

PROTEGE 166

Chapter 166: OFFENDING THE HEAVENLY DAO

Shi Min interjected, "Additionally, we must consider the Heavenly Dao Council at the Hidden Valley. The Heavenly Dao Council members are the overseers of the martial world, ensuring that our actions align with the principles of balance and harmony among martial artist. Bringing chaos to the mortal world and tarnishing the name of the Heavenly Dao or martial artists would surely draw their attention. The Council does not take such matters lightly.

Punishments from the Council can be severe, ranging from the confiscation of our cultivation resources to banishment from the martial world. In the gravest cases, they might strip us of our cultivation abilities entirely, rendering us powerless and vulnerable. This is why we must always be vigilant and mindful of our actions, maintaining the integrity and honor of the Heavenly Dao."

As Shi Min finished, his voice carried a tone of finality, the weight of his words and Ling Li sinking deep into the hearts of their listeners. The group nodded solemnly, absorbing every pointer and reminder declared by Ling Li, their Master, and Shi Min whom they also regard as their Mentor.

As they made their way back to the mansion, the camaraderie among them was palpable. Four Eyes and Ling Li walked hand in hand, their bond feeling unbreakable. Shi Min and Pharsa walked alongside them, their heads close together as they discussed the trainees' progress and planned future training sessions. Four Eyes and Ling Li gently held their little twins, Kim Kim and Chin Chin, as they tried to walk, their tiny legs still learning the rhythm.

"Kim Kim! Such a big girl!" Four Eyes cooed, lifting her gently as she wobbled on her little legs. His heart swelled with pride and affection, his eyes shining with a father's love.

"Kim, big gu...I." Kim Kim tried to say what her Daddy said, her tiny voice filled with determination. The group couldn't help but giggle while Four Eyes felt utterly enchanted by his daughter imitating his words. He beamed at her, his smile wide and full of joy.

Ling Li chuckled, "And you, Chin Chin, you're doing so well! Come on, one more step," she encouraged, holding her tiny hand. Ling Li felt a surge of warmth as she watched her daughter take tentative steps, her tiny face scrunched up in concentration.

Chin Chin cooed and let out an "ahhhh" while striding on her tiny, wobbly legs. Her giggles were like music to Ling Li's ears, and she couldn't help but laugh along with her, feeling her heart fill with happiness.

Suddenly, Ling Li felt the triplets in her womb give a gentle kick. Her eyes widened in surprise, and she instinctively placed a hand on her stomach. The unexpected movement filled her with a mixture of excitement and nervousness. She had kept her pregnancy a secret, planning to surprise Four Eyes on their wedding day. The sensation was a beautiful reminder of the life growing inside her, and she couldn't help but smile, feeling a deep sense of connection with her unborn children.

The twins giggles and playful attempts brought a joyful light to the group's steps. The simple act of watching the twins learn to walk became a moment of pure bliss, bonding everyone together in shared delight.

As the group entered the main house, Four Eyes' parents were comfortably seated in the living room, their faces lighting up with delight as they saw the twins walking in with their parents.

"Look at these two little ones; they are growing so fast," Mrs. Xu, Four Eyes' mother, said emotionally, her voice cracking with pride. Mr. Xu beamed happily beside her, his eyes twinkling with joy as he looked at his grandchildren.

"Gra....n...pa!" Kim Kim called, her voice filled with excitement.

"Aiyo, my little Kim Kim, come to Grandpa. Good girl," Mr. Xu happily approached Kim Kim and took her little hands from Four Eyes, his heart swelling with love and pride.

"Father-in-law, please be careful not to fall; the twins are beginning to be more lively," Ling Li reminded Mr. Xu, her voice tinged with concern.

"Aiyo, with all the daily activities you arranged for me, my knees are now a lot stronger," Mr. Xu declared with a hearty laugh as he happily held Kim Kim's little hands, who was leading the way.

Ling Li consciously touched her nose upon hearing her father-in-law's words, unsure if he was complaining or praising her. Her eyes sparkled with a mix of amusement and relief.

Four Eyes, who had witnessed her small movement, grinned and held her shoulder with an assuring nod, his eyes filled with warmth and support.

Chi Chin, who Ling Li was still holding, started to demand to be lifted. "Up... up..." Chu Yan looked at his youngest daughter and carried her in his arms, his eyes filled with affection. "You lazy bun," he said to Chin Chin as he playfully patted her bum.

"Bun... bun..." Chin Chin echoed her father's words, her voice sweet and innocent. Ling Li chuckled, her eyes shining with amusement.

"You learn these useless words instead of your lessons," Four Eyes commented, a teasing smile playing on his lips. Chin Chin immediately cried, startled by Four Eyes' words. However, Ling Li laughed even harder, her laughter ringing through the room like a melody.

"You should not let her hear you say the words lesson, study, or tutor. She will cry," Ling Li laughingly said, her eyes filled with understanding as she looked at her daughter. The people around also laughed with Ling Li, their laughter filling the room with warmth and joy.

Chu Yan could only helplessly shake his head while coaxing Chin Chin, his eyes filled with a mixture of amusement and exasperation.

"Madam, Masters, the food is ready," Butler Peng announced.

Kim Kim, who was enjoying walking around the living room, heard Butler Peng, "Food... Food..." she echoed, her eyes lighting up with excitement.

"Okay, let's get your food," Mr. Xu cooed while walking with Kim Kim, his voice gentle and filled with affection.

"Alright, everyone, let's eat," Ling Li said, her voice filled with warmth and hospitality. Everyone proceeded to the dining hall, their faces alight with anticipation.

Chapter 167: WE ARE GETTING MARRIED

As they started to eat and chat happily, Ling Li's voice cut through the chatter, "I have an announcement to make." Her words piqued everyone's curiosity, and they held their chopsticks mid-air while all eyes immediately focused on her.

Ling Li took a deep breath, her heart pounding in her chest. "Chu Yan and I are getting married," she announced, her voice steady but filled with emotion. The room erupted in applause and cheers, followed by congratulatory remarks from everyone present. Except for Mr. and Mrs. Xu, the rest couldn't show that they already knew about it from their last night's secret meeting, planning for the big wedding proposal.

"Ling, thank you. We know our son Chu Yan loves you very much, and we wish you all the best. Your Father-in-law and I are truly happy for both of you," Mrs. Xu said, her voice filled with sincerity and joy.

"Paps, Mom, congratulations! We should drink to celebrate this occasion. Butler Peng, please get a bottle from my collection so we can toast to Paps and Mom," Shi Min declared, his voice filled with enthusiasm.

"Master, Madam, congratulations," Mushu said politely, followed by the rest, their voices filled with genuine happiness.

"Mom, when is the wedding?" Ren asked enthusiastically, his eyes sparkling with excitement.

"Oh, about that, what would you think if we held it on the same day as the twins' first birthday?" Ling Li asked, her eyes filled with hope.

Ling Li's proposed wedding date was less than a month away, causing Four Eyes to raise his brow in surprise.

"Ah, Mom, that's less than a month!" Lily exclaimed in surprise, echoing the thoughts in Four Eyes' mind.

"Then we have a lot to prepare!" Ren said, his voice filled with a mix of anxiety and excitement.

“Yes, exactly. But you and Lily have a lot on your plate; you need to study, and Lily has her training. So I will ask your Brother Shi Min to help prepare for the occasion,” Ling Li said, her voice filled with determination.

“No way, I want to be part of the preparation,” Ren instantly vetoed, her voice firm.

“Me too! I need to be part of it!” Lily said, pouting adorably.

Ling Li’s head buzzed, but before she could say a word, Shi Min interjected; he perfectly knew his Mom wouldn’t be able to change her sister’s mind once they decided. “I’ll contact and form a team for the event preparation. Once it’s arranged, I’ll call for a meeting, and both of you could come. From there, we can finalize the plan for both the wedding and the twins’ birthday,” he suggested, his voice calm and composed.

“That sounds good, too,” Ren said, nodding in agreement.

“Alright, everyone can be present during the meeting and give their suggestions. Shi Min, when can we form the team?” Ling Li asked, her voice filled with expectancy.

“I can arrange it within today. I can assemble the team first, and we can have the meeting as early as tomorrow,” Shi Min replied, his voice filled with efficiency.

“Mother-in-law, Father-in-law, please give us your ideas too. Also, I haven’t met any of your family’s relatives. So we must invite them this time,” Ling Li said politely, addressing her in-laws.

“Ling, don’t worry too much. We’ll invite a few and let you know. Regarding the wedding, you and Chu Yan can arrange it. We have no requirements, and we are not very conservative parents,” Mrs. Xu conveyed, her voice filled with reassurance.

“I understand, thank you,” Ling Li replied, her voice filled with gratitude. Chu Yan, recognizing Ling Li’s nervousness, held her hand, squeezing it as an assurance that everything was fine and not to worry too much. This small gesture made Ling Li’s heart warm, and she felt grateful for Four Eyes’ meticulous consideration.

Just then, Butler Peng returned, carefully cradling a bottle of wine. "From your collection, Master Shi Min," he announced, presenting the bottle with a flourish.

Shi Min's face broke into a broad grin. "Ah, this is no ordinary bottle," he began, his voice filled with pride. "This is a Château Margaux 1787, the most expensive wine in the world. A bottle from my private collection, worth every penny for such a special occasion."

Gasps of admiration and surprise filled the room. "Wow, that's incredible!" Ren exclaimed, his eyes wide with awe.

"Indeed, it is," Shi Min said, carefully opening the bottle and pouring a glass for everyone. The rich, deep red liquid shimmered in the glasses, a testament to its rarity and value.

Raising his glass, Shi Min cleared his throat. "To Paps and Mom," he began, his voice filled with emotion. "To their upcoming wedding and the beautiful life they will continue to build together. May your love grow stronger with each passing day, and may you find endless happiness in each other's company."

The room was silent for a moment, and Shi Min's heartfelt words moved everyone. Then, as one, they raised their glasses and echoed his toast,

"To Paps and Mom!"

"To Master and Madam!"

"Thank you, Shi Min," Four Eyes said, his voice thick with emotion. "And thank you, everyone. We are truly blessed to have such wonderful family and friends."

Ling Li's eyes glistened with unshed tears, her heart overflowing with love and gratitude. As she clinked her glass with Four Eyes, she knew this moment would be etched in her memory forever.

"CHEERS!"

As the group continued their meal in merriment, the excitement of the upcoming double celebration filled the air. The clinking of glasses, joyful chatter, and hearty laughter created an atmosphere of warmth and camaraderie.

Before the meal ended, Ling Li stood up, her expression firm yet kind. She raised her hand slightly to get everyone's attention. "Everyone, please listen up," she began, her voice carrying a tone of authority that commanded respect. "Except for Ren and Lily, everyone else is free in the afternoon. I suggest you do meditation and cultivate to strengthen your Qi; this will also maximize the effect of the training in the morning on your body."

Ling Li paused for a moment, letting her words sink in. "Try to do and master the drills and the kata I introduced to you until you build muscle memory with it.

Chapter 168: LOOK AFTER LILY

Also, I prepared a herb bath that everyone has to take every night. These herbal baths are essential to your cultivation. You will feel a different mania, and you have to endure it," Ling Li declared openly and firmly, her eyes scanning the room to ensure everyone understood the importance of her instructions.

"Understood," everyone replied in unison like disciplined soldiers, their voices echoing through the dining hall. The sight of their serious expressions and synchronized response amused Ling Li, bringing a small smile to her lips.

Ren and Lily, who had been quietly listening, exchanged glances. Ren's eyes twinkled with curiosity, while Lily's face showed a mix of determination and excitement. They both knew that their responsibilities kept them busy, but the thought of meditation and cultivation intrigued them.

"Ling Li, you're really putting us through our paces," Mr. Xu said with a chuckle, his eyes filled with admiration for his daughter-in-law. "But I have to admit, these activities have made me feel more energetic than ever."

"Indeed," Mrs. Xu added, nodding in agreement. "I never thought I'd be doing yoga at my age, but it's been surprisingly invigorating."

Four Eyes couldn't help but grin at his parents' reactions. He admired Ling Li's dedication to their well-being and her ability to inspire even the most unlikely participants.

Chu Yan, holding Chi Chin in his arms, looked at Ling Li with a mixture of pride and affection.

Butler Peng, who had been standing attentively by the door, stepped forward with a look of approval.

"Madam, your dedication to the family's well-being is truly commendable," he said respectfully. "I will ensure that everything is prepared for the herbal baths tonight."

Ling Li nodded appreciatively at Butler Peng. "Thank you, Peng. Your assistance is always invaluable," she replied warmly.

Shi Min, who had been quietly observing the exchange, stood up with a glass of the Château Margaux 1787 in hand. "Now, let's raise our glasses once more," he began, his voice filled with emotion.

"To Paps and Mom!"

"CHEERS!"

The room echoed with enthusiasm, and the atmosphere remained lively and joyful. Plans for the wedding and the twins' birthday were discussed with enthusiasm, and everyone contributed their ideas and suggestions.

After everyone dispersed, Fatty approached Four Eyes, who was about to go back to his room with Ling Li to freshen up.

"Chu Yan, do you have a minute?" Fatty asked.

Four Eyes looked at his friend knowingly and nodded, and he signaled to Ling Li to go ahead while he walked toward Fatty.

“Let’s go to the veranda to talk,” Fatty said. Once they were on the veranda, Four Eyes curiously looked at Fatty, wondering what important matter he had to discuss with him.

Fatty cleared his throat, “Chu Yan, I think Lily’s dance partner, is not as simple as he looks,” he said.

Four Eyes, who is a man of few words, looked at Fatty, insinuating for him to continue.

Fatty helplessly scratched his head, “I truly don’t know how to describe him, but my intuition is telling me that this kid is dangerous,” Fatty honestly disclosed to Four Eyes his impression of Solaris.

Four Eyes nodded; he understood Fatty wanted him to relay this message to Ling Li so they could find a way to discover Solaris’ true colors, as Fatty deemed. Four Eyes tapped Fatty’s shoulder to assure him that he got the message.

“Thanks, Bro,” Fatty gratefully said.

“Look after Lily,” Four Eyes said before turning to leave.

“Yes, I will. Thanks again.” Fatty said before following Four Eyes inside the main house that he also needed to wash up and follow Lily to her dance practice in an hour.

Shi Min, true to his word, began forming the team for the event preparation. He made calls, coordinated schedules, and ensured that everything was on track. His efficiency and dedication were evident in every detail. He also called Mushu and Pharsa to discuss forming their separate teams to be in charge of the invitations, security, and accommodations of all the guests.

Fatty hurriedly washed and looked for Lily, whom he found doing warm-up exercises with Solaris and the dance coach’s assistant. The dance hall was alive with the soft strains of music and the rhythmic movements of the dancers.

Once Solaris saw Fatty’s presence inside the hall, he gave him a sly smile that made Fatty clench his fist. Something was unnerving about Solaris’ demeanor that set Fatty on edge.

'I'll expose your true colors soon,' Fatty silently vowed as he returned Solaris' smile with a snort. Solaris, on the other hand, seemed to have seen through Fatty's thoughts and returned with a grinning smile, his eyes gleaming with a challenge, delivering his message loud and clear: 'Sure, you can try.' The confidence in Solaris' expression stunned Fatty, who felt a chill run down his spine.

Fatty's eyes dimmed with determination. 'My instinct seems accurate, but I need more evidence to tear his mask off,' he silently thought. 'For now, I can only silently protect Lily on the side.'

Fatty stayed by Lily's side throughout the dance practice, his presence a silent guardian. He watched every move Solaris made, his senses heightened, ready to intervene if needed.

Meanwhile, Ling Li had just stepped out of the shower when Four Eyes returned to their room. The lingering warmth from the hot shower made her skin glow, and her hair was wrapped in a towel. She was drying off when she felt his presence behind her.

Four Eyes strode to Ling Li with purpose, his eyes dark with longing. He gently wrapped his arms around her waist, pulling her close. "Why didn't you wait for me to shower? Hm," he murmured, his voice a deep, husky whisper that sent shivers down her spine.

Ling Li's face, still rosy from the hot shower, reddened even more at his proximity. "You!" she protested weakly, her voice tinged with embarrassment.

"Why are you so shy?" Four Eyes whispered in Ling Li's ear, his warm breath sending a delightful tingle through her body. Her heart raced as he continued, "I still miss you." Without further words, Four Eyes scooped Ling Li up into his arms, carrying her to their bed with a tenderness that belied the intensity of his emotions.

Chapter 169: COME FOR ME

WARNING *****MATURE WARNING*****

Four Eyes tear off the robe from Ling Li's body as he strips himself, with his knees spread over Ling Li's hip displaying his proud hard cock in front of Ling Li.

Ling Li's throat felt dry as she swallowed her saliva while goggling at Four Eyes hungry cock Hoovering her.

"Do you like what you see?" Four Eyes, with his coarse masculine voice, whispered.

Ling Li couldn't help but hold the hard cock and started to stroke it slowly, which earned her Four Eyes a low grunt. "Uggghhhhhh..."

While stroking Four Eyes cock, Ling Li could also feel herself getting excited and wet, which Four Eyes could detect. He leaned over and captured Ling Li's lips, took both of Ling Li's hands with his right hand, and brought it over Ling Li's head while his other hand kneaded her bosom one after the other. At the same time, Four Eyes adjusted himself and let his hard cock play and tease Ling Li's entrance which made her restless.

Ling Li raked her hips with every movement of Four Eyes cock made, and this made Four Eyes even more hungry for her.

"Honey, may I?" Four Eyes asked with his husky voice, which sounded so sexy in Ling Li's ears.

"Yes, please," Ling Li cried in response.

Four Eyes plunged his hard cock into Ling Li deep and hard, "Honey; I miss this. I want this with you all the time," Four Eyes whispered to Ling Li as his pace and rhythm increased.

Ling Li moaned and cried from the burning passion she was feeling... "Hhhmmmmmm... Ahhhmmmmmm..." tightening her embrace while wrapping her legs around Four Eyes.

Four Eyes wrapped Ling Li in his arms and buried his face on her neck as he hardened his every thrust into her; he was like a ruthless, vicious black panther, lurking in the deep, hidden valley, running and tearing his prey. His muscles tensed with each formidable thrust; he wanted to give his all to the woman he only loved and let her feel how much he worshiped her.

Every trust is full of longing, love, sincerity, and desire. His hunger and yearning for her were evident with each of his movements.

“Ling, I love you...” Four Eyes said it was barely a whisper.

“Chu Yan... Ahhhhhhh... I love you... Hmmmmmm... Chu Yan... I’m coming...” Ling Li cried these words in between moans, one after the other.

Ling Li’s words ignited Four Eyes more; he wanted to satisfy Ling Li’s every desire. “please come for me...” Four Eyes whispered as he made his every thrust more profound until he witnessed Ling Li reaching euphoria; he looked at her full of love and longing.

The room was filled with the aroma of lust, love, longing, and desire.

Four Eyes carried Ling Li to bathe with him, his face still full of longing and love. Ling Li fell into slumber after they showered. When she woke up, he found Chu Yan in a meditative pose beside their bed. She changed and went out of the room without disturbing Four Eyes. She plans to finish concocting the elixirs and the pills she started in the alchemy room.

Meanwhile, the atmosphere in the dance hall was charged with tension as Fatty remained vigilant, his eyes never leaving Solaris. Lily, unaware of the silent battle of wills between the two men, focused on her dance practice, her movements graceful and fluid.

As the session ended, Solaris approached Lily with a smile, offering his hand to help her up from a stretching position. Fatty’s eyes narrowed as he watched the interaction, his protective instincts flaring.

“Good practice today, Lily,” Solaris said smoothly, his voice laced with a charm that made Fatty’s skin crawl.

“Thank you, Solaris,” Lily replied, smiling politely as she accepted his hand. “I feel like we are improving.”

Fatty stepped forward, his presence a silent warning to Solaris. “Lily, do you need help with your bags?” he asked, his tone courteous but firm.

Lily glanced between the two men, sensing the tension but not fully understanding its source. “Sure, Quan Ye. Thank you,” she said, handing him her bag with a grateful smile.

As they left the hall, Fatty couldn’t shake the feeling of unease. ‘I need to stay close and keep an eye on Solaris,’ he resolved, his mind racing with plans to uncover the truth. The thought of Solaris’ intentions gnawed at him, refusing to be dismissed.

Solaris watched both of them leave the practice hall together, maintaining his innocent smile. His eyes followed their every move with a calculated precision, his demeanor seemingly harmless. However, as soon as they turned their backs, his expression darkened, transforming into a grimacing look filled with malice.

Inside Solaris, a storm brewed. His mind raced with thoughts, each one more devious than the last. ‘Lily,’ he mused, his lips curling into a twisted smirk. ‘So pure, so naive. She has no idea what’s coming.’

His innocent facade was a carefully crafted mask, one that fooled Lily and her family into trusting him. But beneath that mask lay a cunning and ruthless character, always plotting, always scheming. Solaris relished the thrill of deception, the way he could manipulate those around him without them suspecting a thing.

‘Fatty thinks he can protect her,’ Solaris thought, his eyes narrowing with contempt. ‘He’s nothing but a minor inconvenience. I’ll deal with him in due time.’

Solaris’ mind was a labyrinth of plans and contingencies. He knew that gaining Lily’s complete trust was the key to his success. He envisioned moments where he could exploit her vulnerabilities. In these situations, he could be her knight in shining armor, further endearing himself to her. His thoughts turned darker as he considered the ways he could isolate Lily from her family and friends, making her depend solely on him.

‘Once she’s in my grasp, she’ll have no choice but to turn to me,’ Solaris’ thought, his grin widening. The thrill of control and power over her was intoxicating.

As Solaris’ thoughts swirled with malice, he maintained his innocent smile, returning to the practice hall as if nothing had changed. To anyone watching, he appeared friendly, approachable, and sincere—a

perfect companion for Lily. But inside, he was already orchestrating his next move, setting the stage for his ultimate plan.

Chapter 170: YOU'LL NEVER SEE IT COMING

Fatty, unaware of the full extent of Solaris' machinations, could only trust his instincts. 'I need to stay close and keep an eye on Solaris,' he reiterated to himself. His mind was set on uncovering the truth, knowing that he had to protect Lily at all costs.

Solaris, meanwhile, relished the cat-and-mouse game. The challenge of outwitting Fatty only added to his excitement. 'Try all you want, Fatty,' Solaris thought, his eyes glinting with a predatory gleam. 'You'll never see it coming.'

The dance hall remained a place of practice and discipline on the surface, but beneath that veneer, a silent battle of wills unfolded. Solaris' cunning plans clashed with Fatty's determination, each one vying for control over Lily's fate.

Four Eyes finished his meditation and realized that Ling Li was no longer in their bed, "she must have gone back to the alchemy room," he thought. Feeling a sense of responsibility, he decided to go down and practice the kata and the drills from the morning.

As Four Eyes entered the training area, he saw Chatty and Fatty being guided by Goldie. He decided to join them. Ling Li had entrusted Goldie to oversee the afternoon training, and Goldie took this responsibility with unwavering seriousness. His eyes were sharp and focused, taking in every movement, every breath of his students.

Goldie stood tall, exuding an aura of authority and precision. He had always been known for his meticulous nature, but today, he seemed even more exacting. Every gesture and every correction he made was precise and deliberate. His voice was calm yet firm as he addressed the group, "Again. Watch your stance, Chatty. Fatty, don't rush through the movements. Let's begin from the top."

The kata practice involved a series of fluid, graceful movements, and Goldie's attention to detail was unparalleled. He moved among them, adjusting the position of an arm here, correcting a foot placement there. "Four Eyes, your balance is off. Center yourself and flow with the movement," he instructed.

As they transitioned to the drills, Goldie's meticulousness became even more apparent. He demonstrated each technique with perfection, breaking down the movements into their smallest components. "Remember, precision is key. Each strike, each block must be executed with exactitude," he said.

Goldie's dedication to their improvement was evident in every action. He did not tolerate half-measures. His sharp eyes missed nothing, and his corrections were swift and effective. Despite his strictness, there was a sense of care in his demeanor. He genuinely wanted each of them to excel and reach their full potential.

Under Goldie's watchful eye, the training session became an intense and focused endeavor. The kata and the drills were not just physical exercises but lessons in discipline and perfection. Four Eyes, Chatty, and Fatty felt the weight of his expectations, but they also felt motivated to meet them.

Shun joined Ren to study with Old Tutor Chen in the grand study hall, its shelves lined with ancient scrolls and dusty tomes. The room was filled with the scent of aged parchment and the soft rustle of turning pages.

Earlier, Ling Li had a long meeting with Tutor Chen, her eyes serious as she disclosed to him Otako's mission for Shun. The weight of the information left Old Tutor Chen overwhelmed, his brows furrowing deeply. Realizing the overall task was given by Otako, a man of immense power, he pondered and murmured, "Indeed, the current president has been very disappointing and has been overusing his influence despicably."

Lost in contemplation, Old Tutor Chen, the old man's finger gently caressed his long silver beard, fingers weaving through the coarse strand with a slow, thoughtful rhythm—a subconscious habit as he pondered the gravity of the situation. His mind was a whirlwind of thoughts as he considered the monumental task ahead.

Old Tutor Chen not only had high regard for Ling Li, but he had also heard whispers of Otako's immense power and influence. Taking a deep breath, he accepted the responsibility to train Shun, the burden of the task weighing heavily on his old shoulders. He straightened his back and declared with determination, "I will meet Shun and assess his learning capability. I will make a study program for him."

Ling Li, with a faint smile, replied, "Thank you, Old Chen. And by the way, we only have less than two years to train Shun."

The revelation of the limited period left Old Chen bewildered. His eyes widened with astonishment, and he felt a pang of regret for already accepting the task. With a disappointed snort, he unfolded his precious fan, the intricate design catching the light. He strode out of Ling Li's study, his mind racing with plans and strategies.

Ling Li couldn't help but be amused by Old Tutor Chen's endearing character. Despite his serious demeanor, there was something undeniably charming about the old man.

In the study hall, Old Tutor Chen meticulously guided both Ren and Shun, his eyes sharp and discerning as he tested Shun's proficiency in learning. The old tutor's presence was commanding, and his attention to detail was unwavering. Shun felt the intensity of his gaze, and Ren watched closely, her admiration for Shun growing with each passing moment.

Throughout the session, Old Tutor Chen's movements were deliberate and precise. He corrected Shun's posture, his voice a blend of authority and encouragement. "Focus, Shun. Your concentration must be unwavering," he advised, his finger tapping lightly on the table.

By the end of today's study session, Old Master Chen was more than pleased with Shun. He could see the young man's confidence and capacity, and an excited glint appeared in his usually stern eyes. "I will find you a more qualified teacher for politics and governance. I will bring him with me tomorrow. Meanwhile, I will meet you every weekend to learn culture and arts," Old Tutor Chen announced enthusiastically, knowing Shun's mission to take over the government required the best guidance. He already has the perfect person in mind.

Shun, feeling a mixture of gratitude and determination, respectfully said with a deep bow, "Thank you, Tutor Chen."

Ren, her face lighting up with joy for her friend, also said, "Thank you so much, Tutor Chen."