

## Hidden 2101

### Chapter 2101: Competition

Lu Tingxiao sounded upset. "Camera."

"Huh? What's wrong about the camera?"

"It's tilted."

"Uhh..."

"Yes, I'm so sorry. I'll aim it at your wife now, alright!?"

Lu Jingli was a little annoyed. "How can you not be worried at all?! Your wife is so talented at shooting that she even beat Guan Ziyao! While I'd love to see Xiao Xi Xi win, winning in this situation would make it feel like she's into Li Muyan! This is so frustrating!"

The people around the shooting range surrounded them and stayed for the drama.

The circles Meng Linlang brought Ning Xi to were mostly to meet the head ladies and madams of different families. She wanted her to learn how to behave as a head lady. Only a small group of people knew about Ning Xi's relationship with the Zhuangs. Among the group of onlookers right now, everyone except Li Muyan only knew Ning Xi as the hottest celebrity in China.

Popular events like today would usually invite some celebrities to lighten up the mood. As the most successful artiste under Glory World Entertainment, it was not odd to invite her over.

However, something like what had happened between Ning Xi and Li Muyan was unusual.

Even with Ning Xi's current status in the entertainment industry, along with her identity as the owner of Spirit, aiming for Li Muyan was still too far-fetched for her.

"Eliza is really good at shooting. She wouldn't have suggested it otherwise. She's used this to chase several romantic rivals away already!"

"She doesn't have opponents in any other field too. Eliza is great at everything!"

"How could an actress possibly win over Eliza who's a true royalty? Eliza's mother is a descendant of the royal family from France!"

...

Li Muyan was not moved at all when he heard the comments about Eliza. He had seen too many girls like her who received elite training since she was a child. While they had multiple talents and skills, their souls were boring to the very end.

Li Muyan then looked at Ning Xi. He gripped his fists a little as he thought about how she was willing to compete for him.

He had been trying to win her over slowly in the past few months. He had never broken the invisible wall between them because he never had the confidence.

It was an unexpected reward for him even though Eliza had kicked up such a fuss today.

As Li Muyan was deep in thought, the competition started.

Everyone focused on the two of them.

Each person would shoot one after another until all ten shots were fired, then the final score would be calculated.

First shot: Eliza, 9.7 points; Ning Xi, 9.6 points.

Second shot: Eliza, 9.6 points; Ning Xi, 9.5 points.

Third shot: Eliza, 9.8 points; Ning Xi, 9.7 points.

Ning Xi fell behind on the first three shots as everyone expected. Li Muyan unconsciously straightened his back. Maybe Ning Xi was still warming up, but there were still seven shots left!

The competition continued.

Fourth shot: Eliza, 9.2 points; Ning Xi, 9.1 points.

Fifth shot: Eliza, 8.9 points; Ning Xi, 8.8 points.

Sixth shot: Eliza, 9.4 points; Ning Xi, 9.3 points.

...

Everyone was stunned by the scores.

### **Chapter 2102: I Lost**

No one really noticed anything odd at first, but after the sixth shot, everyone was starting to be doubtful.

Was it not too much of a coincidence that Ning Xi was always 0.1 points lower than Eliza?

By the seventh shot, Eliza was probably affected psychologically, so she only got 3.4 points, and Ning Xi quickly fired a shot, earning 3.3 points.

Everyone was speechless.

Was it their imagination? Or was Ning Xi losing on purpose?

It must be a mistake! Hitting 0.1 points lower every time was much more difficult than hitting 10 points every time!

The competition went on...

Eighth shot: Eliza, 9.8 points; Ning Xi, 9.7 points

Ninth shot: Eliza, 5.5 points; Ning Xi, 5.4 points

On the tenth shot, Eliza made a mistake and only got 1 point. Ning Xi shot out of range and got 0 points!

...

On the tenth shot, everyone saw Ning Xi just fire into the air.

Everyone was speechless.

They were probably blind if they had not seen that Ning Xi was losing on purpose.

Ning Xi turned the safety lock on and handed the gun to a waiter beside her before she looked over at Eliza and shrugged. "I lost."

The girl in the red dress then left.

"You! You did that on purpose!" Eliza was frustrated and her face turned red.

Li Muyan just remained stationary. His worked-up feelings had now fizzled out and the fire inside him was extinguished.

Lu Jingli was impressed as he streamed the whole scene for his brother. "Damn! Sister-in-law was amazing! Even though she lost, it's a complete victory over that Eliza!"

"I'll be there right away." Lu Tingxiao left him with these few words and then hung up the call. He did not want to wait any longer; he just wanted to see her.

The sky turned dark and almost all the guests had arrived. The atmosphere was getting more and more lively with fairy lights starting to light up on the grass, resembling stars in the sky and filling up the venue with a sense of fantasy.

"Wow, so beautiful! Lu Tingxiao's birthday banquet used to be usually organized in hotels, which were so rigid and boring! It's suddenly so romantic this time!"

"It's probably for Mrs. Lu!" One of the girls said with an envious expression.

"I heard Mrs. Lu is appearing tonight too. Is that true? I don't believe it. I can't believe it! Could it be that Lu Tingxiao is really married?"

"I didn't want to believe it too, but my sources are reliable and it shouldn't be mistaken. Actually, there were rumors for a very long time ago before. It's just that the Lu family has been so low-profile that until now, no one knows who Mrs. Lu is! I tried to find out from Lu Jingli. He told me personally that his sister-in-law will be coming tonight!"

"God! I'm going to be heartbroken!"

"It's not just you. Do you know how many more other women are going through heartbreak? I wonder who's so lucky, or who's so powerful to tame a man like Lu Tingxiao. Rumor has it that Lu Tingxiao was really doting to that woman..."

...

Eliza was still angry about being embarrassed just now, so she ignored Li Muyan's actions to stop her and she stomped up to Ning Xi angrily. "Ning Xi, what were you trying to do just now? Are you insulting me and Bro Muyan?"

Ning Xi raised her eyebrows, acting confused. "Insult? You're the one who won, Ms. Eliza. How is that an insult?"

### **Chapter 2103: Thank You, Milady**

It was Eliza's provocation that had triggered this. Moreover, if Li Muyan had taken action earlier, this whole fuss would not have happened in the first place.

She had been pretty busy a while back then and had been spending most of her free time with Lu Tingxiao, so she never noticed anything odd about Li Muyan since he never did anything overboard. She only thought of him as the son of her aunt's good friend.

Only just now did she feel like something was wrong with the way Li Muyan looked at her.

Eliza's attitude and tone of speaking further confirmed her guess.

If Li Muyan stepped up and resolved the issue, she would not have needed to pull this off. She could just find a chance in the future and explain it to him.

However, Li Muyan chose to do nothing about Eliza's provocation. Therefore, she could only use her own method to solve the issue.

"You..." Eliza could not say anything back to her.

Eliza did not want to admit defeat. She merely wanted to regain her pride somewhere else.

She then judged Ning Xi's gorgeous appearance tonight. "Today is Mr. Lu's birthday. The spotlight should belong to Mr. Lu and Mrs. Lu. Aren't you being rude for dressing so extravagantly?"

Ning Xi's outfit for tonight was indeed very high-profile and attractive.

Ever since she appeared, many people had been secretly judging her, especially the young girls at the venue. Of course, all the men were checking her out too.

The crowd suddenly felt that she was inappropriately dressed as well after Eliza pointed it out.

Events like these would usually invite celebrities to lighten up the mood; Ning Xi was not the only celebrity there. All the other celebrities tried to avoid being the spotlight and wore more plainly, except Ning Xi, who wore a very attention-grabbing, bright red dress.

Red was the color that represented China. Usually, only the host would wear this color and the guests would all avoid it.

Ning Xi's outfit was indeed unseemly.

Several girls came together and started discussing. "Ning Xi is being a little too high-profile, isn't she? Is she trying to embarrass Mrs. Lu?"

“Well, she’s just an actress, after all, so she wouldn’t know about all these rules, would she?”

...

At this moment, loud voices came over from the entrance. It seemed like the main person of the night had arrived.

Lu Tingxiao, who usually wore dark colors, had actually put on a maroon suit today, appearing more fresh-looking than usual.

Probably because of his birthday, he seemed to be in a jovial mood. The man’s face was not as cold as usual and he looked more lively.

“CEO Lu!”

“Mr. Lu, happy birthday!”

“Happy birthday!”

Amidst the well wishes, the man nodded and made some small talk with the guests. At the same time, he walked towards the center of the venue.

The man did not stop until he reached in front of a girl in a long, red gown. He appeared before the girl like a bright sun in the sky.

The man stood before the girl, his arm casually wrapped around the girl’s waist before he lowered his face and left a precious kiss on the girl’s soft, petal-like lips.

The girl’s face bloomed into a smile as she gently murmured, “Happy birthday.”

The frigid man melted and he smiled back. “Thank you, milady.”

#### **Chapter 2104: Prince Charming Is Taken**

Above them was a sky full of stars. All around, the colorful lanterns lent the lawn a layer of dreamy brilliance.

In the middle of the venue, the handsome man and the girl before him, who was just as splendid and moving as a blazing sun, had quietly fixed their sights on each other.

This scene was as beautiful as a fairy tale.

When they saw Lu Tingxiao’s gentle kiss as he embraced Ning Xi, and heard Lu Tingxiao murmur that extremely loving word “milady”, those heiresses, who were nit-picking on Ning Xi’s outfit earlier, were all dumbstruck.

Eliza was initially still bitter over Ning Xi overestimating her capabilities and stealing her man, but at this moment, her sweet and delicate little face looked as if she had just seen a ghost. She stared blankly at the two people who were being intimate as if nothing could come between them.

In the meantime, behind them, Li Muyan had an expression that did not need to be elaborated upon.

The woman with Lu Tingxiao on whom he doted, that legendary Madam Lu... was actually... Ning Xi!

Earlier, Ning Xi's words were not an excuse to get out of trouble. She was really, really... married...

After a short silence, there was a commotion.

"Oh my God! Ning... Ning Xi is Madam Lu!"

"Lu Tingxiao's wife is Ning Xi? This is extremely shocking!"

...

In that instant, everyone seemed to have suddenly understood why Ning Xi would wear such a vibrant color tonight.

She was the wife of the esteemed guest!

Apart from her, no one else would have the right to wear such a color and such an outfit!

The funny thing was that all of them had even deliberately dressed carefully, afraid of stealing the Madam's limelight although no one truly had the capability to steal this Madam Lu's limelight.

Lu Tingxiao naturally let the girl hold on to his arm, and his gaze swept across everyone present before announcing the start of the banquet, "Thank you, everyone, for coming today. It's the honor of my wife and I. We hope everyone has a delightful night."

Delightful...

When they saw that their Prince Charming was taken, they were really delighted.

The fangirls who had especially come over to see Lu Tingxiao were all forcefully stuffed with the display of affection, so much so that they were about to weep from the torture.

To the public eye, Lu Tingxiao had always been distant from women's charms. He had an untouchable image, and there was even a time when many people thought that he liked men.

Who would have thought that after all the silence would come such a huge surprise? He had been keeping it in for the big move to publicly display his affection. It was such a savage move that it terrified everyone!

"How could this be?! How could it be Ning Xi?!"

"Even though Ning Xi is very beautiful, yeah, I admit that, but to consider her identity and her family background, she wouldn't be a match for Lu Tingxiao, would she?"

"Exactly! If it were the Second Master's wife, I could still sort of understand, but this is the position of the head lady of the Lu family!"

Helplessly, no matter how unconvinced they were, this was already a fact that was set in stone.

Even if they were unwilling to admit it, the pair of the fine-looking couple in front of them really looked pleasing no matter how they gawked.

A group of heiresses was still mumbling skeptically when some murmurs rippled from the entrance.

“Ah! It’s Elder Chief Zhuang!” Someone cried out.

The elder’s hair was silver white, yet he appeared healthy with a hearty spirit. Even if he was not wearing his military uniform, he still had a natural air of hardship on him that came from the battleground. While the middle-aged man beside him had a similar aura, he was even sharper and colder, and his eagle eyes had a terrifying luster in them.

On the left of Zhuang Zhongren was Zhuang Liaoyuan, and on the right was Meng Linlang in a qipao , looking elegant and graceful with an outstanding aura as always.

Behind them, there was also the composed and beautiful Zhuang Keer in a couture gown from Spirit, and Zhuang Rongguang who stood tall and straight in his military uniform.

One could say that this family was excellent at attracting eyeballs. Instantly, everyone’s gazes turned towards them.

### **Chapter 2105: It’s the Lu Family’s Blessing**

“It looks like the entire Zhuang family is here!”

“Wow, really? Since when did the Zhuangs become this close to the Lu family? Lu Tingxiao’s just celebrating his birthday, but the entire Zhuang family has come?”

As the crowd thought about how strange it was, they started to doubt it. “It really is a little weird. These two families... one’s in the army and the government, while the other is in business. Usually, they would just have a nodding acquaintance, wouldn’t they? Especially Elder Zhuang... He would never get close to anyone, especially businessmen, what more attend the birthday banquet of someone from the younger generation?”

“But we can’t say for sure. Now that the Lu family does have an existence that even the higher-ups have to fear, I’m afraid the Zhuang family are bound by convention!”

“Well, that’s true...”

On the other side, Zhuang Keer had immediately seen Ning Xi who was the most dazzling person amidst the crowd. She immediately ran over to Ning Xi and greeted extremely intimately, “Xiao Xi!”

“Keer, you guys came too!” When she saw Zhuang Keer, Ning Xi instantly flashed a sincere smile.

Zhuang Rongguang who was formidable-looking in his military uniform rushed up to Ning Xi like a monkey and said with an expression as if he was showing off his treasures, “Bro Xi! Quickly look! Tell me, do I look handsome in this? Am I handsome or not?”

As Ning Xi watched this young man who was becoming more and more energetic, her eyes were filled with admiration. She was not stingy with her praises. “Indeed, you’ve become much more handsome now!”

When Zhuang Rongguang heard the words he wanted to hear, he was instantly overjoyed.

Meng Linlang helplessly shot her son a look, then she noticed Ning Xi's outfit and her eyes lit up. "Girl Xi, this outfit is gorgeous! Child, you usually dress a little too simple. Someone of your age should wear more bright colors like this. Don't wait till you're my age. You can't wear them even if you wanted to anymore!"

When they saw this scene unfolding, all of the heiresses instantly had mixed expressions.

"Why are all the Zhuangs so close to Ning Xi?"

"Is that even a question? She's definitely benefiting by association with the Lu family! In any case, she's the wife of the young master of the Lu family now. She's the head lady!"

"What!? What luck is this!? She really increased her status by climbing up this tree! It's so unfair! Which one of us here wouldn't be miles better than her in terms of family background? What's the Lu family thinking, letting someone of such status marry him? Even if they don't think for themselves, they should think about the future generations' genes and bloodline, shouldn't they?"

"This Ning Xi doesn't match Bro Lu at all!"

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The heiresses immediately felt even more resentful seeing Ning Xi being so close the Zhuang family. They started to group together and mutter.

Only Li Muyan who knew the inside story was filled with bitterness.

Zhuang Zongren could hear these voices and his expression soured. The elder was known to be hot-tempered, plus this matter involved his most beloved granddaughter. Thus, he growled angrily with a scowl on the spot, "Who says my Xiao Xi doesn't match the punk from the Lu family!?"

His worn and honest voice rang in everyone's ears.

The second Zhuang Zongren's slightly furious voice reverberated, the entire venue was immediately enveloped with an overbearing aura. Those heiresses who had been muttering among themselves suddenly did not dare impose. At the same time, they exchanged glances while looking shocked.

What did Elder Chief Zhuang just say?

My Xiao Xi...?

At this moment, Yan Ruyi smiled and walked up to smooth things over. "Elder, look at you. Xiao Xi is your granddaughter. Even Master Xuan Jing said that Xiao Xi was good luck and would bring a happy family and prosperity. To be able to have a daughter-in-law like Xiao Xi is our Lu family's blessing from another lifetime!"

### **Chapter 2106: She Was A Phoenix**

When they heard Yan Ruyi, all the ladies from prestigious and wealthy families, who had bragged about how their family backgrounds surpassed a certain someone, were well and truly stunned.

“Elder... Elder Zhuang’s granddaughter?!”

“Ning Xi is actually Elder Chief Zhuang’s granddaughter?”

“What!? How’s this even possible!?”

So...

Ning Xi had not flown up a branch and become a phoenix !

She was actually already a phoenix?

This was Imperial’s number one aristocrat family. They were first-rate aristocrats in the army and the government for generations. Which of the heiresses present could compare to her status?

Eliza claimed that her maternal side had the blood of Country F’s royalty running through her veins, but everyone knew that the so-called royal family sounded more like a tiger’s roar. However, they did not actually have any real authority. The ones with real authority were the military!

As Eliza listened to the discussions around her and how her name was being compared to Ning Xi, her initially insufferably arrogant expression had, at this moment, completely transformed into disbelief.

This woman... and the Zhuang family... How was this possible!?

No one would have thought that this girl, who had encountered crisis after crisis since she debuted and had climbed one step at a time to her position today, would have such a powerful identity and background. Furthermore, she had even married into a family like the Lu family!

“This Ning Xi is really unpredictable! She’s been hiding a little too securely, hasn’t she!”

“Exactly! Who would’ve thought that she and the Zhuang family would have this layer of relationship?!”

When they said this, the heiresses looked at her with a renewed expression.

If Ning Xi had wanted to use her connections a little to make her way to the top, it would have been easy, yet she had maintained a low profile up till now.

Just as the words Ning Xi had once said at Noble perfume’s audition.

“True elegance and nobility aren’t about the luxury brands between her words. It isn’t the precious jewelry on her wrist or boasting about their own good looks, knowledge, and accomplishments. True elegance is that even if in ragged clothes, with messy hair and a dirty face, the aura of elegance cannot be concealed.

“True elegance, is that even if she conceals her identity and never highlights it, the bloodline in her bones cannot be erased.”

Some of the ladies and dames in the circle who were present that day seemed to have known about the relationship between Ning Xi and the Zhuang family. At that moment, they were making small talk with Meng Linlang and Ning Xi. They were very amiable and good-natured to Ning Xi, seeming as if they were close to her.

Yan Ruyi and Lu Chongshan also loved their daughter-in-law dearly; that went without saying.

As matters stood, those heiresses were all done with their temper. “Enough, everyone, stop sulking. They’re truly the ideal couple with families that are well-matched. They are a match made in heaven!”

Yan Ruyi’s words earlier had calmed Elder Zhuang’s fury, but he still looked a little cross.

Once this elder, who had been in the military for half his life, got angered, no one could calm him down.

Just as Yan Ruyi and Lu Chongshan fidgeted awkwardly, when even Ning Xi, Lu Tingxiao, Zhuang Keer, and the rest were at a loss, from the side came a soft voice. “Great-grandfather!”

When the elder saw the obedient and cute little baby, his anger instantly evaporated and he beamed broadly. That cold face turned warm and loving. “Little Treasure! Come, quickly come to Great-grandfather!”

The fully automated portable fire extinguisher, baby Little Treasure, walked over obediently. The old man and the young boy started to chat happily, and it was an extremely harmonious atmosphere.

When they saw that the elder was finally not angry anymore, Ning Xi and Lu Tingxiao exchanged a smile in relief.

Zhuang Rongguang was grinding his teeth with jealousy. Why did this little child from a previous relationship get to be doted on!?

### **Chapter 2109: All These Images**

A birthday song started to play as a tall birthday cake with more than ten tiers was presented. Lu Jingli and Zhuang Rongguang pushed it out together on a cart.

The crowd gave a round of applause as they sang the birthday song together and celebrated Lu Tingxiao’s birthday. They also gave their blessings to the family of three.

Little Treasure and Lu Tingxiao wore pairing outfits today. The father and son duo wore a similar color to Ning Xi’s, and the three of them looked amazing together.

With candlelight and music as the background, pictures started appearing on the huge LED screen. All of them were memories of the daily lives between Ning Xi, Lu Tingxiao, and Little Treasure.

Most of the pictures had been taken by Lu Jingli. Even Ning Xi had been unaware of when the photos were taken.

There were pictures of Lu Tingxiao wearing a bright blue suit for the first time, Ning Xi cooking in the kitchen, Little Treasure and Lu Tingxiao helping her, and even the costume party at Little Treasure’s school. Ning Xi had gone as the Little Red Riding Hood while Little Treasure and Lu Tingxiao became the small wolf and big wolf respectively, amusing everyone

No one could imagine that the aloof Lu Tingxiao would do something like this. Never would they imagine him wearing a cute wolf outfit and even attending his son’s costume party!

The girl looked gentle and lovely while the child looked cute. The usually emotionless man looked genuinely warm and content in the photos.

Lu Jingli was really excited to see everyone's shock.

He could finally let everybody get a taste of all the images he had been seeing until now!

All the singles at the party were really hurt as Lu Jingli wished.

"Second Master! That's enough!"

"Stop it! Are you still human!?"

"Leave us singles alone!"

...

Everyone looked envious. "The three of them look just like a real family. It doesn't look like Ning Xi is a stepmother at all!"

"This woman is really something. She can even deal with that child! That child isn't an easy person to please!"

Aside from envy, there were also some negative voices in between. "While the two of them look good together, I bet Ning Xi's life is going to be tough from now on. The stepmother always has it rough!"

"That's true! Being a stepmother at such a young age and in that sort of huge family... If she doesn't deal with things well, huge conflicts might occur. She's not his biological mother, after all."

...

While these words were expected, they still sounded oddly annoying.

Lu Jingli saw the expression of the little bun change. He quickly changed to another disc and played some cute pictures of his brother when he had still been little, trying to lighten the mood.

The LED screen darkened, then the photos of the three of them disappeared, but it soon lit up again and started playing another set of photos.

Lu Jingli grinned. "Bro, there's a picture of you butt naked when you were little..."

Lu Tingxiao slowly turned his head over at his brother threateningly.

Lu Jingli was terrified. "No! At most, it's just showing your belly button! I know that only your wife can see those pictures! Don't worry, Sister-in-law, I'll send them to you later!"

### **Chapter 2110: Those Photos**

Ning Xi rolled her eyes. However, she was pretty interested to see pictures of Lu Tingxiao when he was young; she wanted to see if he really looked like Little Treasure.

Everyone looked over at the big screen as Second Master had mentioned that there would be photos of little Lu Tingxiao.

A photo appeared and the setting seemed to be in a hospital. There was a signage saying “Department of Gynecology” and a pregnant girl sat on the long bench.

Lu Jingli’s expression changed the moment this photo appeared.

Because the pregnant girl in the photo... was Ning Xi!

While the girl’s face looked much younger, it was obvious that was her.

In just a moment, countless photos flashed through the screen, all of them showing Ning Xi pregnant, in the hospital, on the road, in the park...

“Hmm? W-what’s happening!”

“The person in the photo is Ning Xi, isn’t it?”

“She looks young in there, but that sure is her! But why is Ning Xi sitting in front of the department of gynecology with a bulged tummy?”

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“Damn!” Lu Jingli’s expression darkened and he wanted to take out the disc, yet he was stopped by a large palm.

If they stopped it right now, it would only attract more rumors and things would be really messy by then.

Ning Xi’s face already went pale when she saw those pictures. She panicked.

After Lu Tingxiao stopped Lu Jingli from taking out the disc, he put his arms over the girl’s shaking shoulders. “It’s alright.”

Lu Tingxiao focused intently on the photos, observing how Ning Xi was pregnant, walking alone, shopping alone, going to the hospital alone. His grip on the girl became tighter and tighter...

“Hahahaha...” Suddenly, there was the sharp laughter of a woman among the crowd.

A woman in a waitress’s outfit rushed below the big screen and then screamed, “Daughter of a prestigious family, a proud lady! This woman got pregnant by a stranger when she was 18, yet she’s still acting all pure in front of everyone! She’s just trash! A shameless slut!”

The crowd was stunned to see Ning Xueluo.

“Ah... That woman, isn’t that Ning Xueluo?”

“That’s right! It’s her! She’s the foster daughter of the Ning family! The one who was chased out recently!”

Ning Xueluo’s matter was too high-profile to be ignored, so many people recognized her almost instantly.

Everyone believed the pictures when they heard Ning Xueluo’s words.

It was perfectly normal for Ning Xueluo to know Ning Xi’s secrets, so she had come here for revenge!

No one expected such a big scandal would be revealed at Lu Tingxiao's birthday banquet...

Lu Tingxiao's wife, the head lady of the Lu family, had such a huge scandal.

An out-of-wedlock pregnancy at 18?!

"Oh god! No way! Is Ning Xueluo telling the truth? Ning Xi got pregnant with a stranger's child at 18?"

"Does the Lu family know about this? Does Lu Tingxiao know?"

"Of course not! They wouldn't have gotten married if they knew! That's so scary! As expected, the private lives of women in the entertainment industry are incredibly messy!"

...