

Chapter 431 Back Then

Xiao Lingyu could not help but tremble. She really did not expect it would be so dangerous to be liked by Jiang Tao. But, she also knew this was not Jiang Tao's fault.

Gong Tianhao saw that Xiao Lingyu's face was slightly pale, and she looked a little scared. He felt his heart ache as he hugged her in his embrace. He patted her small shoulders and comforted her, "Yu 'Er, don't be afraid. I'm here now. It's alright. I'll protect you and all the members of the Xiao family."

Xiao Lingyu leaned against Gong Tianhao's chest and listened to his heartbeat and his magnetic voice. Her panic and fear slowly subsided.

She lifted her head from Gong Tianhao's chest and nodded, "Yes, with you around, I'm not afraid. Because you will protect us."

At the same time, her desire to become stronger intensified. If she did not become stronger, others could crush her as easily as crushing an ant.

This time, she was very lucky. Gong Tianhao came to her side and protected her and her family. But what if he weren't by her side?

Xiao Lingyu asked curiously, "Then what happened after that?"

Gong Tianhao said, "Tao Zi told me how disappointed he was when you weren't willing to accept his love. He said it was because you told him you were pregnant. Then, he told me the story behind your pregnancy. Back then, I had already suspected you were the woman in bed with me that night. After hearing the story from Tao Zi, my heart skipped a beat, and I became extremely excited.

"At that time, I couldn't care if Tao Zi still liked you. I knew that it was impossible for me to hide my feelings anymore. At that moment, I wanted nothing more than to immediately fly to you and hold you tightly in my arms. "So, I flew to Taoyuan Village to look for you."

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Xiao Lingyu thought of that time Gong Tianhao suddenly appeared at her house with his suitcase. Yan Siming was also there to question her about her pregnancy. Gong Tianhao had a verbal fight with Yan Siming that day. Xiao Lingyu still thought it was very funny.

Gong Tianhao was a little puzzled and asked, "Yu 'Er, why are you laughing?"

Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said, "I was thinking about the day you came and argued with Yan Siming. I find it funny. I think you were quite handsome back then."

"..." Gong Tianhao said unhappily, "Yu 'Er, I wasn't just handsome back then. I've always been handsome, okay?"

In a relationship, people care about what their partners think of them. But normally, women had this concern more than men. Xiao Lingyu rolled her eyes and said, "Yes, yes, yes. You're very handsome every day, alright?"

Gong Tianhao nodded and said, "Yes, you're also very beautiful every day in my eyes."

Xiao Lingyu, "..."

Then, Xiao Lingyu seemed to have thought of something. She stood up and grabbed Gong Tianhao's collar as she questioned loudly, "You said that you came to me only after you knew that the child in my stomach is yours, right? So, your goal is the child, after all?"

Gong Tianhao's expression changed slightly. He immediately explained, "No, Yu 'Er, listen to my explanation."

Xiao Lingyu said with a faint smile, "Alright. I'll listen to your explanation. Let's see what you can come up with." Gong Tianhao wiped the sweat off his forehead. 'Yu 'Er is too smart for me to fool.'

Gong Tianhao told her the truth, "Yu 'Er, you know that I fell in love at second glance. It's just that I've been suppressing it. Later on, when I found out that you were pregnant with my child, I was overjoyed. I felt that you were destined to be my wife.

"At the same time, I understood that when it comes to relationships, you couldn't give in.

"If you like Tao Zi and Tao Zi likes you, then it's fine. I'll give you my blessing. However, you don't like Tao Zi.

"If I have to see you end up with a man you don't like, it's like pushing you into a fire pit. Plus, Tao Zi has a complicated family background. Instead of letting you suffer, it's better to protect you under my wings. "I will definitely not let you suffer any harm, and I will absolutely not allow anyone to hurt you.

"Tao Zi also understood this very well, so after learning everything between us, he decided to bow out and gave us his sincere blessings."

When Xiao Lingyu heard this, she blinked her eyes. She felt that this matter... was very touching

"Yu 'Er, believe in me!"

When Xiao Lingyu became silent, Gong Tianhao was worried that she had gone back to question his motives. "I didn't know relationships in the past, but I understand it now. I'll not make the same mistake in the future."

Xiao Lingyu laughed sinisterly, "Oh. So you think there's a chance you'd make the same mistake in the future."

Gong Tianhao immediately quivered and shook his head, "Of course not. You're my wife for the rest of my life." He was very serious.

Xiao Lingyu burst out laughing. "Alright, alright. Don't be so serious."

Gong Tianhao heaved a sigh of relief. He patted his chest and said, "Yu 'Er, you scared me to death."

Xiao Lingyu found it funny. At the same time, she felt happy and sweet in her heart.

Gong Tianhao was such a powerful man. Yet, he was so nervous in front of her. He treated her so well. What more could she ask for?

Gong Tianhao looked at Xiao Lingyu's smile, and his eyes deepened. He pulled Xiao Lingyu into his embrace and said, "Yu 'Er, please don't doubt my feelings anymore. I was wrong before, but now that I've thought it through, it's even more impossible for me to give you up now."

"Mm. Good!" Xiao Lingyu said with a smile.

"Cough, cough..." At that moment, a cough suddenly came from the side.

This cough immediately startled Xiao Lingyu. She quickly broke away from Gong Tianhao's embrace and turned around to look at the new arrival.

"Mom!" Xiao Lingyu called out with a blush. She had no idea when her mother had returned and how long she had been watching. Xiao Lingyu's face burned.

Gong Tianhao was very generous and did not feel embarrassed at all.

He smiled and called out, "Mother!"

Mother Xiao suddenly thought of something important and said, "Yu 'Er, the trees that have been planted on the mountain are showing signs of yellowing and withering." The two fruit tree experts went back after the saplings with planted. They even brought a few saplings back with them. So Mother Xiao turned to Xiao Lingyu now that there was a problem. Xiao Lingyu frowned and said with some doubt, "Withering?"

The trees were watered with the spring water, and they were cultivated in the farming space so they shouldn't wither. "That's right!" Mother Xiao nodded and said, "I don't know what's going on either." Everything that was planted with the spring water was perfect. Something like this had never happened before. This was very strange. "The fruit trees we planted were all properly planted under the guidance of experts and professors. Logically speaking, this shouldn't happen, right?" Mother Xiao frowned. Xiao Lingyu said, "Mom, I'll go take a look." There was a cable car installed in the mountains, so they could reach the farm directly.

Gong Tianhao supported Xiao Lingyu. The three of them reached the platform, got on the cable car, and went up the mountain.

Even from the cable car, Xiao Lingyu could see that most of the fruit trees were sick.

Gong Tianhao asked, "Yu 'Er, should I get someone to invite Professor Yu and Professor Ji back?"

Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said, "Let's take a look at the situation first."

Her fruit trees were special. Normal people might not notice anything but the professionals would after spending time studying the trees. Therefore, unless it was absolutely necessary, she would not invite professors over. After getting off the cable car, she walked to the row of pear trees. Xiao Lingyu came to

the side of a pear tree and noticed that there were white and yellow leaves on the pear tree. It looked like it was sick.

Chapter 432 Problems with the Trees

“Yu ‘Er, can you tell if these are sick?” Father Xiao walked over and asked.

Xiao Lingyu said, “They look like they are sick. However, it’s hard to say.”

“What exactly is the illness? Shall we invite professionals over to take a look?” Eldest Uncle Xiao asked.

Gong Tianhao nodded in agreement. “Yes, that is a good idea.”

Xiao Lingyu did not pay any attention to them. Instead, her eyes were fixed on a piece of soil.

Just as she was about to squat down, Gong Tianhao immediately stopped her and asked, “Yu ‘Er, what are you doing?”

Xiao Lingyu pointed at a piece of soil and said, “Dad, dig out this piece of soil so that we can take a look.”

Father Xiao and the others were very puzzled, but Father Xiao still followed Xiao Lingyu’s instructions and dug out the soil.

When he did, he immediately noticed something was wrong. Xiao Lingyu’s sense of smell was very sensitive. She could smell the salty smell on the soil.

Father Xiao was closest to the disturbed soil. He also smelled the salt. His brows were tightly knitted. He dipped his fingers into the soil and placed them in his mouth.

Mother Xiao, Eldest Uncle Xiao, and the others were surprised. Eldest Uncle Xiao asked in surprise, “Second brother, why are you eating soil? Is there something wrong with this soil?”

“It’s salty!” Father Xiao exclaimed. He frowned, “Why is the soil salty?”

Eldest Uncle Xiao took some soil to taste too. He frowned. “You’re right.” Mother Xiao did the same thing. “Yes, why is it salty? Could someone have poured saltwater here?” It wasn’t strange for her to think that way. The other villagers kept finding ways to sabotage their farms.

Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said, “Dad, check the other places. Can you find more salty soil?”

Father Xiao dug a few more places, but he couldn’t find any more salty patches.

Father Xiao shook his head. “There’s nothing else. Only this area has it. Plus, the soil here is obviously more moist than in the other places. Could it really be that someone poured saltwater here?”

The saltwater would affect the roots’ ability to absorb nutrients. The culprit wanted the trees to die. However, he had no evidence, so he didn’t accuse anyone.

Gong Tianhao asked, “Then can these trees be saved?” He would definitely not forgive the person who did this. These mountains were planted with tens of thousands of fruit trees. The Xiao Family had invested over a million. If someone wanted to disrupt this plantation, he would definitely let them rot in prison.

Xiao Lingyu looked at these saplings, lowered her eyes, and seemed to be deep in thought.

Then, she said to Mother Xiao, "Mom, go to my room. There are a few bottles of water there. Bring them over."

Mother Xiao immediately understood and said, "Okay, I'll go get them now."

After Mother Xiao left, Xiao Lingyu and the others walked to a normal sapling.

This time, without waiting for Xiao Lingyu to speak, Father Xiao and Eldest Uncle Xiao squatted down and tasted the soil.

"The soil is salty but not as salty as the previous location," Father Xiao said. Xiao Lingyu nodded. They checked a few more fruit trees. The sick trees were surrounded by salty soil. The normal ones were not affected.

Father Xiao looked at Xiao Lingyu and asked, "Yu 'Er, can you tell what's the problem?"

Xiao Lingyu said, "I have some guesses now, but I still need to confirm them. Dad, uncle, I need you to go to the peanut and soybean fields to see if they are affected or not." "Okay!" The two moved immediately. Peanuts and soybeans could only be harvested once. If this happened there, they could lose millions. They only planted three Mu of land for the last season of peanuts, but they had earned almost nearly two million. Third Uncle Xiao's tofu business was booming as well. People actually were willing to pay a higher price to get them. It showed how valuable these peanuts and soybeans were to the Xiao Family.

After the others left, Gong Tianhao asked in puzzlement, "Yu 'Er, what's going on? is it really possible that someone poured saltwater here?"

Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said, "Probably not." Xiao Lingyu looked around and said, "Everyone in the village knows that I have installed surveillance cameras here. Some of them are very well hidden. They won't risk it." Gong Tianhao had even provided her with night vision cameras. Xiao Lingyu had informed the villagers about this situation.

"Furthermore, the affected area is more than a few mountains. If people did this, they would need a lot of saltwater.

"It's impossible to transport such a large amount of salt at night without people knowing. Based on the scale, they would need not one or two bags of salt but hundreds of them.

"On top of that, hundred bags of salt cost hundreds of RMB. No one would be willing to waste that money. Plus, the case of Zhang Xiaolan and Zhang Chunjiao is still fresh in their minds. I don't think the villagers are that stupid."

Gong Tianhao frowned and asked, "What if it's someone from outside the village? Like the neighboring Back Mountain Village?"

Xiao Lingyu looked at Gong Tianhao in confusion.

Gong Tianhao explained, "Some time ago, the thieves who stole Little Light and Big Light had accomplices not only in Zhang Chunjiao but also some villagers from Back Mountain Village. They were

arrested and imprisoned. “Two were detained and fined. Another two were jailed for three months. Is it possible that their families wanted to take revenge? With a group working together, they could have done this.”

Xiao Lingyu smiled and shook her head, “Tianhao, have you forgotten that there are people guarding the mountain at night? Plus, if a whole group came, the cameras would have alerted us. So I’m sure this is not man-made.”

Gong Tianhao agreed with Xiao Lingyu’s analysis.

He frowned and asked, “Then what exactly is going on?”

Xiao Lingyu said, “I’m guessing we’re dealing with halophile.” “Halophile?” Gong Tianhao asked, “What’s that?”

“They are worms who like to eat salt,” Xiao Lingyu explained.

“What? Is there such a thing? Then, doesn’t it mean the salt we eat is not clean?” Gong Tianhao said with confusion.

Xiao Lingyu smiled and said, “This kind of organism needs soil to survive. Once they leave the soil, they can’t survive.”

“Why does it sound like an earthworm to me?” Gong Tianhao muttered, “I heard that this earthworm also likes to stay in the soil. I also heard that if you cut it off, you can turn one earthworm into two.”

Gong Tianhao was born in a rich family. He had read many things about the countryside, but he hadn’t experienced true countryside life before.

Xiao Lingyu looked at Gong Tianhao. He looked adorable.

She smiled and said, “That’s right. If an earthworm is sliced, it can grow into two. You are quite knowledgeable. Have you seen it before?”

Gong Tianhao said proudly, “Of course.” Xiao Lingyu said, “However, earthworms are beneficial organisms. They soften the hard soil and make the soil more beneficial for plants to absorb nutrients. On the other hand, halophiles are the opposite. They are pests. “They are not big, only the size of a baby’s pinky. They will eat up everything in the surrounding soil. They like the taste of salt a lot.

“But they don’t have a long life. When the food perishes, it will die off too.

“Their digestive system turned their food into carbon dioxide. The only exception is the salt. So after they die, the salt stays in the soil.”

Chapter 433 The Root Cause

“Yu ‘Er, it’s the same at the peanut fields. Some places are salty, and some are not.”

“It’s the same with the soybean fields!”

Father Xiao and Eldest Uncle Xiao came back very quickly.

When they returned, Xiao Lingyu and Gong Tianhao were still standing beside the small sapling. They asked anxiously, "Yu 'Er, what's going on? Could someone have poured saltwater at the farm?" Tens of thousands of saplings and hundreds of Mus of peanut and soybean fields were worth millions. It would be a big loss. If someone was behind this, then they really had a deep hatred for the Xiao Family.

Xiao Lingyu shook her head. She walked over to a normal-looking sapling and told Father Xiao, "Dad, take the hoe and loosen up the soil around the tree."

Father Xiao was a little confused, but he obliged. He and Eldest Uncle Xiao picked up the hoe and started to shovel the soil. They dug until they were around a foot deep.

"Stop!" Xiao Lingyu noticed something among the dug-up soil. Father Xiao and Eldest Uncle Xiao noticed it too.

Father Xiao stretched out his hand and caught the white worm. He frowned and asked in puzzlement, "A halophile worm?"

Eldest Uncle Xiao looked at the worm that looked like a silkworm and said, "It seems like we've found the cause." Then, he said in puzzlement, "But we've just cleared the mountains, and the saplings have just been planted. How can there be halophile? Is the entire mountain crawling with them?"

Generally speaking, halophile wouldn't be found on newly-developed farmlands. Halophile preferred places with high salinity, which were not good for crops. Therefore, they didn't expect the fruit trees to be infected by halophiles.

It was hard to grow anything on salty land. After these halophiles died, they would leave behind salt deposits. Due to the salt deposits, the tree leaves in the nearby area would turn yellow and then wither.

Father Xiao was confused. "Why are there halophiles here?" There had to be at least two halophiles for the tree leaves to turn yellow. They had to find the halophiles, or else the trees might die.

Xiao Lingyu thought for a moment and said, "It might have something to do with the water." In other words, it was most likely to do with the spring water. Salt had certain bactericidal and disinfecting effects.

However, a single solution couldn't solve everything. Most bacteria were afraid of salt, but some of them thrived on it. The perfect example was the halophile.

The salt we ate had been processed and filtered, so we didn't need to worry about finding them in our cooking. Even if we accidentally ate one, it was fine because the halophile couldn't survive in our stomach.

The spring water was very nutritious. It could nourish the drinker. Perhaps, it had attracted the halophiles. This was something that needed to be verified. "What?" Father Xiao was stunned, and then he realized his daughter meant the spring water. If that were true, then it meant that they couldn't use the water anymore. What would they do then?

Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said, "It's hard to say. We'll wait for Mom to come back first."

Father Xiao's expression was grave. Xiao Lingyu said with a smile, "Dad, don't worry. It's easy to destroy the halophiles. We only need to sprinkle some limestone." Halophiles like salt so alkali was their natural

enemy. Once they encountered alkali, they would shrivel up and die. Therefore, they were an easy pest to deal with.

Even if they were attracted there by the spring water, they could be dealt with in the same manner. Things could still be saved.

Father Xiao's eyes lit up. He patted the back of his head and said with a smile, "Haha. You're right."

However, to Xiao Lingyu, this was a good thing. This way, the villagers wouldn't think that her crops were too abnormal.

If her crops continued to flourish, it was inevitable that someone would suspect something. Everyone was using the manure from the Little Cattle King, so how come Xiao Lingyu could grow crops that were much better than theirs?

The appearance of the halophile would lower that suspicion. It meant that Xiao Lingyu's crops were susceptible to disease like everyone else's.

The few of them waited for a while longer, and Mother Xiao brought a bottle of mineral water over.

Mother Xiao passed the bottle of water to Xiao Lingyu.

Xiao Lingyu said, "Uncle, why don't you put the worm on the ground?"

Uncle Xiao did as he was told.

Xiao Lingyu unscrewed the lid and poured the water directly onto the worm.

The worm wiggled about. Its head turned left and right as if sucking the water. Then, they could see with their eyes how the worm had grown bigger than before. This proved that the halophile was drawn here by the spring water.

Elders Uncle Xiao asked in surprise, "Yu 'Er, what kind of water is this?"

Xiao Lingyu said very calmly, "This is not ordinary water. I asked my friends at the Academy of Agricultural Sciences to use Little Light's excrement to develop something special." At this point, Xiao Lingyu deliberately said, "Uncle, this is just an experiment. We don't have it in large quantities. I hope that uncle can keep it a secret."

Elders Uncle Xiao obviously knew the importance of this. He nodded and said, "That's for sure."

As for Gong Tianhao, he was not a farmer, so he didn't care about this.

Xiao Lingyu looked at the worm on the ground. "It looks like we've found out the root of the problem. Dad, uncle, I need you to find someone to purchase some limestone.

"Mom, please tell the villagers that Little Light's manure might attract halophiles, so tell them to prepare some limestone of their own too."

Mother Xiao nodded and said, "Okay."

Then, she looked at Xiao Lingyu and said with some heartache, "Yu 'Er, you've been busy for the whole afternoon. Go back and rest. We'll take care of the rest."

“Okay!” After all, she was pregnant. She felt tired after standing for a while. “Then, dad, Mom, uncle, we’ll go back first.” Gong Tianhao called out and helped Xiao Lingyu leave.

Chapter 434 Endless Money

The villagers were shocked when they heard that the fruit tree saplings had withered due to halophiles. They knew that halophiles grew on salty soil. But why would the mountains have salty soil? If the mountains’ soil were saline, the mountains wouldn’t have been able to grow trees and herbs in the past.

Later, they heard the Xiao Family say that the halophiles came due to the use of the Little Cattle King’s manure.

The Little Cattle King’s manure contained a certain amount of salt. Perhaps that had attracted the halophiles. That cleared up the villagers’ suspicion.

Although the halophiles were destructive, it was not hard to get rid of them. All they needed to do was sprinkle some alkaline salt. To that effect, every household in Taoyuan Village went to town to buy limestone powder.

This made the seller extremely happy.

Even if every household only bought a few catties, with the entire Taoyuan Village combined, that was several thousand catties of limestone. That was a big business.

Xiao Lingyu needed an amount that was far too large for the town to supply. The Xiao Family used the car and went to the nearby towns to collect all the limestone. After the villagers bought the limestone, they ground them into powder and sprinkled them in the field. Most of them had small farms. The vegetable fields were only one or two Mus.

Even though Xiao Lingyu had promised to buy all the vegetables, she gave the price according to the quality. The better the quality, the higher the price. Therefore, the villagers took care of the crops meticulously, hoping they would bring the family more income. Due to the mountain contracts, most of the villagers were well-off already. However, no one would complain about having too much money.

While everyone was working in the fields, they started chatting.

“Zhengyang hired some more people to do some work today.” There was some envy in his words.

“Chengbang’s family is good friends with Xiao Zhengyang’s family. His family is always hired.”

“You’re right. When they need fewer people, they will only hire Xiao Chengbang and Xiao Chengchun’s families. We’ll only be hired when the Xiao Family needs more workers.”

Some were already satisfied. She said, “That’s already not bad. Just working for the Xiao Family, my family has earned nearly 3000 today. Think about it. In the past, this is impossible. There were no odd jobs to go around in the village. We barely had enough money for food, much less savings. Now that the Xiao Family has planted so many peanuts and soybeans, the odd jobs keep coming.”

“You’re right.” Someone concurred. “In our village, as long as they’re not lazy, they can earn some money. We now have the budget to build new houses and help our children’s marriages.”

“Speaking of, who would have thought halophiles would grow in the mountains. No wonder their saplings look so yellow.” “That’s right. Halophiles normally prefer saline lands. If they didn’t discover this early and deal with the pests the right way, the saplings might all die.”

“The fruit trees and the soybeans and peanuts will cost the Xiao Family several million in damages. In fact, I heard Xiao Lingyu had spent at least two million to buy these saplings.” The people around sucked in a breath.

“Xiao Lingyu is getting richer and richer. She spent a few million to rent the mountains, then hired a bunch of people to work, and now she spent so much to buy the saplings. Her money is simply inexhaustible.”

“That’s not true. I heard that she borrowed five or six million from the bank.”

“Is the bank willing to lend her money?”

“In the past, we only knew to go to the bank to deposit money. Who would have thought the bank would lend people money too? But she borrowed so much money from the bank. Does her family own the bank?” Some villagers found it unbelievable.

“But that’s because she’s capable. I heard that the bank didn’t loan people money for nothing. There’s high interest. Qiuying told me that the five million was only on loan for two years. After two years, she has to return six million.”

“Six million? That’s one million extra.”

“That’s why not everyone can afford to borrow money from the bank. Do you think the bank is willing to loan money to people like us?”

Eventually, the topic was pulled back. “It’s a good thing that Xiao Zhengyang’s family found these halophiles in time. Otherwise, the consequences would be unimaginable.” “That’s right. They would have lost millions.”

“I heard from Qiuying that Xiao Lingyu was the one who found them.”

“She is really clever.”

“Xiao Lingyu and Gong Tianhao are getting married soon, and the date has been set.”

“Both of them are young and like each other. Even if it’s for the sake of the child, they will definitely get married before the child is born.”

“Do you guys think that this child really belongs to Young Master Gong?”

“It should be. Didn’t you notice how happy Old Master Gong is after the date has been set? He told everyone he would invite the whole village to the hotel for a banquet when his great-grandson was born. He even promised to have all the villagers experience flying on a plane.”

“Just how rich is that family? There are hundreds of families in our village. It’ll be expensive to have the banquet at a big hotel.”

“That’s what he said. I wonder if he’ll keep the promise or not.”

Chapter 435 Investigation

"Boss, boss," Gong Tianhao was having a global meeting with his subordinates when Situ Xing suddenly barged in and said loudly, "Something bad has happened."

Gong Tianhao turned his head and shouted at Situ Xing, "Get out!"

Situ Xing looked a little embarrassed and wronged. He touched his nose and said in a low voice, "Alright then, I'll get out. After your meeting, I'll have to tell you that someone is investigating sister-in-law."

"Wait, come back!" Gong Tianhao's ears were sharp, so of course, he heard Situ Xing's muttering

He closed the conference and said with a sharp gaze, "Did you just say that someone is investigating Yu 'Er?" Situ Xing nodded and said, "That's right. Someone is investigating sister-in-law. Our people have arrested them. After interrogation, they told us they were under the orders of the Jiang family to investigate sister-in-law. They are the Jiang Family's assassins." At this point, his face was filled with anger as he said loudly, "That must be an order from Old Man Jiang. This old man, why is he so nosy? Why is he suddenly investigating sister-in-law?" Gong Tianhao's presence turned sharp, and his eyes flashed with a trace of malice.

He said coldly, "Tao Zi just came back and Old Master Jiang immediately sent people over. He must have obtained some news.

"The people he sent over last time were all intercepted. He got nothing. It looks like he still hasn't given up."

Situ Xing was still a little confused, and he asked again, "But boss, why would Old Man Jiang suddenly investigate sister-in-law?"

"Because Tao Zi likes Yu 'Er. Old Master Jiang probably has found that out." Gong Tianhao did not hide anything.

Furthermore, there was no need to hide this matter anymore.

He and Xiao Lingyu were already in love and were about to get engaged. Even if Tao Zi liked Yu 'Er, he was very understanding. He would not interfere with their relationship.

"Ah?" Situ Xing was surprised. "That cold popsicle actually likes sister-in-law? Does sister-in-law know?" Then, his eyes were filled with intense gossip.

Young Master Jiang and his boss were indeed good friends. Even the person they liked was the same woman.

However, his boss was better. He got sister-in-law pregnant already. Even if Xiao Lingyu didn't like him, the child was a huge favor to his boss. But thankfully, his boss' hard work paid off.

Situ Xing's eyes sparkled as he asked curiously, "Boss, you and Young Master Jiang like the same woman. Will you fall out because of that?"

Gong Tianhao rolled his eyes at him and said unhappily, "I'm afraid you've watched too many TV dramas. I'm sorry to disappoint you. We didn't have a fall-out."

Tao Zi was a very broad-minded man. Plus, because he liked Xiao Lingyu, he couldn't be with her. Therefore, he withdrew.

Situ Xing, "...” Why didn't they fall out? How disappointing! Gong Tianhao glanced at him and said, "Why? Are you disappointed?" He looked at Situ Xing sinisterly. If the latter said yes, he would have to pay.

Situ Xing shuddered and shook his head, "No, of course not."

Gong Tianhao pulled the topic back. "Did those people find anything? Did they send the information back?"

Situ Xing shook his head and said, "They haven't found anything yet."

"Something's not right." Gong Tianhao's eyes were cold as he said, "If they didn't find anything, how did Old Master Jiang find out about Yu 'Er?"

Situ Xing was stunned for a moment before he reacted. He said seriously, "Boss, you mean that the information about sister-in-law might have reached Old Man Jiang's ears already?" Gong Tianhao nodded and said, "It's not a possibility, but a certainty."

Situ Xing immediately flew into a rage and cursed loudly, "Those bastards, I'll skin them alive!" He didn't expect them to give him false information after his interrogation.

Gong Tianhao thought for a moment and said, "Last time, Old Master Jiang sent some normal scouts over, and I obscured everything.

"However, Old Master Jiang must have heard the news from somewhere and had his suspicions aroused again. So, he sent his assassins over this time. He really needed to get to the bottom of the truth."

Speaking up to this point, he said mockingly and disdainfully, "The old man sure values his control over Tao Zi. It's hard to train family assassins. These assassins will not take missions normally. However, Old Master Jiang utilized them just to prevent anyone from affecting Tao Zi. In the end, his people fell into our hands."

At this point, Gong Tianhao realized Jiang Tao needed to usurp the power of the Jiang Family as soon as possible.

If Old Master Jiang continued to do this, he could end up hurting Yu 'Er?

Currently, Gong Tianhao was there to protect Yu 'Er and her family. But what if he was careless and allowed the assassins to capture Yu 'Er?

Gong Tianhao thought for a moment and said, "Keep the assassins captive. I'll leave them with you to experiment on. I'll go talk to grandfather now." Situ Xing, "...”

Chapter 436 Old Master Jiang's Surprise

When Old Master Jiang received the call from Old Master Gong, he asked with a smile at first, "Ol Gong, where are you hiding now? Are you planning to be a coward now?" Old Master Gong immediately scolded him over the phone, "Bullshit. Ol Jiang, you're the coward."

“If you’re not a coward, why can’t I find you in the capital?” Old Master Jiang mocked, “Have you gone into hiding?”

Old Master Jiang was actually testing him. He wanted to know where Old Master Gong was so he could tell the rest of the Gong Family. Once they knew, they would go and trouble Old Master Gong.

He knew that Old Master Gong didn’t have good health. Last time, he was so provoked by his nephew that he fainted. The doctor said that he couldn’t be provoked anymore.

However, Old Master Jiang wanted Old Master Gong to suffer more tribulations. It was best that he’d die from it. Without Old Master Gong, the Gong Family would shrivel with just a brat at the helm. That was his dream.

Then, the Jiang Family would soon overtake the Gong Family. As long as Old Master Gong was around, the Jiang Family would forever be placed second. Jiang Huaiyuan had fought with Old Master Gong his entire life already, and he was always in second place. He wanted to take down Old Master Gong so that the Jiang Family would be the first family in the capital. But Old Master Gong was no fool. Plus, the two of them had crossed swords most of their lives, so they understood each other very well. To prove that his health was improving, Old Master Gong said loudly, “OI Jiang, I’m recuperating. The doctor says I need peace and quiet. I can’t have that in Beijing.”

When Old Master Jiang heard Old Master Gong’s energetic voice, he furrowed his brows tightly. The old man’s voice is too powerful to be suffering from any illness. Has he really found a peaceful place to recuperate? That’s impossible.’ He knew that Old Master Gong had taken a bullet near his heart when he was young. It made surgery impossible. The bullet wound affected his health, and he normally couldn’t speak too loudly. But now...

Old Master Jiang asked with a smile, “OI Gong, your voice is full of energy. It sounds like you’re getting better.”

“You’re right,” Old Master Gong responded. “The doctor said I can live for another eight or ten years without any problems.”

Eight or ten years!

Old Master Jiang’s pupils constricted, and his expression was filled with disbelief. ‘Has OI Gong’s body recovered?’

While Old Master Jiang was pondering that, Old Master Gong got to the purpose of his call. “OI Jiang, are you investigating a girl recently?” Old Master Jiang’s pupils shook. “How do you know?” He received constant reports from his assassins in the first few days, but then, they went completely silent. Old Master Jiang had a bad feeling. Old Master Gong said angrily, “How do I know? Hah! The person you are trying to investigate my granddaughter-in-law. Now, they are in Hao ‘Er’s captivity. How do you expect me not to know about this?”

Old Master Jiang’s eyes trembled, and the phone almost fell. He said in disbelief, “What did you say? You said that girl is your granddaughter-in-law?”

“Of course,” Old Master Gong answered firmly. Then, he added sternly, “OI Jiang, why are you suddenly investigating my granddaughter-in-law? Also, how did you know about my granddaughter-in-law?”

Then, he paused for a moment. His tone was unusually solemn and stern as he said loudly, "Jiang Huaiyuan, I'm warning you. If you dare to do anything to harm my granddaughter-in-law, you will definitely regret it."

Old Master Jiang was still incredulous. He asked, "You're saying that I'm investigating your granddaughter-in-law?! Ol Gong, you're not lying to me, are you? I'm clearly investigating my Jiang Tao's crush."

"Ol Jiang, are you suspecting that I'm lying to you?" Old Master Gong was furious. "Do I need to lie to you? What does your Tao Zi's crush have to do with my granddaughter-in-law? Besides," Old Master Gong paused for a moment and said sharply, "I heard that your Jiang Tao is engaged to that child of the Qin family. Do you think that under your suppression, Jiang Tao still dares to like other girls?"

Old Master Jiang's face was dark, and his temples were throbbing.

"Also, don't you know your grandson? Since he is engaged to the girl of the Qin family, he will not do anything to let her down. "Ol Jiang, you are really getting more and more muddle-headed as you get older. You have a good grandson. You can raise him normally, but you have to turn your grandson into an emotionless robot. Is this what you want to see? Even if Tao Zi manages to raise the Jiang Family to great heights in the future, will you be there to see it? How many more years do you think you'll still be here on Earth?"

"Gong Zhen!" Jiang Huaiyuan's face turned even darker, and his anger soared.

"Alright. That's all I want to say. You can heed my advice or not, your choice." After saying that, he directly hung up the phone.

Chapter 437 Old Master Jiang's Fury

"Master, what's wrong?" Butler Jiang saw Old Master Jiang's furious look when he walked into the room.

Old Master Jiang pursed his lips and suppressed his anger. He ordered sternly, "Go and call Qin Yan over."

Butler Jiang was shocked. He didn't know how young madam had provoked the old master. However, he still carried out the order respectfully.

Just as he was about to turn around, Old Master Jiang stopped him. "Wait. Take this photo and get someone to analyze it."

Butler Jiang's veins twitched. He still followed the order and said, "Yes, Master!" Then, Butler Jiang asked in confusion, "Master, is there anything wrong with that photo?" Old Master Jiang said coldly, "If I'm not wrong, there's a big problem with that photo." Then, he hit the ground with his crutch and said sternly, "I might have been tricked." Butler Jiang's pupils shrank.

The Old Master had been scammed, and the scammer was Qin Yan.

Butler Jiang sighed in his heart.

“The Old Master is aged. He has been competitive all his life. Now that he has been tricked by a junior, he is naturally angry.

‘However, that child from the Qin family is really bold.’

Butler Jiang shook his head and left. Actually, Butler Jiang only got half of it right.

Old Man Jiang was angry because of Qin Yan’s scheme, but what made him even angrier was that the assassins he had sent out had been caught by that brat from the Gong family. He knew his assassins would not return anymore. That was a huge loss to the family. And it was caused by a little girl’s scheme. It had made him lose face in front of Gong Zhen too. So how could he not be angry? Therefore, his anger had to be directed at the culprit.

Speaking of, Old Master Jiang was really funny. Back then, Butler Jiang had reminded him that the photo was suspicious. However, Old Master Jiang said that the young madam of the Jiang Family should be at least a little bit scheming.

But the young madam had schemed against him. Whose fault was that?

In any case, Old Master Jiang had lost both his assassins and dignity because of it. Naturally, Qin Yan had to pay the price.

On the other side, after Old Master Gong hung up the phone, his expression was also abnormally angry.

“Jiang Huaiyuan is ridiculous. What era does he live in?” Old Master Gong muttered, “How can he control his grandson like this and hurt the innocent?”

He was furious when he thought of this.

When he heard his grandson say that Jiang Huaiyuan was investigating his granddaughter-in-law, he was shocked and filled with doubt. Why would Jiang Huaiyuan suddenly investigate Yu ‘Er? He had fought with Jiang Huaiyuan for most of his life and knew him very well. He wouldn’t investigate the girl for no reason.

Later on, his Brat told him that Jiang Tao also liked the girl. However, he had bowed out of the competition after the Brat and the girl got together.

Jiang Huaiyuan, that old bastard, somehow got the news. He found out the girl was Jiang Tao’s crush. He planned to harm the girl.

Jiang Huaiyan was already quite old. However, he still held onto the power of the Jiang family tightly. He had a suspicious personality. Wasn’t that tiring? Wouldn’t his life be easier if he just relaxed and enjoyed life?

Gong Tianhao heard his grandfather and smiled. “Grandfather, you don’t need to be so angry. We’ve always known that Old Master Jiang is an overbearing, autocratic, and stubborn person.” Grandfather Gong said, “I know. That’s why I feel so sad for him. He acts like the Jiang Family will fall once he steps down. “Even if that happens, it’s his fault. Who told him to hold onto the power so strongly despite his age. If he didn’t let go and allow his juniors the space to grow, how can they become stronger?”

Situ Xing gave Old Master Gong a thumbs up and said with a grin, "Old Master, you're still more prescient and open-minded. You gave your power to Boss long ago."

Old Master Gong said proudly, "Of course. Do you think I want to exhaust myself to my death?"

Situ Xing nodded and said, "So, why can't Old Man Jiang figure that out? His life is so tiring."

Gong Tianhao rolled his eyes and said, "I wonder where Grandpa Jiang got this news from?"

Situ Xing's eyes lit up, and he said, "Boss, why don't we go to the Jiang family and ask around?"

Gong Tianhao shook his head and said, "No need. Let Tao Zi handle this." Then he narrowed his eyes and said, "Since he intends to wrestle for power, I'll help him. Currently, he'll never have his freedom as long as that old man is alive."

Old Master Gong coughed loudly. No matter what, Old Master Jiang was these people's senior. They shouldn't talk about him like this.

Situ Xing heard the cough and stuck out his tongue. He nodded. "Boss, you're right. If that Old Man Jiang doesn't die, Young Master Jiang will not have any freedom. In that case, we shall help Young Master Jiang." Old Master Gong, "... These two youngsters are actually plotting how to deal with Jiang Huaiyuan right in front of me.

Old Master Gong sighed in his heart and said, "The future belongs to the younger generation. If you want to deal with Old Jiang, then be careful. He's an old fox and not easy to deal

with."

"Yes!"

Chapter 438 Investigation!

After Jiang Tao put down the phone, he held the phone so hard that his veins were about to pop out. His expression was serious, with pain and disappointment. He closed his eyes, and when he opened them again, his sharp eyes shone with determination and desire.

In the past, he was like a puppet. He could not have his own thoughts and feelings. He was very obedient. Even so, his puppeteer was still worried. He wanted to cut off everything around the puppet so that the puppet would be obedient to the master alone.

'Grandpa, you shouldn't have done this. In that case, you can't blame me for seizing the power of the Jiang Family.

'You've forced my hand. I have someone to protect now. I will not allow anyone, not even grandpa, to harm her.'

Jiang Tao suppressed the feelings in his heart. He had to see her find her happiness. To do that, he had to be strong.

Since Jiang Tao had made that decision, he had to move. Even if he missed this place, he no longer had the right to stay. That day, he moved back to the capital and left Xing Yin County.

He didn't say goodbye to Xiao Lingyu. He felt that he did not have the face to see her.

Because of him, he almost brought her a total disaster.

Xiao Lingyu had no idea she had caused such a huge commotion. She also didn't know Jiang Tao had left in a hurry because of it. No one told her that she just narrowly escaped danger again. Gong Tianhao had shielded her.

Xiao Lingyu went up the mountains again.

Since the source of the wilting was discovered early, there were no severe consequences. Previously, almost half of the trees were infected. Now, the leaves had turned back to green. In just a few days, these saplings had all recovered their vitality.

"Yu 'Er, these saplings have healed." Gong Tianhao, who didn't know anything about farming, was impressed.

"Thankfully, the halophiles were discovered early and measures were taken in time." Xiao Lingyu explained to Gong Tianhao, and then she let out a soft sigh, "I am really thankful. Otherwise, the peanuts and soybeans in these few hundred mu of land might have been wasted."

Gong Tianhao smiled and asked, "Are the worms that dangerous?" "Yes," Xiao Lingyu said, "It's about time for the peanuts' blooming season. If the halophiles stayed, the blooms would wither very fast. Then, the peanuts won't grow. It's the same for the soybeans."

"I didn't think a small worm can have such destructive power." Gong Tianhao couldn't help but exclaim.

Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said, "A single person can't topple a state but what if it's a large group? It's the same thing. One or two halophiles is fine, but a large group of them can destroy a whole large farm."

"Yu 'Er, you've been here for a long time already. It's such a hot day. You and Tianhao should go back first." Mother Xiao walked over with a straw hat and said, "Anyway, other than watching, there's nothing else you can do anyway." "... " The corner of Xiao Lingyu's mouth twitched. Only her biological mother would be so direct with her.

Gong Tianhao nodded in agreement and said, "Yu 'Er, you really can't be of much help now. Let's go back first."

These people made her feel like such an invalid.

One or two people made her sound like she only knew how to eat.

However, Xiao Lingyu touched her big belly and realized she was indeed no different from an invalid.

Xiao Lingyu and Gong Tianhao went down the mountain.

When they reached home, Xiao Lingyu felt a little tired.

After Gong Tianhao sent Xiao Lingyu back to rest, he returned to the Gong family.

Gong Tianhao was very concerned about the origin of Old Master Jiang's news. This represented a hidden danger for Yu 'Er.

This person had to fulfill three properties.

First, they had to be close to Old Master Jiang to get the news to him.

Second, they had to know about Xiao Lingyu's existence and purposely bring her up in front of Old Master Jiang. But why? To eliminate Xiao Lingyu.

Third, the goal was someone who understood Old Master Jiang and wanted to use his hands to deal with Xiao Lingyu.

Therefore, this mastermind was the real culprit and Gong Tianhao had to find them out.

With his analysis, the person was most likely a woman. And this woman was probably related to Jiang Tao. In her eyes, Xiao Lingyu was her love rival. It was a good plan to use Old Master Jiang's hands to remove Xiao Lingyu.

However, this person didn't expect Xiao Lingyu was Gong Tianhao's lover. In fact, Old Master Jiang didn't expect that too.

Old Master Gong told Old Master Jiang that his family's assassins had been captured. They would not return. That was a warning.

The warning would make Old Master Jiang feel humiliated.

That humiliation would turn into anger. And there was only a person whom he could unleash that anger on...

Chapter 439 Qin Yan's Panic

"Master, the result for the photo is back." Butler Jiang said respectfully with a hint of anger on his face.

"Speak!" Old Master Jiang said coldly, his eyes cold and stern.

Butler Jiang said, "The photo has been tempered with a computer." Then, Butler Jiang showed the two photos in his hands to Old Master Jiang.

One of the photos was of Jiang Tao and Xiao Lingyu.

The other photo was of Gong Tianhao and Xiao Lingyu.

However, other than the male lead, the two photos were exactly the same. Beside the same big tree, the man was hugging Xiao Lingyu. His face was turned slightly to look at her.

Obviously, one of the two photos must be fake.

It was impossible for Jiang Tao and Gong Tianhao to replicate the same action at the same location with the same woman.

When the two photos were placed side by side, a discerning person would be able to tell at a glance which one was real and which one was fake instantly.

In the picture, Jiang Tao's body movement was intimate, but his eyes were dim.

The male lead in the other picture was the complete opposite. Even in the picture, one could see that his sharp eyes were filled with affection and tenderness.

When Old Master Jiang saw the two photos, his expression immediately darkened. His sharp eyes were bursting with intense dark fire, waiting to erupt. He held his crutch and rubbed the jade ring on his thumb. Butler Jiang explained, "Master, the picture of Young Master Gong and this girl is the original. Someone use Photoshop to transform Young Master Gong into Young Master."

"Good. This is just perfect!" Old Master Jiang spat out the words. "The girl from the Qin Family is so clever that she'd think she can pull one over me." It seemed that the old man had forgotten he was the one who approved of the girl's scheming nature.

Butler Jiang was silent. As the mistress of the Jiang Family, she couldn't be sweet and naive. The Jiang Family needed a cunning and vicious mistress. However, this woman had plotted against the Jiang Family before she even entered the family.

Old Master Jiang's face darkened as he pondered for a moment before ordering, "I need to find out where the Qin girl gets this photo."

Jiang Huaiyuan didn't want to care about this anymore since it didn't involve Jiang Tao. He understood the Gong Family kid very well. He was a person who valued his privacy. However, the girl from the Qin Family managed to get her hands on this photo. This meant that she had a certain level of capability.

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However, for Old Master Jiang, a woman who was too capable wouldn't be easy to control.

On top of that, there was another reason. Why would Qin Yan swap Gong Tianhao's face for Jiang Tao? It was clear that she wanted to use his hands to eradicate this woman in the picture. But why would she want that?

If the picture was unadulterated, then it was understandable. No woman would want their fiance to mingle with another woman. It was understandable.

However, the picture was not even real. The woman in the picture was in love with Gong Tianhao and not Jiang Tao. To think that the Qin girl would use his hands to remove a woman who had nothing to do with her fiance was unreasonable.

But once Old Master Jiang thought it through, the answer soon came to him. She must love the actual man in the picture. That was why she needed the woman in the picture removed. Old Master Jiang's eyes gathered fire. His face was gloomy, cold, and terrifying, but his expression was calm as usual.

When Qin Yan arrived, she greeted Old Master Jiang. When she saw Old Master Jiang's expression, her entire body trembled, and her heart was in her throat. Her expression also showed panic, fear, and guilt.

She didn't know why Old Master Jiang suddenly decided to summon her.

But when she entered the door and saw Old Master Jiang's terrifying and fearful expression, her heart jumped, and she had a bad feeling

She lowered her head slightly and thought for a moment. Then, she raised her head and revealed the gentlest and most perfect smile. She cautiously called out, "Grandfather!"

Old Master Jiang threw two photos at her face.

He didn't hold back. The corner of the photos was sharp. They slashed across Qin Yan's fair and tender face, and a bloody scar immediately appeared.

Qin Yan's pupils shrank. While she was shocked, she instinctively covered her injured face with her hand.

Then, she felt something sticky.

When she looked up, it was blood.

This woman valued beauty very much. Even if she had a small pimple, it was the end of her life. Naturally, she was very scared. This was no different from disfigurement in her mind. It was the most serious thing she had faced.

However, she was about to be proven wrong.

"Qin Yan, aren't you going to give Grandpa an explanation?"

Chapter 440 Qin Yan's Performance

Qin Yan's face was wounded. It was worse than the apocalypse. Qin Yan stared at the blood on her fingertip. Her fair face was filled with panic and anger. Her face was ruined. How could that be? She was most proud of her face.

Because of this face, she was the number one socialite in the capital.

Because of this face, she managed to open many doors.

Because of this face, countless men knelt at her feet.

Because of this face, she was named the Beautiful Angel. Because of this face...

But now, this face...

As Qin Yan stared at the bloodstain on her fingertip, one of her hands was clenched into a fist. Her skin was as white as snow, and it revealed the bulging veins on her skin.

If the culprit weren't... she would definitely... kill them.

However, before Qin Yan could react, a cold and dignified voice entered her ears.

"Qin Yan, aren't you going to give Grandpa an explanation?" Old Master Jiang coldly looked at Qin Yan with a vicious gaze. In the past, he was very satisfied with Qin Yan. But now, he felt that this woman was too shrewd. She was also not she appeared to be.

It was fine if she liked Jiang Tao because then her schemes would be used to help Jiang Tao. However, if she didn't like Jiang Tao, then clearly, she would plot against Jiang Tao and drag down the entire Jiang Family.

Old Master Jiang folded his hands together. He rubbed the jade ring on his thumb.

He was thinking.

Was Qin Yan the right woman for Jiang Tao?

With her family background, status, looks, and influence, this woman was undoubtedly the most suitable person for Jiang Tao and also the most suitable person to be the mistress of the Jiang family.

When Qin Yan heard grandfather Jiang's question, her heart trembled. The anger on her face retreated, and her face turned pale. She was fearful and guilty. She knew how stern Old Master Jiang was. She had heard many stories about him since she was young.

Old Master Jiang was a tyrannical and stubborn autocrat. He was ruthless and merciless. He didn't show mercy even to his family.

For the past few decades, the Jiang Family was ruled by this overlord. The voices that questioned him either disappeared or became powerless. It was clear who was behind the silence of the dissent.

Qin Yan's face paled even more when she thought about this. Her entire body trembled uncontrollably.

However, Qin Yan was, after all, the daughter of the Qin family. She was the eldest daughter of the eldest son. She had been nurtured by the Qin family since she was young. Her temperament was stronger than most women. Moreover, with her status, no matter how angry Old Master Jiang was, he couldn't do anything to her.

At worst, he would strip her of the chance to be the young madam of the Jiang Family. That was perfect. It was not that she wanted that position that badly anyway.

Qin Yan was too shocked to notice the two photos that had cut her face.

Qin Yan carefully patted her chest and secretly took a few deep breaths.

Then, she covered her injured face with one hand. With tears at the corner of her eyes, she showed an aggrieved and innocent expression and asked in a weak and gentle voice, "Grandpa, did Yan 'Er do something wrong to make you so angry?"

Butler Jiang, who was watching from the side, suddenly froze, and he took a deep breath.

'What is this pretense? What is this acting?

'I have no idea the eldest daughter of the Qin Family is such a hypocritical woman.' At the same time, he secretly admired this woman's courage. She actually dared to play tricks in front of the old master.

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"Grandfather, if Yan 'Er really did something wrong, I will do my best to improve and change. I am willing to heed Grandpa's advice."

The corners of Butler Jiang's mouth twitched.

Grandfather Jiang's face darkened a little more.

Grandfather Jiang watched her performance coldly, his eyes showing some disdain. His tone was indifferent, but it carried a tight sense of dignity. He said, "I am just an old man. Who am I to advise the great Miss Qin?"

"Qin Yan, you can be scheming. In fact, the Jiang Family requires a cunning mistress to lead the family. "But to think that you'd actually scheme against me? Qin Yan, who told you to do this? Is it Qin Xingbao?"

Qin Xingbao was the head of the Qin family and also Qin Yan's father.

Qin Yan's beautiful eyes widened, and her expression seemed to be in disbelief. The guilty look on her face was instantly exposed, and her heart kept pounding.

Qin Yan forced herself to be calm and ask innocently. She looked up with her pale face. "Grandpa... What are you talking about? Why can't Yan 'Er understand?"

At this moment, Old Master Jiang didn't get angry. Instead, he smiled with a deep coldness.

There was no need for him to beat around the bush with a little girl.

He looked at the ground with his eyes and asked sternly, "You still don't understand?! Alright, I'll spell it out for you. Qin Yan, tell me, what's with these photos?"

Qin Yan finally noticed the photos on the ground.

When she saw one of the photos, her pupils contracted violently. She could no longer maintain her calm and was on the verge of collapse!