

PROTEGE 106

Chapter 106: I'M SO EMBARRASSED

Mr. Xu nodded and smiled through his tears, grateful for Ling Li's confidence. "Thank you, Ling. You are very good to us."

"Eh, don't keep thanking me. I would feel you don't accept me as your family," Ling Li replied playfully.

"No, no. Please don't get me wrong," Mr. Xu responded immediately, his tone earnest.

Ling Li smiled, feeling a deep sense of connection with her in-laws. "Father-in-law, Mother-in-law, I know your hearts. I shall take my leave. I hope you will tell me if you need anything." Ling Li comforted the two elderly before bidding goodbye.

When Ling Li returned to the main house, she saw Lily sitting alone in the living room, her face lit up by the soft glow of the late afternoon sun streaming through the windows.

"Lily, I thought you were in the office with your sister," Ling Li said, setting her sunglasses down on the coffee table.

"Mom, I was with my big sister but came home to talk to you," Lily responded, her tone suggesting she had something important to discuss.

"What is it? Tell me," Ling Li prompted, curiosity piqued.

"Mom, I intend to participate in next year's international dance sports competition. Also, I got an invitation from Coach Carlos. He is forming a gymnastics team to compete in the Asian Olympics," Lily informed her mother, excitement and determination evident in her voice.

Ling Li's eyes lit up with pride. "Lily, I will support you in your decision. I will take care of Ren's business while you are training," she replied happily.

"Mom, I can handle the business. But can you find me, my own assistant? Big sister said she would take her personal assistant with her," Lily requested.

"I can find you a reliable assistant. Give me at least five days," Ling Li agreed, mentally adding it to her to-do list. She was still so tied to the training that she could only focus on this after sending off the trainees.

"Regarding the business, I'll take over the jewelry business. You can just concentrate on Ren's real estate. If you have any questions, ask your brother or me. Don't bother your sister anymore. Oh, and never compete with your brother's real estate business. He will punish you," Ling Li advised.

Lily laughed out loud, her eyes sparkling with mischief. "I was gonna poach Big Brother's customers. Ha ha ha."

"You! Don't even think about it!" Ling Li scolded playfully.

"Ha ha ha, I know, Mom. I was only joking. Brother's real estate business is not within my reach," Lily assured her mother.

"Ren and your brother decided to divide their target market. Ren focuses on low-cost and class B, C, and D customers. While your brother's target markets are the class A and the elites," Ling Li explained, defining the business landscape for Lily.

"Ooh, now I got it. I didn't know about that. Mom, I want to open my own coffee shop in the future," Lily mused.

"Coffee shop? Why do you need your own? Just take over our existing shops," Ling Li retorted, raising an eyebrow.

"Mom, I didn't know we had coffee shops!" Lily almost yelled in excitement.

Ling Li laughed at her daughter's incredulity. "It's all over your brother's department store. 'The Asian Brew.'"

"What!? Mom! 'The Asian Brew' is ours?" Lily's jaw almost dropped.

"Yeah, and all of 'Over The Moon' Resto Bars," Ling Li added, enjoying the moment of revelation.

"Mom, how did I not know about these?!" Lily was both amazed and a little embarrassed.

"You're still in school. We want you to focus first on your education and not mind the business pressure around us," Ling Li explained.

"Mom, do you know I wanted a coffee shop resembling the 'Asian Brew'? Just to discover we own it? I feel so embarrassed," Lily said, puffing her cheeks in a way that made her look adorably funny.

Ling Li laughed out loud, unable to contain her amusement. "Ha ha ha, you are cute like a pufferfish! You don't have to feel pitiful. You are still young; don't rush. When you feel you have explored everything, you can settle down and work permanently in your chosen field. Because once you start working full time, you can no longer enjoy freedom as much as you want," Ling Li reminded her, a note of wisdom in her voice.

"Going back to your training, where do you want to train?" Ling Li asked.

"Mom, can I convert one of the halls into my dance studio?" Lily requested, her eyes bright with anticipation.

"Sure! Why not?!" Ling Li replied with enthusiasm.

"Thank you, Mom," Lily beamed.

"Of course, my good daughter. Butler Peng," Ling Li called, summoning the ever-reliable butler.

"Yes, Madam?" Butler Peng responded promptly.

"Please help Lily convert the hall beside the gym into her personal studio," Ling Li instructed.

"I understand. I will ask Lily for her preferences and have it done immediately," Butler Peng replied courteously, already mentally making notes.

"Thank you, Butler Peng. Let's talk later and go over the specifics," Lily said, excitement bubbling in her voice.

"Yes, Young Miss Lily." Butler Peng bowed and left to start on the preparations.

"Lily, what about your gymnastic training?" Ling Li inquired, knowing her daughter's ambitions didn't stop at the dance.

"I could practice my floor exercise routines in my studio; the hall you mentioned is big enough," Lily explained, her mind already planning routines.

"Yes, but since you do all-around events, I'll ask your brother to build you a practice area. The castle's estate still has a vast place for it," Ling Li proposed, always thinking ahead.

"Mom, you are too good to be true," Lily said, hugging her mother tightly.

"You sure have a sweet tongue. I'm going to check on the guys at the camp. Do you want to come with me?" Ling Li asked, enjoying the moment but aware of her other responsibilities.

"I can't, Mom. My online classes will start in an hour. You go ahead. I will take a shower for now," Lily replied, torn between wanting to join her mother and needing to prepare for her classes.

"Don't make yourself hungry. Grab some snacks before your class," Ling Li reminded her, always the caring mother.

"Yes, Mom. Thank you," Lily said, heading towards the kitchen to grab a quick bite.

"Alright, I have to go," Ling Li said, preparing to leave.

"Bye, Mom," Lily waved as Ling Li headed out.

Chapter 107: FIRST BREAKTHROUGH

As Ling Li walked out, the house felt alive with the promise of new beginnings. Butler Peng was already busy coordinating the conversion of the hall, and Lily was mentally preparing for both her training and her upcoming online class.

The hum of activity, mixed with dreams and ambitions, filled the air, creating a sense of warmth and unity. Ling Li felt a surge of pride and contentment as she stepped into the car, ready to check on the progress at the camp. The family was growing, not just in size but in accomplishments and dreams, and she felt blessed to be at the center of it all.

It was already late afternoon when Ling Li arrived at Camp Blaze. The twenty-eight men's team was holding their spears, engaged in intense training under Mushu's watchful eye. Ling Li observed them, noting the change in their auras since they left the battlegrounds. 'This is good. They know they are in for survival,' she thought, satisfaction blending with her usual stern composure.

A loud, thunderous sound caught her attention. Ling Li smiled, recognizing the signature of Shun's newfound power. 'I guess Shun is really a talent. He has grasped the power of fire in a day,' she mused proudly.

"Ahhhh!" The piercing cry of pain diverted her focus. Four Eyes collapsed, writhing in agony.

Everyone was stunned and wondered what happened. Ling Li sprinted toward him. Recognizing what is happening, "Chu Yan! You are breaking through! Sit and focus... Focus and gather your Qi in your dantian," Ling Li declared and instructed Four Eyes, her voice steady and authoritative. She knelt beside Four Eyes, guiding him through each painstaking moment. Four Eyes followed Ling Li's every word, his face contorted in concentration.

The rest of the team watched, taken aback by the spectacle. "The rest of you, this is how one breaks through and how you properly do it," Ling Li informed them, her tone both instructional and

commanding. "Now that you have seen it, remember: we cannot disturb a person in the middle of their breakthrough. Someone should always watch over them. If the breakthrough is not successful, it can harm the person's body.

Carry on with your training. I will stay beside Chu Yan." Ling Li declared.

After an hour, the training ended. Shi Min and Shun arrived back at the camp, both looking invigorated.

"This is amazing, Mom; Paps had a breakthrough," Shi Min exclaimed, noticing Four Eyes in deep cultivation.

"I know," Ling Li acknowledged, a proud smile playing on her lips.

Then, as if recalling something important, she reached into her pocket and pulled out tiny pieces of sophisticated technology. "Mushu, Shi Min, Pharsa. Implant these trackers into each of them," she said, handing Shi Min the tiny trackers.

This state-of-the-art tracker was one of Ling Li's innovations. Once implanted, it was virtually undetectable, sending alerts only to specific domains and ceasing once the person's pulse stopped.

"What do you mean by an implant?" Chatty asked, eyes wide. "Put it inside our body? Cutting us and putting it in?"

Shi Min laughed. "Ha ha ha, yes. Like this." He took one and tapped behind Shun's neck. "All done."

They were all stunned except for Shun, who had seen Shi Min's abilities.

"Son, I forgot about that. We can do it this way," Ling Li laughed, taking back half of the trackers from Shi Min. With their mystic powers, only Shi Min and Ling Li could implant the trackers seamlessly.

"This saves a lot of time and effort," Ling Li remarked as she and Shi Min continued the process. The men watched in awe as the trackers were implanted without any visible discomfort.

"And no pain! I didn't feel anything at all. Is it really in?" Fatty asked, rubbing his neck in disbelief.

"Are you doubting the Supreme Commander?" Mushu shot him a stern look.

"How dare I!" Fatty quickly shut his mouth. He felt aggrieved.

After implanting the trackers, Ling Li addressed the group. "You are all dismissed. You may go home. I'll wait for Chu Yan."

Shi Min turned to one of the trainees. "Reginald, stay here with Mom."

"Yes, Grand Master," Reginald replied formally, knowing the camp demanded a certain decorum.

"How long will it take for Chu Yan to finish?" Chatty asked, curiosity getting the better of him as they walked towards their car.

"It varies from person to person. Some take only five minutes, while others can take as long as six days," Shi Min explained.

"Six days!" Fatty and Chatty exclaimed in unison, their eyes widening.

"Yep," Shi Min confirmed.

"Don't you feel hungry or need to go to the bathroom?" Fatty asked, still puzzled.

"Once you meditate, you won't feel any of it. Some masters can cultivate for up to six months. Mom once meditated for three months," Shi Min shared his tone, one of pride.

"Wow!" The amazement in Fatty and Chatty's voices was palpable.

They chatted animatedly all the way back to the mansion, leaving Ling Li and Reginald at the camp.

Ling Li watched over Chu Yan, a serene look on her face. She knew this breakthrough was pivotal for him, and she felt a deep sense of pride and hope for the future. The evening air was cool, and the forest around them seemed to hum with the promise of new beginnings.

Ling Li glanced up at the sky, the fading light painting the heavens in shades of orange and purple. She took a deep breath, feeling the weight of her responsibilities but also the satisfaction of seeing her family's progress.

As the camp quieted down for the night, Ling Li remained vigilant. She whispered words of encouragement to Chu Yan, her presence a beacon of support and strength. Time seemed to blur as the stars began to twinkle above, each one a silent witness to their perseverance. The gentle rustle of leaves and the distant calls of nocturnal creatures created a soothing symphony, lulling the camp into a tranquil state.

Shi Min returned home with the rest of the group, puzzled by the sight of a truck parked outside their house. "Butler Peng, what is going on?" Shi Min inquired as he stepped inside, his curiosity evident.

Chapter 108: YOU HAVE BLACK MAGIC

"Masters, good evening," Butler Peng greeted him with a respectful bow. "Young Miss Lily needs the hall for her training. She will be joining next year's International Dance Sports Competition and gymnastics. We are clearing the hall."

"Really? I thought she was taking over Ren's business," Shi Min responded, furrowing his brows in surprise.

"Master, Young Miss Lily, and your mom discussed all the matters this afternoon. You can ask them about it," Butler Peng informed Shi Min, noticing his confusion.

"I see. Please inform the servants to prepare our dinner," Shi Min instructed while sinking into the plush sofa in the living room.

"Yes, Master," Butler Peng acknowledged, pivoting smoothly on his heel to carry out the order.

Turning to Shi Min, Fatty couldn't mask his curiosity. "Shi Min, is Lily a dancer?" Fatty asked.

Shi Min, who had been silently absorbing the news from Butler Peng, looked taken aback. "She did not tell you?" Shi Min asked, genuinely surprised by Fatty's lack of knowledge.

Fatty's face flushed, and he shook his head in embarrassment. "No, she didn't."

"She turned professional at age sixteen. She's also a gymnast and competes internationally," Shi Min declared proudly, a hint of brotherly pride in his voice.

Fatty's eyes widened in amazement. "That is so cool!" he exclaimed, his enthusiasm overflowing. The pride in his voice mirrored Shi Min's own feelings toward his sister. He felt an extra surge of pride for his little girlfriend.

Shi Min smirked, watching Fatty's joy with a mix of amusement and contemplation. 'I wonder how he would feel if he found out about Lily's wind and light power,' Shi Min pondered internally, a secret smile playing on his lips.

At that moment, Butler Peng returned, his demeanor as impeccable as ever. "Master, the dinner is ready."

Shi Min nodded, rising from his seat with a composed grace. "Please inform Shun and Ren to come down for dinner. Where are the twins and Lily?" he inquired, his voice steady but filled with subtle authority.

"The twins are with their grandparents. Young Miss Lily is in her online class. I will call for Miss Ren and Young Master Shun," Butler Peng replied, executing a precise bow before excusing himself to deliver the message.

The dinner table, a long and polished mahogany piece adorned with an exquisite centerpiece, awaited the family. The tantalizing aroma of the meal wafted through the air, promising an evening of comfort and conversation.

Back at the camp, as the hours passed, Chu Yan's breakthrough neared completion. Ling Li could feel the shift in energy, a subtle yet powerful change. She knew that this moment would mark a new Chapter for him, one filled with potential and growth. Her heart swelled with pride, knowing that they were all on the path to greatness, united by purpose and unwavering resolve.

It was almost nine o'clock in the evening when Four Eyes finally completed his cultivation. He was surprised to find that it was already dark, and only Ling Li and Reginald remained.

"You have been waiting for me. I'm sorry," Four Eyes said, feeling a pang of guilt as he noticed Ling Li had waited for him in the chilly open field.

"Why do you have to be sorry? How do you feel?" Ling Li asked, her excitement palpable.

"I feel great, and my body became... bulky?" Four Eyes struggled to find the right word.

"Sturdy!" Ling Li exclaimed with a chuckle.

Four Eyes laughed. "You are correct, sturdy. Let's go home."

"Master, congratulations on your breakthrough," Reginald said, his voice full of admiration.

"Thank you," Four Eyes replied, grateful for the support.

The three of them began their journey back, the path illuminated by the soft glow of the moonlight. As they walked, Ling Li couldn't help but feel a deep sense of pride. Not just for Four Eyes, but for the entire team and the journey they were all on together.

Meanwhile, back at the mansion, Shi Min was quietly contemplating the evening's events. The training, the breakthroughs, and now the surprising news about Lily's dancing aspirations. It was a lot to take in, but he felt a growing sense of optimism.

'Mom and Lily have really been busy,' Shi Min thought as he made his way to the dining room, eager to hear more about Lily's plans and to share in the pride of their family's accomplishments. The warmth of the home, the shared meals, and the support from one another made him feel incredibly fortunate.

The night air was cool and filled with the subtle fragrance of blooming flowers as Ling Li and Four Eyes settled in after supper. The soft glow from the lanterns cast gentle shadows on the walls, adding a touch of intimacy to their conversation. Ling Li took a deep breath, preparing herself for the discussion ahead.

"Chu Yan, I need to discuss something with you," she said, her tone serious and her eyes earnest.

Without missing a beat, Four Eyes pulled her into his arms, a playful glint in his eye. "I also want to do something with you."

Ling Li tried to keep her stern expression but couldn't help the small smile tugging at her lips. "You, I'm serious."

Four Eyes's smile widened, his eyes dancing with mischief. "Who said I'm not?"

"Chu Yan!" Ling Li exclaimed, her tone a mix of exasperation and affection. Ling Li let out an exasperated sigh, though her heart fluttered with affection. "Alright, you win this round. But we really do need to talk."

Four Eyes grinned at Ling Li, his hold on her firm yet gentle. "Okay, tell me."

"Release me, release me," Ling Li insisted, her voice firm yet soft.

"Can't you tell me while I'm holding you?" Four Eyes teased, but the look in Ling Li's eyes told him she meant business.

"No. This is a serious matter," Ling Li insisted.

Realizing the gravity of the situation, Four Eyes released her, concern replacing his playful demeanor. "Now, tell me."

The gravity of the moment settled in, the light-hearted teasing giving way to the importance of their conversation. Ling Li glanced around the room, her mind racing with thoughts and plans for the future. They had come so far together, and she knew that this discussion would shape the next steps of their journey.

"I've been thinking about our training and the challenges ahead," she began, her voice steady. "We need to be prepared for anything, and that means making some tough decisions."

Four Eyes listened intently, his playful nature replaced by a focused resolve. He knew that whatever Ling Li had to say was crucial, and he was ready to face it with her, no matter what.

"Chu Yan... Honey... You have Black Magic," Ling Li finally said in a calm yet firm voice, her eyes searching his for understanding.

Four Eyes squinted, confusion clouding his features.

"Chu Yan, your Black Magic is especially powerful. You should be able to contain it, or you might hurt yourself." Ling Li explained.

"How is it possible?" Four Eyes asked disbelief etched in his voice.

'It appears he doesn't know about his great-grandfather and uncles,' Ling Li thought, her heart heavy with the burden of revealing such a truth.

Chapter 109: ROCKING WILD LIKE A RODEO

*** WARNING *** *****MATURE CONTENT *****

"Honey, Black Magic is rare but can be passed on in the family. I learned that your great-grandfather and two uncles had the same power as yours. Your two uncles died because of it." Ling Li revealed what she learned from the elder Xu.

Four Eyes frowned deeply. He had always been told that his uncles had died of congenital diseases, but this revelation shattered that belief.

“How did you find out I have this?” he asked, still grappling with the newfound information.

Ling Li chuckled softly, trying to lighten the mood. “You were lifting all the pieces of furniture in our room when you were cultivating. Ha ha ha.”

Four Eyes was stunned and asked, “How did I do that?”

“It was your internal energy. You cannot control and gather the energy properly in your center, so it releases on its own. This is very dangerous,” Ling Li clarified. “When you are in cultivation, try to gather all the light you see and control it instead of allowing it to flow freely around you.” Ling Li added.

“You mean the black light?” Four Eyes asked, starting to piece things together.

“Honey, the black light represents Black Magic. Now that you had a breakthrough, this will also become stronger.”

“Um,” Four Eyes nodded, still processing everything.

“Honey, do you have any idea what your Black Magic can do?” Ling Li inquired.

Four Eyes shook his head. He still couldn’t comprehend the fact that he had this power, much less what it could do.

“Watch me,” Ling Li said, focusing her attention on their bed. After a few seconds, it floated in the air, then gently settled back down.

Four Eyes was overwhelmed by what he had just witnessed. He was still reeling from the news that he possessed Black Magic, and now he had to accept these new facts about it.

“How did you do it? Do you also have Black Magic?” Four Eyes asked, his mind racing.

Ling Li shook her head. “Shi Min and I have mystic powers.”

Four Eyes wanted to vomit blood.

Four Eyes felt as though he could faint. Seeing his shock, Ling Li continued, “Honey, you are very powerful, but you need to control Black Magic well because it has evil forces that come with it. You can only reverse that evil force by using the magic with honest and pure intentions.”

Four Eyes nodded slowly, realizing the magnitude of what lay ahead. It was a daunting task, but with Ling Li by his side, he knew he could face it.

“Um.”

Ling Li’s eyes sparkled with excitement as she watched Four Eyes. “Honey, try it. First, close your eyes and concentrate. Gather your ‘Qi’ and all the black lights and send them all to your eyes. Then look at your target and focus on your intended actions.”

Four Eyes shook his head.

“Honey, you only have three days, no two days, before you leave. You must try it while I am here to guide you.” Ling Li insists.

“Can I not use my black magic?”

Ling Li’s expression softened with understanding. “You can, but have you considered that this might save your life in unforeseen events in the future? Black magic is one of the most powerful skills one can have. You can even control and influence other people’s minds. Honey, you can be stronger than me.”

Four Eyes sighed, realizing the weight of her words. "Um." He doesn't think he can win this discussion with his wife, so he agrees.

Ling Li was so delighted that she kissed him.

Four Eyes squinted his eyes, astonished by Ling Li's excitement.

"Now, Honey. Try to focus. Remember to gather all your 'Qi' first with the light, send them to your eyes, and focus on the 'intent' you wish to do."

Four Eyes closed his eyes, meditated for several minutes, and opened his eyes, looking at the bed in front of them. A few seconds later, the mattress rose and went down.

Ling Li's jaw almost dropped. She couldn't believe Four Eyes could do it in one go. He is focused on all aspects of his endeavor.

"Honey, you are awesome. You can do it on your first try!"

"Because I have a good teacher. Or should I call you my 'gosu'?" Four eyes replied jokingly, pulling Ling Li into his arms. "Now, can I get my reward?"

Ling Li wrapped her arms around his neck. "Sure, what about I teach you another magic trick?"

"Let me punish you first for teasing me." Four Eyes whispered.

"No, no, no... Ummmmmmmm."

Four Eyes stopped Ling Li's words by pressing his lips on hers. And carried her to their bed.

Four Eyes stripped both of them, and he started kissing and sucking Ling Li's whole body. His glistening saliva felt warm and very sexy in her flesh.

Four Eyes' tongue left trails on her body, moving down to her nipples, now saluting up to him, down to her navel and sweet entrance. The intoxicating smell filled his nose.

Four Eyes circled his tongue around Ling Li's hard, protruding clitoris, eagerly waiting to be eaten like a ripe sweet cherry.

"Ahhhhhhh..." Ling Li's melodic moans became music to his ears. From slow to a higher pitch as she trembles underneath him.

"Ahhhhhhh... Ummmmmm... Chu Yan..."

Ling Li is driven mad by Four Eyes' tongue; she urges him to get closer and deeper by holding his head and rocking with him, lifting her hips to meet his tongue, his whole mouth. She wanted to restrain herself, but she couldn't stop.

Before Ling Li could orgasm, Four Eyes came up, mounted her, and asked, "May I?"

Ling Li nodded.

Her wetness, almost begging for him. He entered her.

"Ugghhhhhh..." Four Eyes couldn't stop himself from shouting. He could feel his hard cock wanting to explode with every thrust he made.

Ling Li convulsed violently under him.

"Ugghhhhhh..." Four Eyes shouted again.

"Dear, show your true form...." Four Eyes whispered in between his thrusts.

Ling Li complied without hesitation.

“Ugghhhhhh... yes!” Four Eyes couldn’t help but yell again, claim her lips, and let his tongue dance with hers.

“Dear, I want to go harder!” Four Eyes said, his voice barely a whisper.

Ling Li cupped Four Eye’s bums as an affirmation to him that made him even more frantic. She could only close her eyes, let go of herself, and feel ecstasy.

“Chu Yan... I’m coming...”

“Come, my dear... have a lot. I want a lot more.” To Four Eyes, he would like to freeze time for this. He doesn’t want it to end.

As Ling Li came, the room was illuminated with golden light.

Four Eyes, his muscular body rocked hard and fast into Ling Li.

“Ugghhhhhh... Dear, I’m gonna come. Come with me! Ugghhhhhh...” Four Eyes shouted.

Ling Li couldn’t count how many times she had orgasmed.

“Dear, pleasure me. Please....” Four eyes rolled both of them over, putting Ling Li on top of him.

Ling Li happily complied and ground herself to him, rocking hard and wild like a rodeo.

Four Eyes, with his eyes closed, could feel Ling Li milking his cock with her juice dripping on him.

“Ugghhhhhh... harder...harder...” Four Eyes shouted his pleasure.

“Ugghhhhhh...”

Gripping Ling Li’s buttocks tight with his hands.

It was a crazy night for the couple, and the smell of erotica floated in the air.

Ah! Who else knows how to rock like a rodeo???

Chapter 110: CHANGE OF PLAN

Ling Li summoned Shi Min to her study the following day, the aroma of freshly brewed tea mingling with the hints of sandalwood from the incense burning softly in the corner. The air was still heavier than usual, as if the house itself held its breath, anticipating something significant.

Outside, the gentle rustle of leaves whispered secrets of the day. At the same time, the other gentlemen were engrossed in their foreign language lessons, oblivious to the brewing storm of conversation awaiting Shi Min.

“Mom, I’m here,” Shi Min announced, stepping into the warm, inviting space with its ornate wooden furniture and the mystical flicker of candles casting shadows along the walls.

“Shi Min. Read this,” Ling Li said, an unusual tremor darkening her tone as she handed him a delicate, folded card. Its edges were intricately embossed, an emblem from Otako that Shi Min recognized instantly.

Shi Min’s brows knitted together as he opened the card. “This is from Otako,” he said, absorbing the formal penmanship that seemed to carry more than just words.

Ling Li nodded, a shadow of worry etching deeper into the creases of her brow. The heavy silence between them spoke volumes; Shi Min could feel the weight of his mother's concerns resonating within him.

"What the hell!" Shi Min exclaimed after scanning the contents of the letter, his voice laced with disbelief. "They will go to the Mystical Mountain instead of the Amazon???!!"

"Yes," Ling Li confirmed, her voice steady yet strained. "That's what Otako has planned."

"Mom, they will fight with the demonic beasts! Their cultivation is still very low," Shi Min argued, concern swirling in his chest like a tempest. The thought of his friends facing off against fearsome creatures sent a shiver down his spine.

"I think this is why Otako is sending them to the Mystical Mountain; using their skills in actual combat is the best way to quicken their cultivation," Ling Li stated, her resolve shining through her worry.

Shi Min shook his head vehemently, brushing a hand through his hair in agitation. "Their sword skills are not even at their best! How can they face such dangers now? Why not send them to the Hidden Valley instead?" Shi Min suggested, desperation creeping into his tone.

"Our family can let them enter as inner disciples and train there. They'll be safe!" Ling Li's expression shifted, and concern flickered in her eyes. "As you said, their cultivation is too low; they would be outmatched and bullied in the Hidden Valley.

You know how those old geezers are, all hungry for power. Suppose they find out we've brought outsiders under our protection. In that case, they will surely show their superiority and target our people," Ling Li reminded Shi Min, her voice rising slightly, reflecting her frustration.

"Yeah, you're right," Shi Min conceded, a dark cloud of disdain creasing his forehead.

"And with the family competition approaching, I can't stand those old geezers. They're insufferable." Ling Li sighed, rubbing her temples as she tried to formulate a plan.

“We must take them to the magic array. It’s the only way.” Shi Min leaned back, the tension in his shoulders easing slightly as consideration replaced his indignation.

“That’s the only way I see fit.” Ling Li called out, “Mushu.”

Moments later, a light knock heralded the entrance of Mushu, whose loyalty was unwavering. “Madam, Young Master,” he greeted, bowing slightly.

“Are they done with their lesson?” Ling Li inquired, her eyes narrowing as she prepared for the upcoming announcement.

“They just finished and are waiting for Master Shi Min,” Mushu replied, standing with his hands straightened neatly on his side.

“Let them come in, you and Pharsa as well,” Ling Li instructed, her tone leaving no room for defiance.

A few moments later, the study was filled with youthful energy as everyone gathered. The sun filtered through the window, casting a soft glow on the group, highlighting their eager faces, still flushed from their recent intellectual endeavors.

“Everyone, I have an important announcement.” Ling Li’s voice rang out, commanding attention. The atmosphere shifted as she dropped the bombshell. “Otako changed the plan. You are no longer going to the Amazon.”

“Oh, great!” Fatty and Chatty, ever the mischief-makers, exclaimed in unison, their excitement palpable.

“Don’t celebrate yet; I’m not done,” Ling Li warned, maintaining an air of gravitas. The cheers died instantly, replaced by a tense silence. Fatty and Chatty exchanged confused glances, their enthusiasm quickly evaporating.

“You are no longer going to the Amazon; instead, you will be going to the Mystical Mountain,” Ling Li continued, allowing her words to sink in.

“Mystical Mountain?” they echoed, bewildered murmurs weaving through the group.

“I know you haven’t heard of it,” Ling Li explained, her voice steady amid the rising tide of uncertainty, “but it is notorious among martial artists, a place where many come to train and enhance their cultivation.”

“What is in the Mystical Mountain?” Four Eyes piped up, his curiosity cutting through the thickening air, only to be met with an unwelcoming response.

“You will be fighting demonic beasts,” Ling Li stated, a sigh escaping her lips, laden with the weight of what was to come.

Four Eyes was left speechless, his mind racing with the implications of her revelation.

In contrast, the others felt their hearts stop momentarily, a collective chill running down their spines as reality settled in. The gravity of their fate hung in the air like an unspoken challenge. This looming adventure beckoned them into the unknown.

“Why...Why do we have to go to this place?” Chatty asked nervously.

Ling Li’s expression softened as she placed a reassuring hand on Chatty’s shoulder. “It could be said that Otako wants to hasten your cultivation. You can do it by using your full potential in the actual fight.”

Chatty swallowed hard but nodded. Ling Li continued, “I will take you to a place where you can practice today and tomorrow. And know what to expect from Mystical Mountain.” Ling Li added, her voice firm with resolve.

“Mushu, we will show them the magic array. Let’s go. We have no time to waste,” Shi Min said, his tone commanding.

As they left the study, Ling Li grabbed Four Eyes’ hand and held it tightly, her touch warm and reassuring.