly bow. "Ready?"

Li Lanni had to rearrange her thoughts and she could swear that her heart stopped for a second. The man must have done it on purpose, and the slight curve of his thin lips was proof of that.

Not allowing herself to lose her mind to such slight teasing, she grunted in response and followed his lead to the car.

A minute or two passed, and Li Lanni realized that his gaze was on her.

"What is it?" She stammered in askance, and she could have sworn that the look in his deep blue eyes at that moment wasn't entirely pure.

Whatever was running through his mind she didn't know, and she had a feeling she didn't want to know.

Ji Xiehan tore his gaze away and started to drive. "You look beautiful."

Li Lanni involuntarily looked down at her dress. Luckily she wasn't showing too much skin. "Thank you." She said. 'You look handsome yourself.' Of course she couldn't say this aloud.

That was bound to be yet another silent car ride.

There was still time before the banquet started, so Ji Xiehan drove slowly in the name of prioritizing safety. The silver sports car looked totally out of place gliding on the road like a snail.

It wasn't much different from walking all the way.

And all this was because Ji Xiehan wanted to greedily spend some time with her alone.

The thought of other men getting to enjoy the view of his Lanni's beauty made him uncomfortable. He wished he could have her all to himself.

But no matter how much time he bought, they still arrived.

Most of the guests were already there, and the banquet had begun.

Thanks to their tardiness, they attracted quite a lot of attention.

The attention was majorly on Ji Xiehan. Many people had expected him to attend and were eagerly waiting for his arrival.

But what made their eyeballs almost roll out was the beauty he helped out.

Clad in a blue floor-length gown, she looked like a young but capable lady. From her disposition alone, one could tell that she was from some affluent family and her upbringing was definitely impeccable.

The most scary thing was that although their hands were not linked, she and Ji Xiehan looked like a couple despite her young look.

"Who is that girl?" A few guests couldn't keep their curiosity in.

"I'm not quite sure but she looks very familiar. She's so beautiful! Is she Xiehan's girlfriend?" The person who spoke was Jiang Xingyu's mother, and as soon as she was done, she shot her son a look, silently scorning him for not having a girlfriend.

Jiang Xingyu felt wronged. I have a girlfriend, okay!

He walked over to the duo with a smile. "I didn't think you would come."

Before he could catch up, someone, or rather a crazy fool, appeared from nowhere and squeezed himself into the conversation. "Damn! Ji Xiehan, you traitor!" He complained. "How can you hook up with such a beauty and not introduce her? What happened to bro code?"

Wait the most important thing is, do you think you will break up soon?"

Ji Xiehan shot a look at Lin Jian, wanting to pretend not to know him. "What drugs are you hooked on this time?"

Jiang Xingyu wanted to kick him in the guts too.

Before he did, Lin Jian looked at Li Lanni like he was looking at a goddess. "Beauty, my name is Lin Jian. Nice to meet you.

Uhm... this guy is quite boring while I'm interesting and handsome. Do you think you can consider me when you break up with him?"

Ji Xiehan swallowed the urge to dole out a generous beating. Did this fool leave his brains at home?

Jiang Xingyu felt embarrassed too. Did this guy have brains?

'Here goes another of the pervert's perverted firends' Li Lanni thought but maintained a nonchalant expression. "I'm Li Lanni."

Then she did something none of the three friends expected.

She hooked her arm with Ji Xiehan's and smiled sweetly. "Sorry, we're not breaking up any time soon. Xiehan's my fiancé."

Fiancé!

She had just said fiancé...

Lin Jian shut his mouth.

Jiang Xingyu coughed. What?

Ji Xiehan was shocked, his brain taking a while to register what she had just done and said.

Li Lanni was shocked too. She had never thought that she could say such a stupid thing in the heat of the moment just to keep a man off.

The pervert wouldn't be mad, right?

She looked up at him almost desperately, silently pleading him to play along and make his friend stop talking nonsense.

How could Ji Xiehan not understand her plea? He was more than happy to play along. "That's right. Lanni will be my wife soon. You better stop thinking about it. Then he turned to look at her gently, reassuring her that he wouldn't let anyone mess with her.

Of course, neither of them thought of the fact that they were in a banquet with more than a hundred guests and they were currently being watched.

Some distance away, a wine glass dropped as its owner clenched her fists.

Chapter 99 - Banquet With The Pervert 2

Ji Feifei was initially happy when she saw Ji Xiehan's car arrive. When she saw him step out of the car looking so dashing as ever, she almost drooped at the sight. It was not every day that she could admire her brother.

But her admiration turned into irritation when she saw him circle the car and help a woman out. And out of all people, it just had to be Li Lanni.

That damned witch, what had she done to Ji Xiehan?

However, thinking about the drama that was soon to unfold, she kept her calm.

And she was not disappointed.

As soon as Madam Ji saw Ji Xiehan with Li Lanni at the entrance, her face became contracted and she unconsciously dropped the wineglass in her hand!

Putting on an act of the caring daughter, she hurried over and took Madam Ji's hands to check them. "Mother, are you okay? How could you be so careless? Luckily your gown isn't ruined, and you aren't injured.

Don't worry about that girl. She..."

Madam Ji didn't notice that Ji Feifei was beside her, much less hear what she was rambling on about.

Her attention was on the pair still close to the entrance. It seemed like... the girl that bullied Ji Feifei was really the girl that Ji Xiehan liked. And she was also the little girl she had seen together with Li Yuming years ago.

Just as she had predicted those years ago, the girl turned out to be very beautiful, and judging from her disposition, she was well behaved too.

She had only seen Jiang Xingyu and Lin Jian hurry over to greet the pair and didn't hear what they talked about.

But she clearly saw that the girl simply hooked her hand with Ji Xiehan's! Unacceptable! She could not accept such a thing!

No matter how beautiful the girl was, there was no way she was going to let her son be a third party. This was the main point at the moment. In the photo Ji Feifei had shown her, the girl was with another man.

Later, she would ask the girl about it.

Ji Xiehan felt a sharp gaze on him and turned to the direction. Then his blood went cold.

How. Could. He. Forget?

No wonder he had a bad intuition the day before.

How could he forget the closeness between the Ji family and the Jiang family?

This banquet was of great importance to the Jiang family.

Even Jiang Xingyu's parents were here. Logically, the Ji family would be here too.

Darn it.

He smiled at his mother in the distance and clearly saw that she shot him a questioning look. He smiled once again, to express that he would explain later.

It all happened in less than two seconds.

Seeing that the crisis was temporarily averted, he brought Li Lanni along to greet some guests, making Li Lanni wonder why she needed to know so many people.

Even then, she still greeted them and conversed with them politely. A few of them with sharp eyes recognized her artistic talent from the previous competitions she had participated in, some of which she

couldn't remember, and they were eager to invite her to exhibitions as a guest. At the same time, some were willing to employ her in their companies.

Of course, she would consider going to exhibitions, but she gracefully turned down the invites to jobs. Everyone she had spoken to was pleased by her confidence and eloquence. She was so easy to talk to since she wasn't totally clueless about anything.

Li Lanni soon became the center of attraction as Ji Xiehan's partner.

Young master Ji, who was known to lack tender feelings towards the fairer sex, brought a female companion with him today! What happened to finding females troublesome and disgusting?

And look at the way he spoke to that woman, gentleness was oozing from his eyes.

While the bored ones were eager to watch the spectacle as it was not every day that they could gossip about Young Master Ji's love life. They were eager to collect gossip materials which they could chat for three days and three nights.

Many young ladies, who had come to this party for the sole reason of admiring him, could hear the sounds of their hearts breaking in disappointment.

Well, since Ji Xiehan was taken, Jiang Xingyu was an option too.

Li Lanni didn't seem to be intimidated by being the center of attraction. She casually continued to chat with Ji Xiehan and other guests. Her every little action was full of grace.

A while later, Ji Xiehan went to receive a phone call, so she strolled around, casually picking a glass of wine from a waitress.

Even she wondered how she knew all those things. She had been keeping herself up to date with most things so she wouldn't stick out in such circumstances, but she knew that some of those things she had said were unknown to her.

She blinked her long eyelashes and sipped on her wine as she thought of a possibility. She must have learned them before losing her memory, and now she was starting to remember. This was a good sign!

She was still basking in her newfound joy when a chubby waitress suddenly bumped into her!

She had a few wine glasses on her tray, and most of them toppled, a few crashing onto the floor.

Li Lanni was not able to dodge in time, resulting in her gown getting stained.

She sighed as she looked down at her gown sadly. There goes a million dollar gown; her mother had explicitly chosen for her. She wondered if it could be restored again.

"I'm sorry." The chubby waitress apologized, even though she didn't look sorry at all.

"It's alright." Li Lanni said regardless and was now thankful that she had taken her mother's advice and carried an extra dress for emergencies like these.

She looked up to see that the waitress was still looking at her.. They were attracting attention, which Li Lanni didn't like.

Chapter 100 - Is This How Star Art International Treats Guests?

"Miss, I will pay for the damages." The waitress said pitifully.

Li Lanni cringed from the waitress's overly pitiful expression. She had thought that it was an accident, but now she wasn't too sure anymore.

She was starting to get annoyed, "You don't need to. Please excuse me."

However, the waitress blocked her path. "Miss, I will feel really guilty if I don't pay for the damages."

Li Lanni was starting to get irritated. Didn't she already say she didn't need to? She maintained her good mood, nonetheless, not wanting to bicker with a waitress. Besides, more guests were starting to look over. "You don't have to, really. I'm not going to blow up such a small matter, so can you please let me go?"

The guests watching were even more impressed by Li Lanni's attitude. Most heiresses would kick up a fuss and demand exorbitant compensation if they had their clothes stained.

On the other hand, not only did Li Lanni not get angry; she was even rejecting compensation.

Some steps away, Ji Feifei, who was enjoying the show, suddenly glared at the waitress. What was that bimbo doing?!

The waitress shrugged from the glare then directly became more offensive. "Is it because you think I cannot afford it?"

Li Lanni cringed. She wasn't trying to look down on her, but... could she?

"Is this how people from wealthy families behave? You are despicable!"

Li Lanni raised her eyebrows ever so slightly. At the same time, Ji Feifei was smug because Madam Ji was looking over and had displeasure written all over her face.

Seeing that Li Lanni was silent, the waitress thought that she was defeated and became even sharper with her words while keeping her pitiful expression. "What right do you have to act all high and mighty?"

You are just a fatherless bastard. Aren't you just the daughter of a slut? A slut who has been divorced by her husband many years ago! Seeing how you have been acting around men, you must be a slut too!"

A slap rang through the hall.

In that instant, everyone's attention was now piqued.

Li Lanni couldn't hold back anymore; this was her bottom line. She could tolerate being insulted but someone dared to insult her mother!

How dare she? She should also be asking, how come a waitress knew that her mother was a divorcée? Thinking of a possibility, she stepped back as though she wasn't the one who had just administered a slap and asked in annoyance. "How much have you been paid?"

"What?" The waitress was struck dumb by the sudden slap.

"You are here to cause trouble deliberately. Isn't it because you have been paid to do so? Tell me, and I will pay twice more if you point that person out."

The waitress was taken aback. This wasn't part of the script. Wasn't Li Lanni supposed to yell at her and create drama like a shrew? Wasn't the plan to make her lose the image she had just gained, that of an even tempered, well behaved young miss?

"No... no one paid me. What I said just now was the truth!"

Li Lanni smiled slightly then glanced at Si Yulin, who was rushing over. She was unexpectedly calm. "Since you have not been paid to cause trouble, doesn't this mean that employees of Star Art International are like you, deliberately creating a ruckus, probing into guests' personal lives, and hurling unnecessary insults?

Is this how Star Art International treats their guests?"

"Li Lanni, what happened, dear?" Si Yulin asked gently. She was quite fond of Li Lanni.

Li Lanni had displeasure written all over her face as she explained what had just happened. "It's alright if she wants to insult me, but why did she drag my mother into this?"

When Si Yulin heard the whole story, her face was flushed with anger. This was going to ruin their reputation. Most importantly, this waitress dared to insult the trainee she liked very much. And she even insulted Li Yuming!

The commotion had attracted everyone's attention, and Jiang Xingyu's interest was piqued too and he walked over. He was at the other side of the hall just now, so he was unaware of what was happening. When Ji Xiehan ended the call and came in, everyone was staring at Li Lanni.

But instead of going to Li Lanni's side, he stood beside Jiang Xingyu to watch the spectacle silently. His little beauty wouldn't lose to a waitress, right?

A wave of chaos erupted when Si Yulin scrutinized the chubby waitress and said with a frown, "She is not an employee of Star Art International."

"What?"

"How is that possible?" The guests were shocked.

Li Lanni was shocked too. Then who was she? Her eyes darkened. Was what she was thinking even possible?

Si Yulin saw that Jiang Xingyu was glaring at her and explained. "Every employee of Star Art International has undergone training from Jiang Corporation. Not only that, everyone Star Art International hires must be highly qualified, and they must take a test for decorum. They would never behave like this."

The Jiangs could agree with her. Even they were shocked that someone from Star Art International could blatantly cause trouble at a banquet. Since Si Yulin was at it already, Jiang Xingyu and his parents let her settle the matter.

Si Yulin glared at the waitress. "Who are you? Who sent you here?"

The waitress was shocked witless, but when she looked in the distance and saw Ji Feifei's glare, she recoiled and stuttered incoherent words.

Ji Feifei couldn't take it anymore. It was already bad enough that Madam Ji was no longer so angry with Li Lanni. What she had was to remind Madam Ji that people would have a lot to talk about if they accepted Li Lanni into the Ji family. But looking at Madam Ji's expression right now, she had failed miserably.

If that bimbo ratted her out, she would be done for.. She couldn't let that happen.