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"You said you don't like me, but actually deep down you love me very much, right?" "You're even having dreams about me, just that you are too shy to express it, right?" said Nan Xing confidently.

"All mom dreams of his uncle." Erbao suddenly interjected.

"Huh?" Nan Xing was surprised.

"Erbao, what are you saying?" Ning Ran exclaimed, her face flushed.

"I am speaking the truth! If you don't believe me, you can check with brother." Erbao retorted.

"You dreamt of my brother? Why would you dream of him?" Nan Xing was relentless in getting an answer out of Ning Ran.

"Are you crazy? Why would you believe what a kid said? Why would I be dreaming of him?" Ning Ran scolded Nan Xing.

"Yeah, that's exactly what I am asking you. Why would you be dreaming of him? Don't tell me you like my brother? No wonder you are always so cold towards me. It's because of my brother, right?" Nan Xing was hit with a sudden realization.

"You must be mad. Who said I like him? I feel sick just by looking at his poker face!" Ning Ran shouted.

"You don't like him? That's good. I will convey exactly what you said to my brother later. Can you repeat what you said just now?" Nan Xing replied.

"You are crazy!" This angered Ning Ran.

"Mom said, I feel sick just by looking at his poker face!" Erbao repeated on behalf of Ning Ran.

"You again!" Ning Ran shouted at Erbao.

"But that's what you said, mom!" Erbao retorted again.

"Ok, I will convey this message to my brother later, so that he knows you don't like him" Nan Xing said.

"Why are you so annoying? Do you have nothing better to do?" Ning Ran asked Nan Xing. "Want to hear the truth?" Nan Xing replied.

"No, I want to hear a lie. OF COURSE I want to know the truth!" Ning Ran yelled.

"The truth is, I think the way my brother looks at you is quite fishy too." Nan Xing said in a serious tone.

"Crazy! All of you are crazy!" Ning Ran scolded.

"Since you said you don't like him and he makes you feel sick, this makes things so much easier." Nan Xing laughed.

"Don't say such things in front of a child!" Ning Ran reprimanded Nan Xing.

"Ok." Nan Xing kept quiet obediently. "We shall talk about it in private then."

"Go out! Don't kick up such a scene in my bedroom!" Ning Ran pointed at the door.

"I just wanted to ask you to get ready. We are going to eat." Nan Xing said.

"Yay! Time to eat!" Erbao jumped in excitement.

"Didn't you just eat?" Ning Ran looked at Erbao.

"No mom, that was lunch! It's dinner time now!" replied Erbao.

"Don't you guys need to rest? We are going straight to dinner?" Ning Ran thought that Nan Xing should have some rest. After all, he was the one who spent the most effort during this period of time.

"We have already rested enough. Come to the hotel restaurant after you get changed. The chef here is not bad, I'm sure you will be satisfied." Nan Xing made a silly face and went out of the room.

Compared to that poker face Nan Chen, Nan Xing was a stark contrast.

Half an hour later, after putting on some makeup and changing into a new set of clothes, Ning Ran arrived at the restaurant with the kids.

The table was already filled with a very sumptuous meal.

Everything on the table looks so tempting to Ning Ran, except for one, the fish.

She had been eating fish for a few consecutive days, such that she felt sick just by looking at fish now.

At her seat, Erbao can't wait to start eating.

However, she tried to restrain herself after Dabao told her to wait, even though she had to keep swallowing her saliva.

"Brother, we are all waiting for you." Nan Xing shouted towards the door.

Nan Chen, dressed in a black suit, walked in.

After a haircut and a clean shave, Nan Chen had transformed from a 'jungle man' to a smart-looking, domineering CEO.

Although this person is really annoying, but he is drop dead gorgeous from all angles, Ning Ran thought to herself,

Everything about the way he looked, including his face, figure and charisma, was simply perfect.

There were good-looking men all around, but he was indeed the only one this handsome.

Following right behind Nan Chen was Zheng Lunlun, who had a style of his own, but equally good-looking.

Zheng Lunlun was manly but had softer features, which gave him a more feminine aura.

With Nan Xing, Ning Ran and the two kids also present, the restaurant server was stunned. These people must have come straight out from a painting, how can they be all so good looking?! He thought.

"Let's start eating." Nan Chen said after he sat down.

Upon hearing this, Erbao, who had long restrained herself, was elated and started eating immediately.

However, Ning Ran did not allow Erbao to help herself to the food first, as there were table manners to follow. Instead, Ning Ran would take whatever she wanted to eat for her.

Nan Chen took this in. A woman who bothers to teach her child manners can't be too bad, he thought.

Even though he had not eaten such a good meal in a long time, Nan Chen still took his time to eat slowly and did not gobble down his food.

As Ning Ran came from a rich and respectable family, naturally, she was taught to have good table manners. However, Nan Chen had an air of nobility that even she couldn't beat.

The two people who looked the most exaggerated were Erbao and Zheng Lunlun.

Zheng Lunlun had not lifted his head or spoken a single word since he started eating.

"Lunlun, slow down." Nan Chen felt pitiful at this sight.

"Dad, this tastes so good!" Zheng Lunlun had a look of extreme contentment.

"Brother, this child can't even recognize people now. We need to get him treated as soon as possible!" Nan Xing said with his brows furrowed.

"I have already contacted the best neurosurgeons overseas, and he will be starting treatment once we get back to Jiangcheng. I have checked, it shouldn't be a problem, and it would be just a matter of time before he recovers." Nan Chen said.

"That's wonderful! Otherwise, this child would suffer so much." Nan Xing replied.

"You're a fake dad!" Zheng Lunlun looked at Nan Xing.

"Dad." He looks at Nan Chen and said.

Then, he turned and looked at Ning Ran and exclaimed, "Mom!"

OMG, why did he say that?! Even though Ning Ran knew that Lunlun wasn't able to think normally, she still felt really awkward.

"Lunlun, please get better soon. Otherwise, we would have to start sharing our mom." Erbao sighed.

"I will be bringing Lunlun back to Jiangcheng tonight. The rest of you should rest for the night and set off tomorrow." Nan Chen said.

"This is too rushed, brother. You should rest as well. It has been tough on you during this period of time." Nan Xing said.

"I am fine; there is still a lot of work waiting for me to settle in the company. Grandpa has been worrying a lot; I have to get back as fast as possible. I can take a nap during the flight." Nan Chen replied.

"Well, ok." Nan Xing nodded.

"Mom, can we go with uncle?" Dabao asked Ning Ran.

Ning Ran was momentarily stunned. Why do these kids like that poker face so much?

"Let's go.....tomorrow." Ning Ran replied.

Since poker face did not enjoy being in the same flight as her, she should not find trouble for herself.

"Ok." Dabao replied obediently, although he couldn't hide the look of disappointment on his face.

"Rest for a while before going back, your dad will be with you." Nan Chen said gently to Dabao.

"Ok, uncle." replied Dabao

"The children's room has been prepared. When we return to Jiangcheng, they can stay there right away." Nan Chen said.

What did he mean? Ning Ran felt that something wasn't right. He was going to bring the kids back to the Nan family already?

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"The kids have always been staying with me." Ning Ran retorted immediately.

"From this incident, it's obvious that you can't even protect the kids. Do you want something bad to happen to them again?" Nan Chen looked at her coldly.

Ning Ran couldn't find any words to reply.

"You mean, everything was my fault?" Ning Ran said.

"I didn't say everything was your fault, but this incident indeed proved that you were not capable enough of looking after the kids. Children of the Nan family are different from the other kids. Everything they do will be observed and judged. If they continue staying in that low-class estate, it is easy for them to get attacked any time!" Nan Chen and Ning Ran started arguing at the dinner table.

Dabao and Erbao looked silently at each other.

"Your girlfriend was the one who caused it, not me! Furthermore, the kids were not kidnapped at my house. You can't put all the blame on me!" Ning Ran raised her voice.

"This is not a matter of who caused it. The topic of discussion now is the safety of the children. It is safer for them to stay at the Nan family. We can't afford to take any risks!"

Nan Chen was already losing his patience. He thought that Ning Ran was selfish and possessive, without any regard for the children's safety.

Ning Ran felt wronged, although indeed, she did not want to lose the rights of the kids to the Nan family.

But the kids were her flesh and blood. Was it wrong for a mother to want to be with her children? A mother did not want to lose her children because she loves them, how can that be called being selfish?

Suddenly, tears welled up in Ning Ran's eyes.

Ning Ran was not an emotional person, but she just felt like crying at that instant. She just felt so wronged and she was no longer able to control her feelings.

"Mom....." Erbao was shocked. She put down her chopsticks and looked at Ning Ran.

"I am not staying at the Nan family!" Dabao, who was quiet until now, spoke up, expressing support for Ning Ran.

"I am not staying too! I will be with mom!" Erbao followed.

The kids thought that Ning Ran cried because she worried about them staying at the Nan family.

No matter how intelligent the children were, it was still difficult for them to grasp the actual reasons for the adults' arguments.

Ning Ran's tears stunned Nan Chen.

He did not think that he had said anything that hurt Ning Ran. Everything he expressed was merely facts and he was only thinking for the children's safety.

Nan Chen was very well aware that he would not get lucky every time, to be able to have the children back.

"Mom, don't cry. Dad! You are bullying mom." Zheng Lunlun was upset with Nan Chen.

"Don't join in the fight." Nan Xing gave Zheng Lunlun a look and hoped that he would stop.

"Dad is bad!" Zheng Lunlun continued to give Nan Chen his angry stare.

"My dear Lunlun, please don't make things worse!" Nan Xing was unable to stop Lunlun.

"Nan Xing, you are their father. What do you think?" Nan Chen gave Nan Xing a cold stare.

"Errrrrrm.....I....." Nan Xing looked from Nan Chen to Ning Ran and felt torn.

If he was honest with himself, he naturally hoped that the kids stayed at the Nan family.

But looking at the tearful Ning Ran, he couldn't bear to say that.

Nan Xing thought that if he expressed support for Nan Chen's idea, it would be two men ganging up against one lady.

"Do you wish to put your children at risk of being in danger again?" Nan Chen asked Nan Xing sharply.

"Of course I don't wish for that to happen. Ning Ran, would you like to consider....."

"F*** you! Over my dead body!" Ning Ran cut him off before Nan Xing could finish his sentence.

Initially, she only felt wronged. But after Nan Xing joined in the conversation, she felt that the two men from the Nan family were ganging up to pressurize her.

Initially, she felt wronged; but now, she was exasperated.

"I gave birth to the kids and I raised them. Where were you people from the Nan family during all those times? Have you contributed a single penny or even anything? Now that the children are all grown up, you are here to take them away from me? Just because the Nan family is so wealthy, do you think you can bully a weak woman like me? Shame on you!" Ning Ran yelled.

Nan Xing mumbled gibberish under his breath.

Nan Chen felt awkward and took a deep breath. He didn't expect Ning Ran to spout vulgarities. It seemed that the conversation had to stop here.

"Let's meet at court then. Let the judge decide who shall have the rights of the kids." Nan Chen stood up.

Ning Ran stared at Nan Chen angrily, but did not utter a single word.

The Nan Family was one of the most prosperous families in the Flower City. Ning Ran was well aware that if they had to go to court, she had no chances of winning.

Poker face Nan Chen was threatening her.

"The kids are mine. You do not have any decision rights on this matter." Ning Ran persisted.

These words had some effects on Nan Chen. He was merely their uncle. The children's dad, Nan Xing, had not even said anything yet. Indeed, it seemed like he was meddling in another family's affairs.

Nan Chen gave Nan Xing a hard stare and stopped talking. He instructed Zheng Lunlun to leave with him.

"Dad is a bad guy! I am not leaving!" Zheng Lunlun was pitting himself against Nan Chen.

Nan Chen looked even more uncomfortable. Why was it that everyone was against him?

Although he needed to settle some business matters, the other reason he decided to leave with Zheng Lunlun in the evening was so that he could get medical attention at once.

"We have to go back to see the doctors!" Nan Chen said to Zheng Lunlun coldly.

"You are so bad! You are mean to mom!" Zheng Lunlun continued to give Nan Chen the angry stare.

"Let's go!" Nan Chen dragged Zheng Lunlun away from his seat.

Zheng Lunlun was usually afraid of Nan Chen and never dared to retort.

However, things were not the same now. Because of the brain damage Zheng Lunlun suffered, his intellectual abilities were regressed to that of a young child's.

As such, as Nan Chen tried to drag him away, he held on tightly to the back of the chair and refused to move.

This scene that was unfolding was unsettling to the restaurant server. This group of unbelievably gorgeous looking people was fighting with each other?!

Nan Chen felt like he was going mad. This was so embarrassing!

"Ok! Do whatever you want!" Nan Chen, who was in a bad mood, finally let go of Zheng Lunlun.

He had meant well, but look at what he got in return!

"Hmpf!" Zheng Lunlun exclaimed.

Ning Ran immediately gave Nan Xing a look, urging him to appease the situation.

Ning Ran knew that Nan Chen was going to bring Zheng Lunlun to treat his brain condition.

She was also hoping that Nan Chen could take Zheng Lunlun back, so that he could seek medical attention as soon as possible.

However, it wasn't her place to comment on that. So she could only trust Nan Xing to take on the task.

But Nan Xing could not understand what Ning Ran was trying to communicate to him as she had just hurled vulgarities at him a moment ago.

"Brother, you should hurry on and leave. We will take Lunlun back." Nan Xing had completely misinterpreted Ning Ran's "look".

Ning Ran felt like she was going to explode at that moment. What an idiot!!!

"Are you asking him to stay because you are going to find him a doctor?" Ning Ran questioned Nan Xing.

"I.....didn't brother already made the medical arrangements?" Nan Xing was confused.

"Then why are you asking him to stay???" Ning Ran yelled.

Only then Nan Xing realized that was what Ning Ran was trying to mean.

"Lunlun, leave quickly with uncle. Uncle will bring you to the doctor's!" Nan Xing tried to persuade Zheng Lunlun.

"Hmpf! you are a fake dad!" Zheng Lunlun refused to budge.

Nan Xing was at a loss now. He was the fake dad, and Nan Chen was the bad dad. Both of them could not be trusted.

You see, not that I didn't try, but I'm unable to do it, your highness! Nan Xing looked pleadingly at Ning Ran.

Looks like I have to do this myself! Ning Ran stood up and walked over.

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"Lunlun, you need to go with Pok…go with him. He can treat your sickness, and we will get to play again." Ning Ran said in a gentle voice.

"No!" "Be obedient. Let's go, or else your head will hurt tomorrow, as if you have knocked against a rock. The pain will cause put you in so much pain that you can't even eat or sleep!" Ning Ran advised continuously.

Zheng Lunlun touched his own head, not knowing what to do.

"Come on, you are going to go with him on a plane, and will reach there in no time. Once you have completed the treatment, you can then play with Erbao and Dabao." Ning Ran said.

Zheng Lunlun still hesitated. "If you do not go through the treatment, a worm this long is going to live in your brain." Ning Ran picked up a chopstick.

"This worm is going to grow, and grow. If you do not have it removed, it will continue to grow, and your brain will – BOOM! – Explode!" Ning Ran had no choice but to threaten him.

This has truly frightened Zheng Lunlun, who was protecting his head with his two hands. "Let's go now. You will be fine once we have the worm removed." Ning Ran was relieved that her tactic worked. Nan Chen cannot help but frowned after witnessing the scary tactic that this woman used. Was she always so evil??

There was one second Nan Chen almost believed the words Ning Ran said, and started imaging a worm of a chopstick's length growing in the brain. It was just terrifying!

"Alright." Zheng Lunlun was finally convinced.

Nan Chen heaved a sigh of relief. In this world, it seems like evil women called the shots.

It is ridiculous to think that Zheng Lunlun actually believed her words.

All the inner thoughts aside, Nan Chen was glad that Zheng Lunlun was willing to leave with him.

"Mum, I'm leaving." Zheng Lunlun was reluctant to leave Ning Ran.

Ning Ran was torn between laughing and crying, "Let's get moving. I hope the next time I see you; you will not call me your mum again! I have had enough of this!"

"Bye, mum!" Zheng Lunlun waved goodbye.

Ning Ran sighed and said, "Goodbye. Get going now."

"I want to send uncle off." Dabao said.

Ning Ran paused for a moment. Okay, you may do so!

Even a child knows to do so. It may seem disrespectful if I do not send them off!

They went to the top of the building, while waiting for the flight to take off.

"Safe trip, uncle." Dabao waved goodbye.

Nan Chen, who was walking towards the airplane, turned around and hugged Dabao, "See you tomorrow!"

He then hugged Erbao, "Do not eat too much. You might upset your stomach."

Erbao was embarrassed, "I did not eat a lot okay!"

Seeing their adorable faces put a smile on his face. These two babies are definitely capable of lifting his spirit.

When he turned around and looked at Ning Ran, his poker face reappeared. He then looked at Nan Xing, and waved at him.

No matter how he disliked the woman, Nan Chen would always stay a gentleman.

The plane took off and flew into the night sky.

Ning Ran and the rest returned to the restaurant. She felt like having a drink.

She had gone through a lot of pressure and it was time for her to relax a little.

Moreover, just by thinking of her children's custody battle back in the Flower City made her even more uncomfortable. A drink at that time would help.

Nan Xing was pleased when he heard the Ning Ran wanted to drink. He immediately got the waiter to serve the most expensive red wine.

"You deserve this; it must be difficult for you, after years of raising these kids. Cheers!" Nan Xing raised his glass.

"Of course it's difficult. I do not want to accept your toast." Ning Ran said.

"Then what should I say instead?"

"You should stand by my side and never let the children leave me. They are my life." Ning Ran became agitated when someone brought this topic up.

"I understand, really. I am not going to fight against you. The children are yours." Nan Xing said sincerely.

"Then why didn't you support me just now?"

"That's my brother, and you know him. You can only win him over with intelligence, not by force! No one in the Flower City is his match. If we made him our enemy, we will be in a disadvantage!"

Ning Ran frowned. What intelligence, what nonsense is this!

"If I cannot offend him, does that mean I will have to give you guys my children?" Ning Ran asked.

"What is wrong with that? Our house is spacious, has many rooms for them to choose from. And if you decide to move in as well, wouldn't you be closer to the kids too? My house is definitely a much better choice compared to yours!" Nan Xing said in agitation.

"Me? Moving in your house?"

"Yes, if you marry me and become my wife, it is only natural for you to move into my house! And you will be the lady of the house. Do you know how many people in the Flower City would die to marry into the Nan family?"

Ning Ran knew what he said was true.

The Nan family was on the crest of a wave, the wealthiest family in Jiangcheng.

Marrying into the Nan family was equivalent to getting their hands onto a mountain of golds.

Luo Fei did not marry into the Nan family, but still enjoyed all the glory as a girlfriend to a member of the family. Imagine the benefits of being married into the family!

But Ning Ran refused. She did not want to do so.

It would have been a lie if I say I do not want to lead a luxurious life.

Ning Ran was aware that the more she gets after marrying into the family, the greater responsibility she will have to bear.

She cannot imagine what she would encounter in the future, but Ning Ran knew, it would be disastrous.

Above all, she did not like the boastful man in front on her. He might be a handsome and rich young master, but she just doesn't like him.

After all, marrying someone is the decision of a lifetime. I can compromise on other matters, but not this.

"So do you agree?"

Ning Ran kept quiet, and Nan Xing thought she was open to the idea.

"No. I'm not marrying you." Ning Ran remained firm with her answer.

Nan Xing let out a cry, "But why? Do we have to go through this again, after everything I've said? This is ridiculous!"

Ning Ran took a sip of wine from her glass, "Nope, you are not the man I want to marry."

"Then who?" Nan Xing asked cautiously.

Ning Ran shook her head, "I don't know!"

"But marrying me is the only solution to your problem. Once you come into the family, you will be able to spend time with your kids, avoid conflict with my brother, and everything will sort out by itself once you become a part of us"

Ning Ran could tell that Nan Xing was truly sincere.

But she was not ready, and she clearly knew it would not be a smooth path to undertake.

"Am I not good enough for you?" Nan Xing refused to give in.

"You're good – handsome, rich, come from a respectable family etc. Your only flaw is that you're boastful and frivolous." Ning Ran said.

"No human is perfect. And I'm not frivolous, this is me being lively!" Nan Xing defended himself.

"Yes!" Erbao finally found an opportunity to interrupt their conversation.

Nan Xing and Ning Ran stunned for a moment. They totally forgot the two children sitting beside them!

It did not seem appropriate to discuss this matter in front of the children, but they were both mature enough to understand and handle the situation.

Erbao had always liked Nan Xing, whereas Dabao preferred Nan Chen. Ning Ran was well aware of this.

"I'm not saying you're not good. My decision not to marry you has nothing to do with you being good or bad. Just like this bottle of red wine. It may cost several millions, but it is worthless to people who don't drink them." Ning Ran said while swirling the wine glass.

Nan Xing did not seem to quite understand, "Fine. Looks like I'll just have to cultivate your interest, so that you will accept me as the wine that suits your taste."

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Ning Ran had no choice but to return with the others on the next day.

Once they reached Jiangcheng, their helicopter landed on the helipad in the backyard of the Nan family's residence.

Housekeeper Chai Hua and the maids were there on standby to welcome them.

Of course, I have to shower and change first before meeting the old man.

Ning Ran looked around and reckoned that the house was enormous. It was like a manor which consisted of a few independent but interlinked buildings in all four cardinal directions and another one in the center.

The design and layout of the house were sophisticated, almost like a royal mansion in ancient times.

A maid well-trained in professional childcare took the two children away, and Ning Ran was led somewhere else.

This was the rule in the Nan family. Professional caretakers will look after the children, instead of their mothers.

Ning Ran was brought to a room in the west side. Maids were there to help her shower and change, but she rejected the offer, as she was used to doing it herself.

After getting dressed, she waited in the room for quite some time. Soon, Nan Xing appeared.

"The children are having fun with the old master. I came over to accompany you, just in case you're bored." Nan Xing said.

Deep in her heart, Ning Ran knew the Nan family was only interested in the children, not her.

This was normal. They had blood ties with the children, and she was just an unknown actress. She will remain unrelated to them, as long as she was still not married into the family.

Even if she had borne them two children, this would not change the fact that she was just an outsider – unless and until she married into the Nan family, had a marriage certificate to legally prove that she had become a part of the family.

This was going to be difficult as well, because she would need to be a part of everything here, if she decides to take the leap of faith.

She would be a part of everything in this family – not just her identity, but more importantly, she would also have a share of the immense wealth the Nan family possessed.

This was why marrying into a wealthy family can be difficult. Ordinary folks can get married just because they wanted to. It was not the case for wealthy families, as everything was built upon benefits and interests.

And because of all the benefits and interests, people became more vigilant, mean and cold towards each other.

Ning Ran was not bothered by all of those. She did not want to be a part of that world in the first place, as she was comfortable with what she has now.

"You don't have to accompany me. Go spend time with your family. Return the children to me once you're done." Ning Ran was calm, not angry at all.

"Can the children stay here today? It's safer." Nan Xing said.

"No." Ning Ran outright rejected.

"Why not? This is their home too."

"I still have full custody of my children so they should stay with me. I want to bring them to visit Xiangyun, now that we're back. Cheng Xiangyun was the one who took us in, after all."

All I'm trying to say is, where were you when I was lost and down? And where was the Nan family when I needed help? Now that the children have grown up, you want to take them away from me?

Nan Xing did not know what to say, "I'd never wanted to steal your children, you know that. They're yours..."

"I know. They're mine. You don't have to tell me."

"Alright, let's go and see my granddad then..."

"Forget it. He would have called if he wishes to see me. I'd rather not see him."

"You've misunderstood. You know, the Nan family is just a little cautious about such things..."

"I know and I understand, which is why I just want my kids. Nothing else matters."

Nan Xing took a deep breath, realizing he was in a difficult position.

"I'll try to work things out." He said powerlessly.

Nan Xing returned to the living hall, and at this time, the children were talking to Nan Zhengde.

Erbao was actively describing the events that took place in the forest, and may have exaggerated a story or two to make it more interesting.

Nan Zhengde had been through a lot in life, yet he was still taken aback by the stories.

"It's just too dangerous! Thank goodness my two precious grandchildren are back!" Nan Zhengde said in agitation.

"Great grandpa, we were very brave. My brother was even more invincible, as he helped navigate the way, rescue people and catch fish. There was nothing he couldn't do!" Erbao said with pride.

Dabao frowned, as he was baffled by Erbao's exaggeration. He didn't even catch any fish in the river, how could he simply say so?

"Si Rui will be the pillar of the family. He looks exactly like Nan Chen when he was young!" Nan Zhengde said in a serious and thoughtful tone.

He definitely spoke highly of Dabao!

Nan Chen was the man behind the entire Nanshi Corporation. It was almost as if he was implying that Dabao will grow up to be like Nan Chen, and will one day rule the Nanshi empire.

"But I was just as great! When my brother was rescuing people, I was there to help as well!" Erbao wanted a pat on the back too.

"Of course you are! Women are no inferior to men!" the old man praised.

Erbao kept her eyes wide open and looked confused. She was unsure if it was a compliment, as she could not quite understand.

Dabao knew what his sister was thinking. He explained, "Great grandpa meant both boys and girls are equally good."

"Yes! Yes! I'm better than a lot of boys. I'm a genius." Erbao was radiant with joy.

It was at this point Nan Xing walked in. Erbao looked behind him but saw no one.

"Where's mum? Is she still in the shower?" Erbao asked.

This question put Nan Xing in an awkward position. He cannot be telling Erbao that her mother was not allowed to come to the living hall before marriage.

"She feels a little uncomfortable and needs to take a rest." Nan Xing said casually.

"Is mum sick?" Dabao stood up and asked out of concern.

"Nope, she's just tired. She should be fine after taking a rest. You all just stay here and play a while." Nan Xing tried to keep them under control.

"We want to go check on our mum." Dabao stood up.

"Me too." Erbao responded as well.

"Let's have some fun here okay? Talk to great grandpa. Mum's fine, really." Nan Xing explained.

"No, we want to see our mum." Dabao demanded.

Nan Xing looked at Nan Zhengde and hoped he could step in.

"Let them go. it's good that they understand the importance of filial piety. I'm tired anyways, and should take a break." Nan Zhengde said while waving his hands.

"Alright, I'll bring you to her." Nan Xing said.

"Xing, I'd like to have a word with you. Let them bring the kids to their mum." Nan Zhengde stopped Nan Xing.

Nan Xing stayed back, and the maids took over the children.

"Xing, how's your relationship with that girl now?" Nan Zhengde asked.

"Grandpa, haven't I told you? I will marry her." Nan Xing replied.

"You're marrying her because of the kids, or because you love her and wish to spend the rest of your life with her?" Nan Zhengde asked.

Nan Xing hesitated. He had not seriously thought of this question before.

No doubt Ning Ran was gorgeous, and would definitely not bring shame to the Nan family if she decided to become a part of them.

But Nan Xing was uncertain whether the intention to marry her was just because of the children.

Nan Zhengde was a man of experience; he could easily tell Nan Xing was hesitant.

"Will you still marry her if she hadn't had your children?" Nan Zhengde asked again.

Nan Xing shook his head, "I've not thought of this before. I wouldn't even think of answering this kind of hypothetical question."

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"You should really think about it carefully." Nan Zhengde spoke with a stern voice.

"Grandpa, why would I need to think about such a hypothetical situation?" Nan Xing couldn't understand.

"Because this is very important. You know very well our Nan family's status in Flower City. Everyone wants to associate themselves with our family, with the motif of gaining benefits for themselves. You know, there are many who would use unscrupulous means for their own benefits." Nan Zhengde explained.

"Grandpa, Ding Mi is not that kind of person." Nan Xing retaliated.

With a wave of his hand, Nan Zhengde said, "I am not referring to anyone in particular, I'm just stating facts. A family like ours would usually, through marriage, create ties with another family of an equal status. It is not an old-fashioned thinking but rather for business reasons, as marriage, on a certain level, is a combination of the assets of the two families."

"If two families, both with similarly strong statuses work together, your offspring would have better resources to work with. So, from a business standpoint, it is very logical to marry someone from a well-matched family." Nan Zhengde further explained.

Nan Xing neither accepted nor rejected Nan Zhengde's explanation. These practical issues had never crossed his mind.

This fourth young master of the Nan family had had many affairs with female actresses, but he had never thought of marrying any of them, and those women were also well aware of that. They merely took what they needed from each other.

As such, this issue that Nan Zhengde was discussing with him felt unfamiliar and distant.

"However, I will not force you to marry someone from a well-matched family. Our Nan family is capable on our own. We don't need to borrow another's strength. So when you finally want to settle down, I won't insist that you marry a lady from a reputable family. My only requirement is that you must be really in love with each other, and that she is not marrying you for our family's wealth or status." Nan Zhengde continued.

"Grandpa, I get what you mean." This time, Nan Xing agreed with his grandpa wholeheartedly.

"I am glad that you understand. So now, tell me, without considering children into the picture, would you still marry her?" Nan Zhengde asked again.

"I have never thought of that before." Nan Xing shook his head.

"You should think about it seriously. After you get some clarity, think again if she is truly in love with you. If you did not belong to the Nan family, would she still want to marry you? If you can answer all these questions honestly and still want to marry her after that, I will give you my blessings." Nan Zhengde said.

"What if I can't answer those questions?" Nan Xing replied.

"Then you should accept what your brother has proposed — that the Nan family gets custody of the children and she will get a huge sum of money as compensation which would be enough for the rest of her life." Nan Zhengde said.

Nan Xing kept quiet.

Intuitively, he knew that Ning Ran would never agree to such a proposal. If they really did reach this stage, he wondered what kind of fuss Ning Ran would kick up.

Although that woman looked weak on the outside, she was a tough one. If she was driven over the edge, she would be capable of doing anything.

Nan Xing started to worry thinking about this. He did not want things to turn ugly. More so, he did not want the kids to be affected.

"Nan Xing?" Nan Zhengde raised his voice a little to get the attention of the distracted Nan Xing.

"I know that, grandpa. Regardless if I marry her or not, I will be careful. Please don't worry." Nan Xing reassured his grandpa.

"Ok, I trust that you will be able to handle it well. Do seek your brother's opinions. He is more rational than you when handling things." Nan Zhengde said.

"Grandpa, growing up, is there even any area that my brother is not stronger than me at?" Nan Xing forced a laugh.

Nan Chen was sipping coffee in his office as this discussion between Nan Xing and Nan Zhengde went on.

Jiang Zhe, who was standing beside Nan Chen, kept looking at his watch. It was long past office hours, but his boss did not seem like he was leaving any time soon.

It was already so late and yet he was still drinking so much coffee. Did he intend to stay up all night? But Jiang Zhe did not dare to say anything before his boss gave him the permission to head home.

"Why are you still here?" Nan Chen raised his head and saw Jiang Zhe standing there.

I wanted to leave long ago, but without your permission, how would I dare to! Jiang Zhe did not know whether to laugh or cry.

"I.....really enjoy working overtime." Jiang Zhe said, trying to hide the sorrow on his face. This must have been the most hypocritical words that had come from Jiang Zhe's mouth this year.

"Are they here yet?" Nan Chen looked unsettled.

Very few people would be able to get used to Nan Chen's sudden change of thoughts, but Jiang Zhe was able to.

All he needed was a few seconds; to figure out that it was them his boss was referring to — Nan Xing and Nan Zhengde.

"They reached here a while before. The old master wanted to wait for you to head back home for dinner together, but you told him you had other plans." Jiang Zhe reminded Nan Chen.

Boss has the best memory out of everyone I know, how did he forget something that had only happened two hours ago? Jiang Zhe got a bit worried.

What was going on? Did he leave his soul in M nation?

"I see." Nan Chen said, before he went silent again.

"Boss, it is late, why don't you go back and have some rest? It has been tough on you recently." Jiang Zhe said to Nan Chen cautiously.

But Nan Chen just remained silent.

Nan Chen was distracted again. He reminisced the few days he had spent with Ning Ran.

As Nan Chen did not respond, Jiang Zhe did not dare to carry on talking, though he was dying to go home!

"Why did I not go home for dinner?" Nan Chen suddenly lifted his head and asked Jiang Zhe.

"What?" Jiang Zhe was stunned. How should he be answering this question?!

"It is because boss is always so busy." Jiang Zhe hoped that the answer would satisfy Nan Chen.

"Oh. Yeah." Nan Chen replied, and it was silence, once again.

What on earth happened to boss today? Jiang Zhe was confused. Not only did he forget something that had just happen two hours ago, the question he just asked was so brainless!

This is the top guy in Flower City! He doesn't seem to be himself at all today. Did he really lose his soul?!

"You must be so tired, please get some rest." Jiang Zhe tried again.

"No worries. You can leave first." Nan Chen waved him off.

Jiang Zhe wanted to leave so badly, but how could he leave while Nan Chen was still here!

"I am fine. I will be here. Let me know if you need anything." Jiang Zhe said.

"Ok." Nan Chen acknowledged. "By the way, do you have a girlfriend?" Nan Chen suddenly asked Jiang Zhe.

This made things seem even weirder. His boss was never the sort who would pry into the private affairs of others, and neither had he been interested in any gossips. Not that he had the time for it anyway.

"No." Jiang Zhe answered honestly.

"Why not?" Nan Chen continued asking.

"I dated a few women previously, but none were suitable, so I am still single." Jiang Zhe replied.

"So you did like them?" Nan Chen carried on.

"Of course! Otherwise I wouldn't have dated them." Nan Chen replied while nodding his head.

"How does it feel like to be in love?" Nan Chen suddenly asked, seriously.

Jiang Zhe was stunned by this question.

That was a question asked by the ordinary man. Why would a god-like person like Nan Chen ask such a question? What's his purpose of asking? Jiang Zhe was not able to figure out.

"Boss......You have never been in love before?"

"I am asking you a question." Nan Chen replied coldly.

"Hmm, you would want to be with her all day long, share your happiness and worries with her, and her feelings would concern you....."

Nan Chen raised up a hand to stop Jiang Zhe from continuing. His brows furrowed.

Obviously, he was not satisfied with Jiang Zhe's answer. It was the kind of answer he could have gotten from an online search, which he felt was lame.

He actually wanted to hear: if you like someone, you would also like her smell.

But at the same time, he was also afraid that was that Jiang Zhe would say that.

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It was already one in the morning when Nan Chen returned to the Commoner Residence.

Nan Xing was still awake, and was drinking under the pavilion in the garden.

Nan Xing usually drank at private clubs, surrounded by beautiful women. It was indeed rare to see him drinking alone like this.

Nan Chen walked over.

"Brother, I have been waiting for you." Nan Xing sounded a little drunk.

"Why are you here drinking alone?"

"Grandpa was really happy today that the kids were back safely, so he opened the Maotai which he had kept for twenty years. But the old man couldn't drink too much because of his high blood pressure. I didn't want to waste it since it was already opened, so I planned to finish the bottle with you."

Nan Chen sat down and poured himself a cup.

He could already smell the alcohol before he lifted the cup.

Nan Chen finished the cup in one gulp, the aftertaste lingering in his mouth. It felt wonderful.

"Is there anything bothering you?" Nan Chen asked after putting down the cup.

"Today, Ding Mi brought the kids here. But as you know, the Nan family has a rule that a woman can only step into the main hall after she marries into the family, so she could only stay at the West atrium for the time being."

Nan Chen nodded. He had guessed it.

"Don't you think it's rather unfair to her, since she is the mother of the kids after all? She painstakingly gave birth to them and raised them but she can't even sit at the same dining table with the kids. What kind of screwed up rule is this?!" Nan Xing was worked up.

Nan Chen signaled for Nan Xing to lower his voice.

"Not all rules have reasons behind them. Rules are rules, and have to be obeyed. If you think about it, some rules with seemingly no reason behind them actually have their own worth." Nan Chen poured both of them another cup each.

Nan Xing shook his head and said, "I don't know why I am telling you all these. You have never liked Ding Mi to begin with."

"Her name was originally not Ding Mi; it was Ning Ran. She is Luo Fei's half-sibling." Nan Chen said.

"Really?"

"You see, how can you be so certain you want her to be your wife? You don't even know her real name. Is it just because she is the mother of your children?" Nan Chen asked Nan Xing.

"I don't agree. We are all separate individuals with our own secrets. As long as such secrets do not cause harm to others, there is no need to delve in further. Makes sense, right?"

Nan Chen did not reply. He was not getting into any arguments with Nan Xing at this unearthly hour.

It was a rare occasion that the brothers could sit down and drink together, and he did not want to ruin the atmosphere.

Nan Chen had not told Nan Xing any of the bad things he had found out about Ning Ran, as he wanted to protect his brother.

If Nan Xing and Ning Ran ever got into a fight over the custody of the children, Nan Chen was ready to act as the evil one.

If he were the bad guy, Nan Xing could still remain cordial with Ning Ran.

It was also more beneficial for the kids that Nan Xing and Ning Ran did not fall out with each other.

Children always end up as victims when parents are at odds with each other.

It would leave a scar in the children's lives and Nan Chen wanted to protect the children from any possible harm.

Anyway, Nan Chen felt that even without disclosing the bad things about Ning Ran, he would still be able to prevent the marriage.

"Brother, you know I am not any saint. But I really feel that life hasn't been easy for Ding Mi. She deserves better." Nan Xing got even more worked up.

"Such as?"

"Such as a proper title. At least, she should be able to dine with the rest of the Nan family at the main hall." Nan Xing said.

"Is this what she wants? Was this what she told you?"

"She didn't. She doesn't care about anything else other than being with the kids."

"What if she has been pretending? Don't forget that she is a very successful actress. She could be putting up an act in front of us."

"Brother!" Nan Xing stood up. "Why are you so biased against Ding Mi?"

Nan Chen signaled to Nan Xing to lower his voice again.

"What do you like about her?" Nan Chen asked.

"She's really pretty. Not to mention she's also the children's mommy. If I marry her, we will have a perfect family." Nan Xing answered without hesitation.

"If she was not the children's mommy, would you still marry her?"

"Brother, why are you asking the same question as grandpa? Don't you think this kind of hypothetical question is very lame?" That got Nan Xing worked up again.

Nan Chen didn't react to that. He took another sip of the drink.

"So, you don't actually love her. You just feel indebted to her just because she gave birth to your two children, and want to make it up to her by marrying her. Nan Xing, this won't do. You should marry someone with a good character and strong morals, not someone with a motive who would use the kids to accomplish her goals."

"A person without a good character is a risk to both the kids and the Nan Family."

The thought that Ning Ran caused the death of her own mother gave Nan Chen chills. Such an evil women, it would be a disaster if she entered the Nan family!

"Come on brother, you are exaggerating! You are just prejudiced against her! We are twins. I always thought that you were on my side. But I was wrong! You are disregarding my happiness because of your personal prejudices!" Nan Xing was even more worked up now.

"You are drunk. Go get some rest. We shall talk when you are sober."

"No! Let's thrash things out right now. Why are all of you against her? Do you think it was easy for her to raise two kids all on her own? Why do all of you think that she has an ulterior motive? You said the woman I chose has a problem, but what about the woman you chose?"

"Luo Fei is the real evil woman. She almost caused the death of my kids! Why don't you reflect on your choices, brother?" Nan Xing would never have dared to speak to Nan Chen in this manner. The alcohol had taken its effects.

Nan Chen's face darkened.

He wanted to drink more but the bottle was already empty. He slammed the bottle hard against the marble table. Nan Xing's words agitated him.

"It is exactly because I feel responsible for what Luo Fei did that I am trying to prevent the same thing from happening."

Nan Chen walked away, but turned back after a few steps.

"Let's talk about this another time. You need to go to our headquarters in Africa tomorrow to settle some matters, as you left too abruptly that time. Go get prepared."

"What? You are deploying me to Africa again? Is this your tactic to separate Ding Mi and I?" Nan Xing couldn't believe it.

"You will come back after the matters are settled. It's not a long-term arrangement." Nan Chen said coldly.

"If that's the case, I'll go after I get married."

"Why are you in such a hurry?" Nan Chen was getting anxious too.

"I will register my marriage with Ning Ran before going to Africa. We will hold the banquet after I get back."

"No way! You set off tomorrow, immediately. If not, don't you ever think about getting married! Before you are back, the relevant departments will be encountering technical issues and you won't be able to register your marriage." Nan Chen continued in his cold voice.

Nan Xing knew that Nan Chen had an extremely wide network. No one would be willing to help him with his marriage registration as long as Nan Chen did not allow that to happen.

"Ok, I'll go then. But when I am back, I will definitely be getting married!"

"Don't tell anyone you are going."

"Why?"

Nan Chen did not give an explanation. He merely replied, "Remember; only your secretary and I know about your trip to Africa. No one else knows, not even grandpa."

What does my brother have up his sleeve again? Nan Xing was puzzled.

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The next morning, Nan Chen reached the office, looking refreshed.

Usually, Nan Chen wouldn't have any time for someone of Wang Yan's caliber. However, he decided to allocate fifteen minutes of his time to Wang Yan because the Sound of Thunder was an important drama production to him.

Wang Yan felt a sense of nervousness once he saw Nan Chen. Nan Chen's presence always seemed to place pressure on others.

"Be quick, Mr. Nan only has fifteen minutes." Jiang Zhe looked at Wang Yan.

"The production team is on a hiatus currently. The main actors are all uncontactable. What are the next steps we should take, Mr. Nan?" Wang Yan said, with his head bowed.

"Remove all of Luo Fei's scenes. Find another actress to replace her." Nan Chen said.

"Remove all the scenes?" Wang Yan was not sure if he heard it correctly.

Nan Chen did not repeat his words for the second time.

"Mr. Nan already made it very clear. Just do as he instructed." Jiang Zhe said.

"Ok. Zheng Lunlun is also uncontactable. What about his scenes?"

"He will be back. Leave it for now." Nan Chen said.

"Ok. If we remove Luo Fei's scenes, we would have to retake a lot of scenes. There would also be major changes to the script. This will delay the production. I am not sure if the original budget is enough....." Wang Yan lowered his voice even more as he touched on the part about the money.

"I will cover any losses incurred." Nan Chen said coldly.

Wang Yan was delighted. His worries eased upon hearing what Nan Chen had said.

"Then I will resume production activities right away. Does Mr. Nan have any preferences for the second female lead?" Wang Yan asked.

"Choose the most popular actress at the moment." Nan Chen said.

"The most popular now is still Luo Fei, but she......"

This angered Nan Chen. "Is Luo Fei the only popular actress in the whole of China right now?!"

"No, no! Of course there are others." Wang Yan got even more nervous. He did not dare to utter another word.

"You may go off now. Mr. Nan's time is precious. Look for me if you have any questions." Jiang Zhe waved Wang Yan off.

Wang Yan quickly left Nan Chen's office.

"Boss, we may suffer losses if the production drags on." Jiang Zhe said.

"I know." Nan Chen replied coldly.

If I know that we would incur a loss, boss would clearly be aware of that too. Jiang Zhe realized that he had made a really stupid statement.

"There are rumors that Luo Fei......"

"Tell me! What rumors!" Nan Chen shot Jiang Zhe a killer look.

"People are saying that Ding Mi caused the death of Luo Fei."

"Who said that?"

"It is all over the Internet. I'm not sure who started the rumors. It's not easy to check, given the number of independent media outlets right now."

Nan Chen was silent.

Other than the Nan family's security team, no one else should know about what happened in the forest. Who was the one who started such rumors?

Furthermore, Ning Ran had absolutely nothing to do with what had happened to Luo Fei.

Was it just a coincidence that Ning Ran was brought into the picture? Or did someone want to frame her intentionally?

"Do something to stop the rumors." Nan Chen said.

"Yes, boss. But what actually happened to Luo Fei?"

"No idea." Nan Chen replied coldly.

That was enough to stop Jiang Zhe from asking any further.

Nan Chen finally managed to finish his day's work at six in the evening.

He drove back to the Commoner Residence, and went into Nan Xing's room.

He waved his hand, signaling for the servants to get out.

He opened Nan Xing's wardrobe and saw a row of white suits.

Nan Xing and Nan Chen were identical twins. To differentiate them, the Nan family had an unspoken rule that Nan Xing and Nan Chen could only wear white and black suits respectively.

Therefore, at any occasion, the person in white would be Nan Xing and the person in black would be Nan Chen.

The colors also accurately reflected the brothers' temperaments and characters.

Nan Chen picked out a suit and looked at himself in the mirror.

It was a strange sight as he had never seen himself in a white suit before.

After a moment of hesitation, he hung the suit back up in the wardrobe.

Just as he was about to leave, he went back into the room again.

Ten minutes later, the servants who were waiting at the door, saw Nan Xing walking out of the room.

Of course, it was Nan Chen who was wearing Nan Xing's white suit. He had also styled his hair like Nan Xing.

Nan Chen looked at the servants. He was surprised to realize that the way they looked at him was different. Instead of the usual look of fear, they greeted him cheerfully.

"Young Master Nan Xing, going out with the pretty ladies again?"

Nan Chen was used to the respect and look of awe he was usually given. This new treatment from the servants made him uneasy.

So this is how the interactions between Nan Xing and the servants are like? We are both young masters of the Nan family. Why is it that they are not fearful of Nan Xing?

Nan Chen kept a poker face and did not reply.

"Is this Young Master Nan Xing or Young Master Nan Chen? This expression looks so much like Young Master Nan Chen's." One of the servants commented.

"Oh yeah! We didn't see Young Master Nan Chen walking out just now after he entered the room."

"I am sure this is Young Master Nan Xing. Young Master Nan Chen has never dressed in white."

"But don't you think he really looks like Young Master Nan Chen?"

"Must be Young Master Nan Xing trying to act cool by imitating Young Master Nan Chen's style, Haha."

Nan Chen smiled to himself upon hearing the servants' chatter.

Upon reaching the garage, Nan Chen got into Nan Xing's red Ferrari sports car.

This combination of a white suit and red sports car gave Nan Chen the feeling that he was a good-for-nothing rich man's son.

He looked at himself in the rearview mirror. In addition to his poker face, his facial muscles were also tensed.

He forced an expression, but it did not look natural at all.

Nan Chen wondered if people would recognize him.

Nan Chen knew that there was no way he could accurately imitate Nan Xing's cheerful mannerisms.

Vroom! Nan Chen drove off.

Nan Chen wanted to know if anyone would recognize him, so he made a trip back to the office.

Although it was long past office hours, there were still many employees working in the office.

"Why is our Young Master Nan Xing back at the office? Shouldn't you be partying with pretty ladies at this hour?" A few managers greeted Nan Chen the moment he stepped into the office.

Nan Chen forced a smile, but did not say anything.

"Young Master Nan Xing, your smile looks so weird. Are you feeling uncomfortable?" One of the female managers asked.

Weird?! I am sure that I look natural! Nan Chen was getting exasperated.

"Did you see my brother?" he asked.

"I think he left quite a while ago. Is the demon king coming back?" At the mention of Nan Chen's name, the managers tensed up.

'Demon king?" Nan Chen frowned.

"Oh, that is our loving nickname for the boss. He is so god-like and exudes the poise of a king, so he is like a demon king."

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"Do you guys hate him?" Nan Chen really wanted to know.

Although one could never really guess a person's actual thoughts, Nan Chen still wanted to know how the employees thought of him.

"No no no! We really love him." The managers quickly clarified.

"Then why is he called a demon king? Aren't demons evil?" Nan Chen asked.

"In Internet language, demon doesn't necessarily refer to evil beings. It can also mean a super force, a formidable being." One of the managers explained.

Nan Chen still wasn't able to fully grasp that idea.

"Why do you guys love him?" He carried on asking.

Saying that out loud felt kind of mushy to Nan Chen.

"Boss is pretty amazing. He keeps bringing the company to greater heights, and we got increments in salaries. It would have been hopeless for us if a good-for-nothing was our boss instead....."

"Ahem....." One of the other managers pretended to clear his throat, hinting to stop the conversation there, in case someone got offended.

"Of course, Mr. Nan, you are pretty amazing yourself. We heard that your business operation in Africa is going well." The manager attempted at an awkward salvage of the situation.

"Is my brother really that great?" Nan Chen still had doubts.

"Of course he is not all good. He is too fierce, which causes everyone to be scared of him, not to mention he is also super strict. I remember I pulled an all-nighter to complete a proposal last time, but he barely took a glance before rejecting it. I feel so sad every time I recall that incident."

Nan Chen vaguely recalled that incident, but he wasn't aware that the manager had pulled an all-nighter to prepare the proposal.

He was only concerned with the end results. It didn't matter how much time was taken to prepare the proposal, it had to be reworked on if it was not acceptable.

"Isn't being strict a good thing?" Nan Chen asked.

"It is. We do appreciate honest feedback so that we can improve." That manager gave a genuine reply.

Nan Chen was relieved upon hearing that.

Although he did not need that recognition, it always felt good to be appreciated and respected by his subordinates.

Nan Chen dismissed the managers.

He went back to his own office but stepped out again after two minutes.

He drove to Cheng Xiangyun's apartment. After parking his car, Nan Chen knocked on the door. He had brought along a fruit basket.

Even though Nan Chen had attended the Asian Economic Forum and spoke in front of world leaders before, he did not feel as nervous as he was feeling right now.

He smelt a familiar citrus scent when the door opened.

"Why are you here?" Ning Ran looked at Nan Chen in disgust. Her brows furrowed at the sight of him.

This got Nan Chen even more nervous. Did she see through my disguise?

"I just happened to be passing by." Nan Chen handed the fruit basket to Ning Ran.

"Where were you intending to go?" Ning Ran picked an apple from the fruit basket, wiped it on her blouse, and starting munching on it.

Nan Chen was stunned. She ate the apple without washing it? There could be pesticides on it. It's common sense! How could she not know? Did she think that the apple would be safe to eat just by wiping it on her blouse? Didn't she know how many germs there are on the blouse?

"Dad!" Erbao ran into his arms.

Upon hearing the commotion, Cheng Xiangyun rushed out from the kitchen. "Wow, what made Young Master Nan Xing decide to grace us with your presence today? It is such an honor to us."

"Aunt, seriously? Why are you being so polite? It is making my hair stand." Ning Ran was annoyed.

It seemed like dinner was ready. The table was laid with a hotpot and utensils. Steam was rising from the soup.

This is too unhealthy. Dinner at such a late hour, and the soup looks so oily! Nan Chen frowned.

"Why do you look so unhappy? Did someone owe you money? What exactly are you here for? If you think it makes you so uncomfortable to be here, you are free to leave. Don't ruin our appetites." Ning Ran said rudely to Nan Chen.

Nan Chen was extremely unhappy about the way he was being treated, but he could only keep quiet.

He wasn't sure if Ning Ran was treating him as Ning Xing or himself.

Nan Chen was actually feeling hungry. He hadn't had dinner yet. The food smelt good, but it was too oily.

"How can you talk to our distinguished guest like that? It is our great honor that Young Master Nan Xing is visiting us. Please take a seat, Young Master Nan Xing." Cheng Xiangyun was being overly polite, a stark contrast to Ning Ran's attitude.

Nan Chen sat down at once. He had been standing awkwardly since he stepped into the house.

"Eat with us, dad. The hotpot mommy prepared is delicious!" Erbao joined in.

Nan Chen lifted Erbao onto his lap and stroked her hair.

"I don't suppose Young Master Nan Xing eats food like this, right? Hotpot is for commoners like us, it is not like the usual feast you are used to." Cheng Xiangyun said.

"That's not right, dad brought us to eat hotpot the last time. He loves spicy food!" Erbao contributed.

"Really? If that's the case, would you like to eat with us?" Cheng Xiangyun looked at Nan Chen.

"Let's ignore him. We didn't prepare his share anyway. If he eats, it wouldn't be enough for us." Ning Ran said while scooping rice into her bowl.

This woman is indeed very mean. Shouldn't the guest come first? Nan Chen was fuming mad.

The more you don't let me eat, the more I shall eat!

"Yes, I am happy to join you for dinner." After making this important decision, Nan Chen stood up to go and wash his hands.

"Don't you know you are already taking up a lot of space? Why did you suddenly stand up? Are you a pole?" Ning Ran yelled at him.

"I am going to wash my hands then eat." Nan Chen felt aggrieved.

"There's no need to. Just wipe your hands on the towel." Ning Ran passed him a towel.

That works? Nan Chen thought. Didn't she know that the proper way was to wash hands with soap for at least three minutes? You can't get rid of germs by just wiping your hands with a towel!

Nan Chen put down the towel and insisted on washing his hands.

He was stopped by Ning Ran again. "Let the kids wash first."

Nan Chen was confused. Didn't she just say wiping with a towel was enough?

"The kids need to wash their hands to prevent them from falling sick. As for you, your skin is too thick and rough for any germs to penetrate. So, there is no need for you to be so cautious." Ning Ran explained.

Nan Chen felt even more fed up now. Thick and rough? My skin is obviously smooth and delicate. Is this woman blind?! Or maybe she is just a habitual liar.

Nan Chen took a deep breath to calm himself down.

He waited for the kids to finish before he went into the toilet to wash his hands.

While he was washing his hands, Dabao stood beside and stared.

"Why are you not eating outside?" Nan Chen asked.

"Are you Uncle Nan Chen?" Dabao asked softly.

Nan Chen was caught unaware. How did he know?

Since Dabao already knew who he was, he didn't want to lie to the child.

"Can this be our secret?" Nan Chen asked him back softly.

Dabao agreed, feeling very pleased with himself.

Just as Nan Chen was going to ask him what gave it away, Ning Ran walked in.

"Why are you taking your own sweet time? Come out quickly if you still want to eat. Otherwise, there will only be the dishwater left for you to drink later."

Nan Chen was furious. This woman had been offensive from the moment I arrived. Incorrigible! Uncouth! Unforgivable!!!

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Nan Chen really wanted to leave at once. How can I, Master Nan Chen, be subjected to such humiliation!

However, Nan Chen was actually still able to tolerate these. Looks like he had previously underestimated a human being's ability to tolerate things.

He returned to the dinner table gracefully, exuding an air of nobility. Dinner officially started.

There were many ingredients in the hotpot, including tofu, pork belly and many other food items. Afterall, the fun of eating hotpot was that any food could be dumped inside.

Staring at the oily and spicy looking soup, Nan Chen did not know how to start. In the first place, he seldom ate hotpot. During the occasional times that he ate it, it was always at high-end restaurants where he would order a clear broth, served in an individual pot.

It was his first time eating hotpot in this style, where everyone dipped their chopsticks into the same pot.

He raised his chopsticks but hesitated.

"Are you eating or not? If you are not eating, please don't sit here. We are happy to have more space." Ning Ran looked at him in disgust.

"Dad, eat! It's so yummy!" Erbao said, as she picked up a piece of pork belly meat and put it inside her mouth, with an exaggerated expression of satisfaction.

Nan Chen figured that if it was something Erbao could eat, it couldn't be too spicy. With that in mind, he chose a piece of tofu and ate it.

It actually tasted good. It did not taste like the hotpot which he had before.

However, after he swallowed, it felt as if a volcano had erupted in his mouth. He could barely handle the sudden overflowing spicy aftertaste.

To prevent being looked down upon by Ning Ran, Nan Chen ate a big mouthful of rice, hoping that it would help to neutralize the spice.

"Dad, try this! This is the best." Erbao was referring to the pork belly meat.

In order not to disappoint Erbao, who had enthusiastically recommended her favorite food, Nan Chen forced a big piece of pork belly meat down his throat.

It was too spicy and oily! He stuffed himself with some vegetables to flush the taste away.

As Nan Chen continued eating, he realized that the food did not taste as spicy anymore.

Even Nan Chen started to admire himself for his ability to adapt. Within such a short span of time, he was already able to tolerate such a high level of spiciness.

After finishing one bowl of rice, Nan Chen stopped eating. He had a queasy feeling in his stomach.

"I'm done. Please continue enjoying your meal." Nan Chen said politely.

However, he didn't leave the table immediately. According to proper dining etiquettes, the guest should not be the first person to leave the table.

But Ning Ran was not familiar with such concepts. "Why are you still here? Step aside."

This woman knows nothing about etiquettes. If she marries into the Nan family, it would be a disaster! Nan Chen thought to himself.

He had no choice but to leave the table. He sat down on a couch.

Just then, he felt a burning sensation in his stomach. He was starting to feel pain.

Without attracting attention, Nan Chen gulped down a huge glass of water. But it didn't help.

The pain got unbearable after a while. Nan Chen had no choice but to go to the toilet. He walked quickly, taking long strides.

"Oh no. Dad has diarrhea. Maybe he really cannot take spicy food." Erbao said.

"Didn't you say he love spicy food? He seemed to be enjoying himself just now." Ning Ran frowned.

Nan Chen emerged from the toilet, still upholding his poker face.

But the scene in the toilet just now was different. His stomach hurt so badly that his forehead was beaded with sweat.

"I will make a move first. I have something on." Nan Chen announced.

"So fast? Please stay a while more!" Cheng Xiangyun continued to extend her warm hospitality.

"Sorry, I can't. I really need to go now." Nan Chen headed right towards the door.

Just then, he made a one hundred and eighty degree turn and took long strides towards the toilet again, trying to look nonchalant.

Even though he appeared calm, everyone was aware that this young master had an upset stomach.

When Nan Chen came out of the toilet, he did not mention anything about leaving again. If he needed the toilet before he stepped out, again, that would be way too embarrassing.

He just sat down quietly on the couch, still with his poker face.

"Dad is trying to imitate uncle again." Erbao pinpointed Nan Chen's expression.

"Why did you force yourself to eat if you can't take spicy food? Are you happy that you are having diarrhea now?" Ning Ran said.

"It's not just spicy, it's oily too." Nan Chen retorted.

Never had he imagined that the formidable Young Master Nan Chen of Flower City would be defeated by a hotpot. It was depressing.

"Hotpots are meant to be spicy and oily. What's the point of having a hotpot that is bland?" Ning Ran frowned.

Nan Chen did not wish to continue the conversation.

"Young Master Nan Xing, do you want to see a doctor?" Cheng Xiangyun was worried.

"I don't think he needs that. It's just diarrhea, no big deal. I think we have some medicine in the house. I'll go get them." Ning Ran walked away to find the pills.

Not after long, she returned with empty hands. "We finished the medicine. Looks like we need to make a trip to the pharmacy."

"I'll go get it." Cheng Xiangyun offered.

"No need. I can settle it myself." Nan Chen stood up again.

But at once, he felt that something was not right. He rushed to the toilet again.

After he came out of the toilet, he decided that he needed to go to the hospital. That woman's words could not be trusted.

There was an important meeting the next day. Nan Chen could not afford to skip it. He needed to get to the doctor without further delay.

"I really need to leave. I feel much better now." Nan Chen said.

"You are so troublesome. No one forced you to come here or eat hotpot. Fine, I will go with you to the pharmacy. I guarantee that you will recover after taking the anti-diarrheal pills." Ning Ran was losing her patience.

"I think I'm fine. Thank you for your offer." Nan Chen rejected politely.

"Stop acting fine. Let's go now. I'll go with you. You'll feel better immediately after taking the medicine." Ning Ran nudged Nan Chen out of the door.

Nan Chen had no choice but to oblige.

"Wait for me in the car. I'm going to the pharmacy in front to get you the medicine. Leave after taking them, so that you won't have diarrhea anymore." When they were outside, Ning Ran spoke to Nan Chen like she was speaking to a kid.

Nan Chen hated the way she was talking to him, but he had no other choice.

Shortly after, Ning Ran was back with medicine and a bottle of water.

"Take them; you'll be fine in no time." Ning Ran put two white pills on Nan Chen's palm.

Nan Chen hesitated. He eyed Ning Ran suspiciously.

"Go on, eat it. Are you afraid that I would poison you? Would that benefit me in anyway? Just swallow the pills!" Ning Ran was getting impatient.

Nan Chen didn't think that Ning Ran would poison him. It was just that she wasn't even medically trained; how was she so sure that these pills would work?

"Hurry up! Stop staring at me!" Ning Ran yelled.

With no other choice, Nan Chen quickly swallowed the pills and drank some water.

"Ok, you will be better soon. Don't worry." Ning Ran said confidently.

Nan Chen didn't respond. He still didn't believe her.

Ning Ran felt that something wasn't right. Nan Xing wasn't being his usual chatty self. Why is he so quiet today? Did the diarrhea make him stupid?

Ning Ran got into the car and sat next to Nan Chen. "I'll just sit here for a while. If I go back now, I'll have to wash the dishes. I'll go after Aunt finishes washing them."

Nan Chen looked at Ning Ran in shock. What kind of logic is this?!

"You are already feeling better, right?" Ning Ran asked.

Maybe it was just a psychological effect, but Nan Chen was indeed feeling better.

He nodded.

"When my son had diarrhea, I cured him too." Ning Ran was very pleased with herself.

Something didn't sound right to Nan Chen. What do you mean you cured your son when he had diarrhea? Are you taking advantage of me?

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Ning Ran realized that something was amiss after noticing Nan Chen's expression and explained, "That was not what I meant, you're definitely not my son."

This explanation seemed to have made things more awkward. Nan Chen eyes were blazing with anger.

"What I'm trying to say is, we are poor. We will find ways to treat minor health problems, instead of visiting the hospital. Hospitals need us to go through all sorts of screening and test before administering the actual treatment, how can we afford that?" Ning Ran explained her logic. I just have to become a 'doctor' to figure things out myself. Believe me; I might be more skillful than some other doctors in big hospitals!" She said while smiling at Nan Chen.

Nan Chen's anger was suddenly overcome by an inexplicable feeling, when he realized that many people actually did not go to the hospital when they were sick.

And they chose not to go, not because it was a nuisance, but rather because they had no money.

It must have been hard on her. Nan Chen thought.

The light from the streetlamp in the tiny neighborhood shone on Ning Ran's face. She looked as beautiful as a flower that was waiting to bloom in the middle of the night.

"You don't believe me?" Ning Ran asked Nan Chen.

"I do." Nan Chen for once answered truthfully.

'I'm not trying to win your sympathy. I don't think there's any problem with it. My children still grew up healthily and happily." Ning Ran said with pride.

"It would be even better if they enter the Nan family." Nan Chen said.

Ning Ran instantly became alert, "You're not here to snatch my kids away, aren't you?"

"No I'm not." Nan Chen said.

"Good. Because I'll kill you if you do." Ning Ran rubbed her fists and was ready to throw a punch.

"If I'm willing to marry you, would you say yes?" Nan Chen asked.

"I've told you before, I will not marry you." Ning Ran said.

Nan Chen felt strange. Why wouldn't she say yes when she had always wished to use her children to help her rise through the ranks?

Had she really told Nan Xing she was not willing to marry into the Nan family?

"Why?" Nan Chen was curious.

"What's wrong with you today? Haven't I told you?" Ning Ran was getting impatient.

"Since I'm here today, I want to have a proper discussion with you." Nan Chen tried to copy how Nan Xing spoke, and forced himself to speak proudly and frivolously.

It was clearly a failure, but he did seem more relaxed.

"Speak." Ning Ran switched to a more comfortable position to sit in.

"Our marriage."

"I'm not going to marry, and you know the reason why. I don't like you."

"But with me, you can have a better life. The kids can have a better education and environment to grow up in. They will become outstanding individuals."

"Am I married to you now?" Ning Ran straightened herself up and asked.

Nan Chen was not sure why she had thrown the question at him, but he answered truthfully. "Nope."

"Are my kids outstanding?" Ning Ran asked again.

Nan Chen was speechless, and did not know how to answer.

The two children were outstanding, for sure. No one else would be worthy of this description.

"They're outstanding because they are gifted, but without a proper environment to further develop their potentials, they will eventually become ordinary." Nan Chen said.

"Many of us in this world are ordinary folks. I just want them to live healthily, peacefully and happily. I don't really mind if they become ordinary one day."

Nan Chen was a little angry. This woman and her lowly mindset! It's fine if she wishes to be ordinary, but why would she want her children to go down the same path as well?

What puzzled him the most was that she still refused to marry into the Nan family.

Nan Chen always had the impression that Ning Ran would want to get into the Nan family, by hook or by crook. Now that she rejected the offer, he became more confused.

Is she trying to put on airs and act like she doesn't care? She might not have said so, but deep in her heart, it could be her lifelong dream.

"Then what is your ideal type?" Nan Che changed the subject.

"What a meaningless subject. There's no 'standard' when it comes to liking someone. It's not like buying products, when you have sizes and measurements for reference." She said. "You will know what you like about your other half when you fall in love. If you never had this feeling, how would you know what you like?" Ning Ran responded with another question.

Nan Chen was once again dissed by this woman, but he could not agree more.

Deep thoughts from a shallow-thinker. Nan Chen was impressed.

"Then what kind of person do you hate?" Nan Chen asked again.

"Ehm... someone who is uncivilized and constantly full of themselves. Someone who doesn't know how to respect others."

Nan Chen thought to himself, aren't you this kind of person too?

"Are there such people around you?"

"Well, your brother is one of them, isn't it?" Ning Ran blurted out.

She definitely hit the bulls' eye – the bulls' eye that sparked Nan Chen's rage!

Nan Chen reached his boiling point, and his lips trembled, but he decided to keep quiet.

So in her opinion, he was uncivilized, constantly full of himself, and did not know how to respect others?

What do you mean I'm uncivilized? When have I been full of myself?

"What's wrong with you? You're not happy because I talked bad about your brother?" Ning Ran rolled her eyes at Nan Chen.

Nan Chen tried to relax, "Nothing."

"Oh yea, have you talked to your brother about this marriage proposal?"

"Yes." Nan Chen said.

"He must have opposed strongly, right?" Ning Ran said with a laugh.

"How do you know?"

"Because he hates me!"

"Why would he hate you?"

"I don't know. Maybe because I hate him too." Ning Ran said.

"Get out of the car now." Nan Chen said in a cold voice.

"What?"

"I asked you to get out!"

"Oh, so this is what brotherly love is all about huh? Someone got upset because I talked bad about his brother? So we're going to have a fallout now?

Nan Chen soon realized that he was a little too emotional. It was a known fact that she hated him, so what was there to be angry about?

"What I meant was, it's getting late. You should go home and rest." Nan Chen tried his best to contain his anger and spoke gently.

"Are you alright? Does your stomach still hurt?"

"I'm fine." Nan Chen wanted to say 'thank you' but could not bring himself to do so.

"Okay, go home and don't ever come here again. This place is not for you. Please don't think of marrying me again. Just go and find yourself a pretty woman. I'm leaving." Ning Ran got down from the car and slammed the door. Nan Chen could not help but frown.

A leopard never changes its spots. RUDE.

"Are you sure you don't want to get married?" Nan Chen wanted her to confirm.

"You're very long-winded. No means no. I'm not into you." Ning Ran waved goodbye and went upstairs.

Nan Chen sat alone in the car for some time, and drove off once his stomach felt slightly better.

It was not his intention to pull a prank on Ning Ran when he impersonated Nan Xing.

He was hoping to get to know her a little better as he took on another identity.

Clearly, he failed. He could not understand her motifs.

In the past, rumors that revolved around Ning Ran were mostly negative — how she was involved in complicated relationships, how she would sleep with the directors to secure a role, and how she had led to her mother's death.

But after getting to know her personally, Nan Chen felt that she might not be that evil, after all.

She might be rude and was outgoing, but she did not seem like a wicked person.

Nan Chen was confused. Did he think wrongly of her?

But how can I be wrong?