

PAMPERED BY SHORT-LIVED BIGSHOT

Chapter 21 - 21 021 First Night of Living Together Entering the Room

Chapter 21: 021 First Night of Living Together: Entering the Room (Chapter 2) Chapter 21: 021 First Night of Living Together: Entering the Room (Chapter 2) When Tang Wan and Jiang Jinsang returned to the East Courtyard, Old Tang had already taken his medicine and gone to rest.

The autumn wind was cool at night. As the two walked side by side and just entered the courtyard, Jiang Jinsang saw the stacks of empty flower pots by the wall and couldn't help but chuckle softly, "Looks like you really did keep quite a few flowers before."

Tang Wan suddenly felt a bit embarrassed, remembering how her grandfather had just laughed while telling Jiang Jinsang,

"... all those flower pots in the East Courtyard, they were for the flowers Wanwan used to grow. The flowers died, but she couldn't bear to throw the pots away, so they're all piled up there."

"Over the years, quite a few plants have met their end in her care."

"Even cacti couldn't survive under her care."

...

At that time, Tang Wan wished she could cover her grandfather's mouth, as he was saying everything out loud.

It wasn't that she really couldn't care for flowers, but when work got busy, she needed absolute silence, and no one would enter the courtyard. She couldn't even take care of herself, let alone tend to the plants.

Some flowers were delicate, and by the time she was free, it was too late to save them.

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After Jiang Jinsang finished speaking, she gave an awkward smile, and each went to their rooms. Since she had cooked, there was inevitably a bit of an oily smell. She took a quick shower, opened her computer, and prepared to reply to some work emails.

Suddenly, she heard a knock on the door, "Miss Tang, sorry to bother you."

Jiang Jinsang?

She quickly got up to open the door, “Is there something you need?”

“Is there another place to shower in the house? It seems the heater in my bathroom is broken.”

“Broken?” Tang Wan frowned.

Her courtyard rarely had anyone stay over, and those who did were very close friends. If it were a girlfriend, they might even share a room. The room next door hadn’t had someone staying in a while, so the bathroom hadn’t been checked.

Though it was autumn, Pingjiang’s climate wasn’t very cold, so she hadn’t paid much attention to the need for heating while showering.

Remembering how the hotel Jiang Jinsang stayed in before had an unusually high room temperature, it seemed he was quite afraid of the cold.

The Tang family residence was an old house, and there weren’t many places to shower, just the ones in her courtyard which had only been set up in the past two years. They couldn’t exactly have him running around at night, right?

“How about... you come to my room?”

“Is that okay?”

“It’s fine. Go get your change of clothes. I have towels and such here. I’ll have someone fix it tomorrow.”

“I already trouble you enough by staying here. I can have someone fix it.”

Tang Wan didn’t say much. After he went to get his change of clothes, she hurriedly tidied up her room. Living alone, she could be as carefree as she wanted, but it was undoubtedly awkward to have an unfamiliar man around.

The Jiang family people were standing at the room entrance. Seeing their master pack up and prepare to go next door, they were about to follow when he turned and glanced at them.

“I’m going to shower. Are you planning to come in and watch?”

“No.” They wouldn’t dare do such a thing.

“Do you think it’s appropriate to enter a girl’s bedroom?”

The Jiang family: Do you think it's appropriate for you to enter?

"Check the bathroom later to see what the problem is, and fix it tomorrow."

You've said so much. What else can we say?

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A few minutes later

Jiang Jinsang had already entered Tang Wan's room. The young lady's room was clean and tidy, exuding subtle elegance everywhere.

There were few luxury items in her room, except for a floor lamp by the bed shaped like a slanting flower branch, which was exceptionally exquisite, presumably selected to her personal taste with care.

"The bathroom is this way." Tang Wan had already turned on the heater for him. As she opened the bathroom door, a warm ambiance greeted them, "Here are the bathing necessities and towels. Use them as you like..."

“Thank you.”

When Tang Wan left, she squatted in front of her computer. Just as she opened her work email, she suddenly heard the sound of running water, inexplicably recalling the sight of Jiang Jinsang dressing earlier today.

The clothes falling from top to bottom, revealing a lean waist. Her heartbeat suddenly accelerated, and her face blushed slightly.

She patted her cheeks. Could she focus on work?

However, the bathroom’s soundproofing wasn’t good. The sound of flowing water intermittently reached her ears. A strange man in her room, with such alluring looks, not feeling anything would be false.

So she put on headphones and opened a music player to focus on her work.

To drown out the water sounds, she purposely increased the volume and chose an energetic song. So when Jiang Jinsang came out of the bathroom, she remained oblivious.

He leaned against the bathroom door, slightly tilting his head, examining her. Her long hair hung down her back, blown half-dry, resting against her clothes.

The thin material of her pajamas, damp from the shower, clung lightly to her back, sketching a faint silhouette. With the recent shower, no makeup adorned her face, leaving it fresh and beautifully clean.

“Miss Tang.” It was already past ten in the evening. Jiang Jinsang didn’t intend to stay long and only meant to greet her, but after calling twice, she didn’t respond.

So focused?

He walked over, and it wasn’t until he stood behind her that she seemed oblivious—until the computer screen changed. The dark screen not only reflected Tang Wan’s face but also faintly showed the person behind her.

She hurriedly removed her headphones, but in her haste, the cord somehow tangled in her hair.

Instinctively, she tugged to free it, but a hand already extended, gently freeing the headphones from her hair.

“Take it slow.” His voice was warm, deep and mellow, both soothing and comforting, causing her heart to skip a beat.

Meanwhile, the pounding beat in the other ear continued to thrum, vibrating against her eardrums, quickening her heartbeat for reasons unknown.

Helping her with the headphones, Jiang Jinsang was close.

Tang Wan instinctively held her breath.

“I just wanted to let you know, I’m done showering...”

Some words, when heard ordinarily, wouldn’t sound out of place, but at this moment, they seemed particularly suggestive.

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In the room next door

The Jiang family thought that since they were in the same small courtyard, and with Tang Wan also around, if anything happened to Jiang Jinsang, they’d be quickly informed. As he left, they, with nothing particular to do, decided to check the state of the bathroom.

They turned on all the various functions, the wall lights, ventilation, heating...

Seemingly, there were no problems at all.

The heater wasn't broken; the heating effect seemed fine. What exactly needed fixing?

Chapter 22 - 22 022 Little Ancestor of the Jiang Family Second

Chapter 22: 022 Little Ancestor of the Jiang Family: Second Uncle's Fence Can't Be Dug? (Part 3) Chapter 22: 022 Little Ancestor of the Jiang Family: Second Uncle's Fence Can't Be Dug? (Part 3) Tang Wan held her breath, her body tense. His approach had already crossed the safe distance between people.

But before she could speak, Jiang Jinsang had already straightened up. As he leaned over, undried water droplets from his hair slid down, splashing onto her shoulder.

It was scalding.

"You were so focused that I called you twice, and you didn't respond," Jiang Jinsang explained the reason for his approach.

The distance between them widened. He stood there, composed and indifferent, strikingly handsome.

“Wearing headphones, I didn’t notice. Have you finished your shower?” Tang Wan asked a pointless question, just trying to ease the awkwardness.

“Yes, then I’ll leave you now and not disturb your rest,” Jiang Jinsang was gentlemanly and restrained from start to finish.

He could make hearts race, yet he never made people feel he was overstepping boundaries.

One had to admit, this was a skill.

“I’ll see you out,” Tang Wan got up to see him to the door. After closing the door, she leaned against it, exhaling a long breath. This man was too good-looking for his own good, a complete homewrecker.

Just then, there was a sudden knock on the door.

“Miss Tang?”

She was leaning against the door, and the low knocking sounded like a hammer on her back, startling her heart out of rhythm, “What’s up?”

“My mother wants to have a word with you. Is it convenient?”

His mother? Mrs. Jiang?

It was likely either a video call or a phone call, probably knowing she wasn’t asleep. The two families’ elders were so familiar that refusing would be impolite. She had no choice but to open the door. As expected, Jiang Jinsang was holding a phone, only muted, so their conversation hadn’t reached the other side.

“It’s okay if it’s inconvenient.”

“It’s no trouble; give me the phone,” Tang Wan had seen Mrs. Jiang before and knew she seemed very elegant and kind.

She took the phone and couldn’t just stand at the door to take the call, so for the second time, she brought Jiang Jinsang back inside.

The Jiang Family stood at the door, exchanging glances:

Seriously, again, yet another time... he went in?

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Tang Wan cleared her throat and, after unmuting the phone, softly said, “Hello, Auntie — ”

No response.

“Auntie?” Tang Wan frowned.

Instead of hearing Mrs. Jiang’s voice, she heard a child’s milky, muffled voice, “Are you looking for my grandma? She went downstairs, and she’ll be back soon. Sister, what’s your surname? I’ll go call her for you.”

To call Mrs. Jiang “grandma,” who else but the little ancestor of the Jiang Family could it be? The voice sounded innocent and well-mannered, so Tang Wan’s tone softened by a few degrees, “It’s okay, I’m not in a hurry.”

Tang Wan’s voice was gentle and soft, the kind of voice that even women found soothing and attractive, purposely softened, making it even more pleasant.

“Sister, your voice is so nice.”

“Thank you.”

“What’s your surname?” The little fellow was already holding onto the banister with one hand, the phone in the other, walking down the stairs.

“My surname is Tang, like Tang in ‘Tang, Song, Yuan, Ming, Qing.’”

The little one’s brain turned quickly, “Sister, with a voice so nice, you must be very beautiful, too.”

With a scoundrel dad and uncle in the house, the little one had long learned the art of being sweet and charming.

“No,” Tang Wan said this even as she felt pleased deep down. After chatting for a while, the little fellow found his grandmother, “Grandma, the phone, it’s...”

He opened his mouth wide, silently mouthing two words: [Auntie].

Which made Mrs. Jiang laugh, “Drink your milk and go to sleep.” She had come downstairs to get milk for her grandson.

Once Mrs. Jiang answered the phone, Tang Wan’s tone of voice naturally shifted, behaving impeccably in front of elders.

“... Wanwan, with our Xiaowu going over, he’ll surely trouble you in many ways. I do feel a bit bad about it.”

“He won’t be any trouble for me. You’re being too polite.” His schedule was managed by the Jiang Family, no need for her to handle anything.

“Sometimes his temper is pretty bad, please be more tolerant and don’t take it personally. If he really does something too outrageous, just tell me, and I’ll definitely stick up for you.”

...

Tang Wan just listened; tattling wasn’t something she would do.

It was just that Mrs. Jiang’s tone of voice suggested that Jiang Jinsang was a “domineering, malevolent” force at home, totally out of alignment with his image. However, given how Jiang Jinsang nearly “beat Tang Mo to death” today, she really didn’t believe that mistaking Tang Mo for a thief was due to it being dark.

The Jiang Family were all martial arts practitioners; it was impossible for everyone to be blind just because one person made a mistake, and Tang Mo had even announced who she was.

The only possibility was...

This Master Jiang Fifth really did want to kill her.

The two of them chatted a bit more and exchanged contact information before Jiang Jinsang took back the phone and returned to his room.

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Back on the Jiang side, Mrs. Jiang expressed her sentiment after hanging up the phone, thinking that she and Tang Wan got along quite well and it'd be great if she could really marry into their family.

In the adjacent bedroom, the little one holding a glass of milk knocked on his father's study door.

He was still working, video conferencing with some senior executive. Only when he saw the little one enter did he say a summarizing sentence, "Let's pause here for now; talk more when you're in the office tomorrow."

As the video call ended, the little guy had already placed the milk on the table. Like a koala, he clambered onto his father's body via the chair's edge, automatically hanging onto his neck.

"Not sleeping yet?"

"If you really want to find me a stepmother, maybe you can try a little flirtation with Second Uncle's woman."

He pursed his lips, "I've reviewed and I think it's not bad."

Someone got up, one hand supporting the son's backside and the other holding the milk, carrying him back to his room. Only after they left the study did he softly say,

"I'm not going to find you a stepmother."

If there was going to be one...

She would be his real mother!

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That night, Zhang Liyun and her daughter were busy at the hospital till the early morning hours, while over at Tang Wan's place, having an extra person in the compound made her feel odd, and she couldn't sleep until after midnight.

The next morning

She got ready, opened her door to go out, and froze in place.

All the vacant flowerpots in her yard had been filled with flowers, all sorts and kinds, covering about half of the yard. Jiang Jinsang was holding a potted plant, studying it carefully. Noticing her out of the corner of his eye, he smiled and said, "Good morning."

"Morning." Tang Wan pressed her lips, "This..."

"The flowerpots are quite pretty, too much of a waste to leave empty. I don't have much to do here anyway, and I know how to take care of flowers," he said, walking up to her. "This pot should go in your room."

“What is this...”

“Mint.”

“Thank you.” Tang Wan didn’t think much, accepting the plant and placing it on the desk in her bedroom.

Only later did she realize that when a guy gives mint, it means a pure...

Affection.

The Jiang Family was also puzzled, thinking that he came to recuperate, so why did he suddenly start gardening?

Later, he proved with his actions that once flowers are well taken care of, they are portable and can be carried away with the pot.

Chapter 23: 023 Change to a closer form of address? Fifth Brother? Jinsang... Chapter 23: 023 Change to a closer form of address?

Fifth Brother? Jinsang... Jiang Family's Old Residence

With an addition to the household, even breakfast was richer than usual. Tang Wan lowered her head, eating the small wontons, and noticed out of the corner of her eye that Jiang Jinsang, holding a spoon and eating wontons, avoided the cilantro on the clear broth, not touching it at all.

“Fifth Master, shall I call someone to fix your bathroom later?”

“What bathroom?” Tang Lao was in a good mood today and ate more than usual for breakfast.

“The heater in my bathroom is broken,” Jiang Jinsang stated nonchalantly, “I’ll find someone to fix it myself.”

“No worries, I still have the contact number of the maintenance guy from when it was installed. Winter is approaching, so he might as well check other heating equipment in the house too.”

Tang Wan’s reasoning seemed fair; it wasn’t right to have a guest repair things.

“I wanted to ask, which hospital is Miss Tang the Second staying in?” Jiang Jinsang inquired calmly while eating. “I heard she’s in the hospital. Since it’s partly due to me, I should go see her.”

Tang Wan pursed her lips. She really couldn’t figure out the person in front of her. He had beaten someone so terribly last night without a single apology, and today he wanted to visit the sick? Something about it felt odd.

Tang Lao clicked his tongue, “You don’t have to go. With your health, better rest at home, bask in the sun.”

“The doctor said it’s good to go out for walks more often.”

“Wanwan is going to the hospital later, so you guys can go together.”

“Miss Tang is going too? Then it’s perfect for company.”

Tang Wan: “...”

She didn’t say she wanted to go with Jiang Jinsang, this was so random.

“I say, the two of you, could you change the way you address each other? One keeps calling him Fifth Master, the other always says Miss Tang. You’re going to be living together; no need to be so formal and distant,” Tang Lao found it really awkward to hear.

“I see young people today start calling each other darling and hubby even before marriage. You’re already living together, why so courteous!”

Tang Wan knew her grandfather had been pretty bold recently, but she never expected him to be this bold.

“We’re just living in the same courtyard.” If outsiders heard this, what would they think?

“Not living together?” Tang Lao countered.

“...”

In private, Tang Wan pulled her grandfather aside and mumbled, “Grandpa, I already made it clear to him, so please stop saying odd things. Just because he doesn’t say anything, doesn’t mean he doesn’t have thoughts.”

This was her own grandfather, with mutual understanding that he didn’t mean anything bad.

But Jiang Jinsang was different, a man nearly demonic in wisdom. If you openly and subtly try to matchmake him like this, he'd notice. If it's someone he doesn't like, doing this once or twice without giving you a hard time is already being polite.

"Tell me, aside from his poor health, where is he not good?"

Tang Wan stayed silent. Who wouldn't want to find someone they like to spend their life with? According to rumors, Jiang Jinsang wouldn't live past three years.

Once married, the husband would die soon after. How was there any hope of growing old together?

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Tang Wan and Jiang Jinsang went to the hospital to visit. On the way, they bought two fruit baskets. As they reached the ward, laughter could be heard from a distance.

Tang Wan hadn't wanted to come, but a gesture of goodwill was necessary; appearances had to be maintained.

As they knocked and entered, Zhang Liyun wasn't there. Tang Mo was lying in bed. It had been too dark last night to see clearly, but now in broad daylight, Tang Wan looked at her face and couldn't help but gasp.

Her eyes were blue and swollen, and half of her face was bruised and puffy, distorting her facial features. Clad in a hospital gown, it was unclear how injured her body was, but it was definitely not light.

The Jiang Family members really went hard; even if they didn't recognize Tang Mo, they should have known she was a woman.

Tang Wan once mentioned this incident after entering the Jiang Family. Jiang Jinsang merely said, flatly,

"If you're a thief, be prepared to be beaten. In ancient times, if you were beaten to death, it was deserved, but now if you kill someone, you bear the responsibility. I've already told them to hold back."

"Sister, Fifth Master." Tang Mo called out softly when she saw them enter, her voice pulling at the wounds, causing her to wince in pain.

"Aunt Liyun isn't here?" Tang Wan glanced at the ward. There were five or six people inside, all looking around eighteen or nineteen, fashionably dressed in big-name brands.

"Hello, sister." They stood up to greet her. Tang Wan was not much older, but she was already working, giving off a mature and sophisticated vibe, akin to seeing their own elders.

“My mom went out; these are my classmates,” Tang Mo introduced briefly.

“Hello,” Tang Wan greeted them politely, her gaze sweeping over the group, different from the ones she’d seen at home before.

With someone arriving, they felt restrained talking and eventually prepared to leave after a few simple exchanges.

“Momo, take care and get better. We’ll visit again another day.”

“Thank you, I’ll treat you guys to a meal when I’m discharged.”

Tang Wan just listened quietly. Tang Mo often spent extravagantly, and recently Zhang Liyun had cut her allowance. These kids were spending money like water when dining and hanging out together; she likely couldn’t afford to treat them.

However, Tang Mo’s affairs were not something she interfered with. She couldn’t foresee that her matters would later implicate herself.

Tang Mo was completely terrified of Jiang Jinsang. While she previously harbored some romantic notions about him, now seeing his expression only made her feel as though she was facing a devil.

Jiang Jinsang, on the other hand, found this fear more comforting.

Knowing fear meant no more mischief.

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The two didn't stay long at the hospital. When they returned home, the repairman had already fixed the bathroom heater and was calculating his wages, ready to leave.

Tang Wan just returned, thanked him, and inevitably asked, "Master, the heater over there hadn't been used much. It was fine before; why did it break?"

"Maybe it just hasn't been used for too long. When people don't move for a long time, it can lead to problems, let alone machines. I checked, and there's no major issue, just signs of human tampering. If you think there's a problem, call me. Don't try to fix it yourself."

"Human tampering?" Tang Wan frowned. The heater was on the bathroom ceiling. Who would touch it?

Jiang Jinsang casually remarked, "It must have been when I thought it wasn't working well. One of my guys tinkered with it and ended up breaking it."

Jiang Family members: "..."

Oh my gosh, what the heck, Fifth Master, can you have a bit of face when you speak?

Had it not been for the fear of you getting caught lying, would we intentionally sabotage things? Now, with a simple sentence, you're blaming it on us. A bit of decency, please?

But since it was repaired, Tang Wan wouldn't think too deeply about it, nor notice the collective resentment of the Jiang family members. Instead, she went back to change clothes and shoes, preparing to work in her study.

When she entered the study in the South House, she didn't expect Jiang Jinsang to be there too. "Fifth Master."

Although she had said before to make himself at home, a stranger entering her study still gave her a sense of unease.

He sat in a chair near the window, a thin blanket draped over his knees. Sunlight bathed him, smoke-like as if turned to gold. His originally pale skin was now touched with a warm glow.

March peach blossoms were no more beautiful than this.

“Working?” His voice was as calm and steady as usual.

“Mm.”

“I won’t disturb you by being here?”

“No problem. I’m just replying to some work emails, not too busy right now.”

Tang Wan partnered with someone to open a studio, focusing on creating silk-thread and cyan-feather jewelry. She was only in charge of the designing and crafting, while her business partner managed the marketing.

They catered to a high-end clientele, primarily producing jewelry for palace-themed dramas or cyan-feather headpieces for Beijing Opera masters. When busy, they barely had time to eat, but during slow periods, they might have nothing to do for a month or two.

“Fifth Master, would you like some tea? I have some new black tea here.” Black tea is nourishing for autumn and winter.

Jiang Jinsang squinted:

The address “Fifth Master” sounded too formal and distant.

It was time to change it.

Maybe second brother? Or Jinsang...

Her voice was soft and melted into his bones. If she said his name, it should sound even better.

Tang Wan was brewing the tea, completely unaware that someone was staring at her with a gaze—intense and vivid.

Chapter 24 - 24 024 You are special you can be a bit unrestrained

Chapter 24: 024 You are special, you can be a bit unrestrained with me Chapter 24: 024 You are special, you can be a bit unrestrained with me Half of the bookshelf in the study held books, and the other half, sketches. On the workbench, tools needed for making Cyan Feather crafts such as hole punch pliers, a hand drill, and carving knives were neatly arranged. There was also a semi-finished Cyan Feather inlay peony piece on the table.

Tang Wan was brewing tea, and as the boiling water poured in, a faint aroma of black tea filled the study.

She was about to serve the tea to Jiang Jinsang but realized he had somehow circled behind her.

His unexpected closeness caught her off guard, causing her hand holding the cup to tremble and nearly spill the tea, but...

The next second, he reached over, and with her hand, steadied the cup.

“Were you scared of me?”

The cup was too small, and Tang Wan held it with both hands. His hands now encased hers, his fingertips warm and his body temperature slightly high, as if there were sparks teasing the back of her hand...

It was quite hot.

“No,” Tang Wan maintained her composure, attempting to withdraw her fingers, but she was trapped, having no way, “Fifth Master?”

“We’re somewhat familiar now, aren’t we? I’m currently staying in your courtyard, it’s hard to avoid seeing each other every day.”

“You keep addressing me as Master, and it always makes me feel like we’re generations apart, even though there’s only a three-year age difference between us.”

“What Grandpa Tang said this morning was quite right...”

His tone was calm and gentle, his eyes lowered, without a hint of desire, speaking as if he were discussing the weather so casually.

Tang Wan guessed what he was about to say, but when he finally spoke, it was simply, “Should we change how we address each other?”

His voice was warm, and he pressed down on the last syllable of the word, sliding the entire sentence into a low, ambiguous tone.

Tang Wan’s heart was pounding, thumping wildly, squeezing her chest.

It painted her ears with a delicate blush.

“Change how we address each other?”

“Yes.”

If Old Master Tang had said it, it would have been a half-joking teasing, but when Jiang Jinsang said it, the entire meaning changed. His soft and humble tone made it irresistible.

The form of address was just a few words, yet it constantly reminded Tang Wan that the person before her was a master of Sijiu City. She must respect and revere him. Once such boundaries were broken...

More things would inevitably follow suit and be broken.

They were not from the same world, and even if she felt a flutter, Tang Wan wasn't eager to get too entangled with him.

Sijiu City was different from Pingjiang, and the waters of the Jiang Family only ran deeper.

...

At that time, a few members of the Jiang Family were squatting in the courtyard, fussing with flowers and plants.

Most of them came from martial backgrounds, usually handling firearms and sticks, yet now, these grown men were holding pink watering cans to sprinkle the plants. The scene was truly strange.

“This life is impossible to live, broke the heater, took the blame, and now damn it, we even have to water the flowers? How did we end up like this?”

“Why don’t you go and ask the Fifth Master then?”

“The Fifth Master is definitely interested in the young lady, lying through his teeth, saying he knocked over her flower pot yesterday and dirtied her yard, but the results?”

“He compensated with a courtyard full of flowers!”

“Weren’t we supposed to cancel an engagement? How did he end up flirting with a girl? Should we tell Madam about this?”

“Shut up, unless he’s sick, if you dare to say a single word more, today you can still plant flowers, and by tomorrow, you’ll be planting trees in the desert.”

“ ... ”

They had followed Jiang Jinsang for quite a while and had previously sensed that their Fifth Master had some special interest in Tang Wan, but they dared not think in that direction. After last night and this morning, even a fool could see the anomaly.

The group watered the flowers and squatted in the corner to bask in the sun. Thinking about it, this wasn't such a bad little life.

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Meanwhile, Tang Wan suppressed her trembling heart, slowly withdrew her fingers from his palms and created a small distance between them.

“Fifth Master, I think there's no need to change the form of address. You are indeed a master of Sijiu City, calling you Fifth Master isn't overboard, just like you said before...”

“In speaking and acting, one must match their identity.”

This was what Jiang Jinsang had said when he once admonished Tang Mo.

...

He held the teacup, the water was hot. He blew at the rising steam by his lips and looked at Tang Wan, with gentle brows and eyes, “But in my heart...”

“You are different.”

Tang Wan felt she was about to die. This man was naturally too handsome, and he always left some parts unsaid when he spoke. She indeed was different from Tang Mo, but hearing this...

Yet it always carried some indescribable ambiguity.

Enough to make one’s heart skip a beat.

...

“Some things she can’t do, but you can afford to be a bit indulgent with me.” Jiang Jinsang’s voice was clear and slow, yet it shot like an arrow, “biu—”

Hitting right in the heart.

This was tacit favoritism and indulgence.

Tang Wan wasn't cold-hearted. When a handsome man tells you that you are special, claiming not to be moved would be a lie.

"In my household and among friends, I'm the youngest, everyone calls me Xiaowu, you can call me by my name, or..."

"Calling me Brother Wu is fine too."

Tang Wan tightly pressed her lips, call his name? Jinsang? How could she bring herself to say it?

Yet Brother Wu was even more ambiguous.

He stood right in front of her, leisurely drinking his water, patiently waiting, but Tang Wan felt like sitting on pins and needles, changing the form of address wasn't a big deal, but at the moment she just couldn't get the words out.

...

Just when the atmosphere was tense, someone's phone started vibrating. Tang Wan felt saved, immediately took out her phone, but it wasn't hers.

"Fifth Master, it's your call."

"Mm." Jiang Jinsang's phone was on the chair he had been sitting on, resting on a blanket, vibrating away.

He picked up the phone, squinted at the caller display, frowned slightly, mildly impatient, and directly hung up.

"Not answering the call?" Tang Wan exhaled a sigh of relief, feeling she had dodged a bullet, internally grateful for such a call.

"Unknown number, a spam call."

"Mm." Tang Wan didn't think much of it.

And then Jiang Jinsang's phone vibrated again, he casually ended it and blocked the number.

Tang Wan exhaled long, took a sip of tea, her palms damp with nervous sweat.

This Fifth Master Jiang was truly a demon, and not a little demon, but a millennium-old Demon!

Later she came to know, this Demon—

Could eat people!

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Meanwhile in Beijing, the person on the other end frowned, having called twice and unable to get through: “What’s going on? Bad reception?”

Yet when he dialed again, the tone indicated:

[The number you have dialed is not in service.]

...

“Could it be because the Tang Family’s old residence is in the suburbs, so the reception is poor? The suburbs aren’t the countryside; how can there be such poor mobile signal?” he mumbled softly to himself.

For the next few days, the call never got through, only then did he realize his prior thoughts were so naive, for then he became aware of one possibility:

He might have been blocked by Jiang Jinsang!

Damn it, I was just concerned about your health, afraid that you’d be unfamiliar with the Tang Family’s place, mistreated and abandoned in the wilderness, and you blocked me?

All my earnest brotherly feelings, truly fed to the dogs!

Chapter 25 - 25 025 Holding her hand we returned to the room to rest

Chapter 25: 025 Holding her hand, we returned to the room to rest. Chapter 25: 025 Holding her hand, we returned to the room to rest. The issue of addressing someone was ultimately interrupted by two unexpected phone calls. Tang Wan sat in front of the computer, replying to work emails, her heart in turmoil due to a certain someone’s influence. The back of her hand, which had been touched by him, still felt faintly warm.

The instigator leaned against a chair, with a soft blanket on his knee. Sunlight poured down, as if a layer of pale gold danced on his eyelashes.

Accompanied by a gentle knock on the door, “Master Wu, the doctor is here.”

“Then I’ll head back to my room first,” Jiang Jinsang stood up. Tang Wan also got up to see him off. The doctor, in his forties and accompanied by an assistant, greeted Tang Wan very politely before following Jiang Jinsang back to the room.

Tang Wan’s mind was a jumble, and she couldn’t focus on work, so she simply strolled around the garden a few times.

“Big brother, may I ask what flower this is?” Tang Wan looked at the man in black holding a small pink spray bottle. She worked in the fashion industry and recognized most flowers and plants due to needing to draw designs, but not all of them.

“This is...” the Jiang Family member responded politely.

At that time, the door to Jiang Jinsang’s room wasn’t closed. Every movement in the yard could be seen clearly, and Tang Wan could hear most of the conversation between him and the doctor.

It was nothing more than advising him to rest peacefully, pay attention to his health, and other routine matters. Since it was often repeated, Jiang Jinsang’s mind wandered outside and did not listen, but Tang Wan heard it distinctly.

**

Around lunchtime, Tang Wan mentioned that she had an appointment and wouldn't be eating at home.

Jiang Jinsang was playing with a small stick, teasing birds. Two birdcages hung under the eaves of the Tang Family's corridor, containing two Hua Mei birds raised by the old man.

He caught a glimpse of some fishing gear and the like in the corner, used by the old man to pass the time.

Isn't there a saying, "Fishing for three years and raising birds for a lifetime"?

He was not interested and naturally did not understand why some people enjoy pursuing these things. The main issue was that some young people also liked this despite the fast-paced modern life; they probably had too much free time.

He glanced at Tang Wan changing into clothes and leaving, a simple black suit, with a tight pencil skirt, and a white shirt underneath, simple and elegant, her graceful figure on full display.

Jiang Jinsang's eyes lingered on her slender waist, and his hand holding the stick was unsteady, accidentally poking the Hua Mei. The bird, already loud, was jostled hard—

“Chirp, chirp, chirp—” flapping its wings.

The noise was telling its owner, “I’m damn scared!”

Jiang Jinsang was just a guest, and their relationship had not reached that level, so he naturally wasn’t in a position to ask what she was doing. Fortunately, the old man spoke up, “Going out to see Manager Chen?”

“Mm, talking about something, do you want me to bring back some snacks for you?”

“Sure.”

...

After Tang Wan left, the old man feigned nonchalance and walked over to Jiang Jinsang, “This Manager Chen is in his forties, a partner of her studio, has been married for a long time, and their kid is about to start high school. The couple’s relationship is quite good; they’ve even brought their kid over to our house for meals a few times.”

Indirectly telling Jiang Jinsang,

“Don’t worry, our Wanwan has nothing to do with him. I’m still optimistic about you two.”

Once Tang Wan was gone, the old man loosened up, patting Jiang Jinsang’s shoulder, “Xiaowu, you didn’t get your fill of drinking last night, and we have nothing to do this afternoon. How about we get thoroughly drunk today?”

Saying that, he pulled out the Plum Wine.

*

Tang Wan went out to discuss two work-related matters. One was a company wanting to acquire their studio and merge it into a big company. The platform resources would naturally be different, but it also meant losing ownership of the studio. There were pros and cons.

“I need to think this over.”

Manager Chen had anticipated this and merely smiled, “How’s Mr. Tang’s health lately? I heard he almost performed Tai Chi in the hospital room to get discharged recently.”

Tang Wan's eyelids twitched, "How did you know?"

"I told you before, my niece works as a nurse at the hospital, remember?"

Tang Wan suddenly remembered and nodded.

"If Mr. Tang is okay, I have a project here. Would you be interested? It's a historical drama with an investment of two hundred million, a Qing Palace Drama. I'll send you the materials later, so you can take a good look."

"A Qing Palace Drama, I'm afraid it's a heavy task. My grandfather needs someone around, and I might not have that much energy."

"The opposite party has only approached our studio so far and is very sincere. It's still in the preparation stage, so there's plenty of time. The offer is exceptionally generous."

"I'll think about it."

...

Tang Wan returned home before two o'clock without having lunch. As soon as she entered the door, she heard her grandfather speaking in the living room, his voice slurred, clearly drunk.

"Miss, you're back!" Aunt Chen looked uneasy.

"He drank again? Why didn't you stop him?"

"I couldn't stop him," Aunt Chen said apologetically.

Tang Wan quickly entered the living room, realizing the old man wasn't just drinking alone—he'd even pulled Jiang Jinsang in. Seeing her return, he smiled and waved at her, "Wanwan, you're back! Have you eaten? Come over and have a drink with me."

"Don't drink anymore!" Tang Wan frowned, feeling that he didn't take his health seriously. She took away his wine glass and had someone help him back to his room.

"Don't you know the state of your own body? A couple of glasses should be enough, but you drank the whole bottle!"

"And you dragged Master Wu to drink with you. It's not advisable for him to drink much," Tang Wan felt he didn't care for his health and spoke louder than usual.

When she returned, Jiang Jinsang was evidently a bit drunk, holding a wine glass and about to bring it to his lips. As her cold gaze swept over, he paused. His pupils were dark, exuding a purity indifferent to worldly matters.

The Jiang Family had advised him to drink less, but he didn't listen.

However, when he saw her now, Jiang Jinsang obediently set the glass down and sat upright obediently.

Just missing the words on his face: "I'm well-behaved."

How could he be like this after drinking? Tang Wan couldn't help but laugh and cry.

In fact, both of them were drunk. As she supported the old man back to his room, she noticed Jiang Jinsang was still there in the front hall.

"Why haven't you helped him back to his room to rest?" Tang Wan looked at the Jiang Family members.

"He won't go." The Jiang Family members were helpless.

If that family member were here, they would certainly have said directly, “Not going? Tie him up and take him back!”

But no one was here now, and a few people didn’t dare act rashly.

“Master Wu, shall we go back and rest?” Tang Wan’s voice was gentle, deliberately slowing down, as if coaxing someone.

“Mm.” Jiang Jinsang nodded, but when he got up, he was a bit unsteady. As Tang Wan extended her hand to support him, he grabbed it...

Holding her hand tightly.

His breath carried a trace of alcohol, warm and steady, and he spoke almost against her ear, “Let’s go back and rest.”

Chapter 26: 026 A call of Wanwan is very gentle, the operation is so skillful it breaks legs. Chapter 26: 026 A call of Wanwan is very gentle, the operation is so skillful it breaks legs. “Are you going back to rest?”

Tang Wan's hand was held by him. Perhaps because of drinking, his palm was warm and the grip wasn't tight, just enough to make it hard to break free.

"Fifth Master, please slow down." Tang Wan couldn't shake him off at the moment; besides, for a drunk person, he probably didn't even know what he was doing.

"Let's go back."

His voice was always gentle, but now it carried the sour-sweetness of plum wine, and even his breath felt warm.

Tang Wan, after all, was a woman; no matter how strong, she found it difficult to support a drunken adult man by herself, so she kept glancing at the Jiang Family members beside her,

signaling them to come help.

The usually perceptive group of rough men collectively pretended to be dead.

Just as Tang Wan was about to speak, the group suddenly busied themselves.

“Time to go back to the room, right? I’ll go prepare the bed first.”

“I think the master needs a bowl of hangover tea.”

“Then I’ll pour him a glass of water; he’ll definitely be thirsty later.”

...

In just two seconds, they were all gone.

Tang Wan was amused and exasperated. This group really trusted her with Jiang Jinsang. Weren’t they afraid she’d take advantage of him?

What if they encountered a female rogue who’d take full advantage of him? These people were really irresponsible.

*

Although Jiang Jinsang had drunk a lot, he didn't act drunk or do anything reckless, he just held her hand and refused to let go.

The first time she saw his hand, Tang Wan thought it was exceptionally beautiful, with long, slender fingers and a cold white skin, and now, as he gently held her hand, his palm felt warm and dry.

The plum wine aroma on him overwhelmed the smell of disinfectant, and now his cold white skin was tinged with a bit of red.

Like March sea bream, after the rain, a burning color.

Beautiful things are loved by everyone, and the man before her possessed both an exceptional appearance and bone structure, impeccable in every way.

Being held by him, without any reaction, would be a lie.

Finally, they reached the East Courtyard, and Tang Wan led him back to her room.

Since Jiang Jinsang moved in, it was the first time Tang Wan stepped into this room. It was her courtyard. In fact, she picked all the furniture pieces here, yet now his belongings occupied every corner.

Somehow blending perfectly with hers, complementing each other so well that anyone who didn't know might think this place...

Was originally his.

Tang Wan led him to the bedside, "Fifth Master, here we are, please rest first."

Jiang Jinsang was in poor health; from childhood to adulthood, the number of times he'd drunk was rare. For someone who never touched alcohol, getting drunk was too easy.

He only felt dizzy now, everything before him was spinning, even Tang Wan's face was blurry, only the hands he held... Were real.

"Fifth Master, I'm leaving." Tang Wan exerted a bit of force to try to break free.

But Jiang Jinsang suddenly thought of how she looked when she went out this morning in that fitted business outfit, feeling a bit tight in his chest.

Moreover, she was now trying to withdraw her hand. He grew tense inside and slightly increased his grasp...

Unexpectedly!

Tang Wan stumbled, falling into his arms, unable to move.

The Jiang Family members on the side were dumbfounded.

What on earth?

Was the next scene going to be inappropriate for children?

Should they leave to avoid suspicion?

“Fifth Master—” Tang Wan frowned.

This overly intimate move set off alarm bells in her heart.

Just as she struggled, she heard a voice by her ear.

He had truly drunk too much, couldn’t muster strength, and even his voice was feeble, gaining a layer of hoarseness because of it. Leaning close to her ear, he murmured her name...

“Wanwan.”

Like a cicada in late autumn, seemingly using its last bit of strength, voicing a desperate call.

Suddenly startled like a bolt of electricity.

Calm and composed as she was, at this moment, she couldn't help but lose her composure a bit.

But Jiang Jinsang had drunk a lot after all, and soon lay down on the bed-laying next to her, holding her hand, never once loosening his grip.

With no other choice, Tang Wan sat by the bed, feeling a bit bored, even asking the Jiang Family members to fetch a few books from the study to pass the time.

Only after her arm became numb and he was sound asleep did she finally have the opportunity to pull her hand free.

Her hand, held by him, had been very warm; as she walked out of the room into the chill of autumn, her heart was still warm.

Tang Wan took a deep breath... One call of “Wanwan” could utterly melt one’s heart.

**

Jiang Jinsang rarely got drunk, and his usual sleep wasn’t good, yet this time he’d slept exceptionally well, waking only at dusk.

His head ached terribly, supporting himself up, feeling parched. As he caught sight of the water cup on the bedside table, just as he was about to reach for it, he noticed the books on the nightstand...

“Master, you’re awake, I’ll get you a fresh glass of water.” The Jiang Family members immediately bustled about.

“This...” Jiang Jinsang genuinely couldn’t remember clearly.

“These belong to Miss Tang.”

“Hers?”

The Jiang Family members then explained the situation briefly.

They didn't hold back on describing how someone shamelessly held her hand and refused to let go. In short,

she wasn't brought into your room by us; it was you who, after drinking too much, insistently held onto the little girl's hand.

Though you didn't lose your senses, you did take advantage.

Three words summarize it: Shameless!

Jiang Jinsang drank water to soothe his throat, and after hearing them out, he just casually said, "Drank too much, can't remember."

The Jiang Family members seemed unsurprised by this; after all,

someone wasn't newly notorious for such behavior!

...

A knock sounded from the outside, the Jiang Family members hurried to open the door, and from Tang Wan's angle, she couldn't see Jiang Jinsang sitting on the bed as she spoke in a hushed voice, "Fifth Master awake yet? It's almost time for dinner."

"Mm."

"I'm just here to inform you, dinner is at six." Tang Wan didn't step inside, leaving immediately.

**

Tang Wan was a mess inside; she was absent-minded even while preparing dinner, almost injuring herself, leading Chen Ma to tell her to wait in the courtyard.

When Jiang Jinsang reached the front hall, he saw she was holding a small stick, poking at...

"Hua Mei"

The bird was chirping "chirp chirp—" under her pokes, while she seemed oblivious, not hearing it at all.

During dinner, the old master was unusually quiet. He secretly drank and encouraged Jiang Jinsang to join him. Now, he acted timid around Tang Wan, using a headache as an excuse to return to his room right after eating.

Since Tang Wan and Jiang Jinsang lived in the same courtyard, they couldn't avoid returning together.

Walking shoulder to shoulder, Tang Wan still felt a bit uneasy.

"Miss Tang, I'm sorry for the trouble before." Jiang Jinsang spoke first.

"It's okay."

"They mentioned... I might have called your name, and that's why you stayed?"

Might have?

Tang Wan chuckled softly; he had called it quite clearly, recalling it now even made her ears warm.

Besides, she hadn't stayed willingly!

"These past few days I've been contemplating our families' marriage, with thoughts filling my mind, unintentionally calling your name, perhaps because recently..."

"You've been all I think about."

His voice was gentle, carried by the autumn breeze that slowly blew, making Tang Wan feel...

Her heart began to lose its rhythm again.

The Jiang Family members followed behind, looking up at the sky:

Their master's bold move was astonishingly bold to the point it'd break a leg- c'mon!

My goodness, the less seen, the less magical!

Chapter 27 - 27 I entered Fifth Masters room and there were only the

Chapter 27: I entered Fifth Master's room, and there were only the two of us. Chapter 27: I entered Fifth Master's room, and there were only the two of us. The autumn wind was supposed to gradually cool at night, yet Tang Wan felt it blowing against her, making her restless.

Walking side by side with Jiang Jinsang, no matter how much they tried to maintain distance, their arms and elbows would inevitably brush against each other.

"Today, I heard from Grandpa Tang that you went out to meet a partner at the studio. Is there a new job?" His voice was as usual, cold and restrained.

"Yes, but Grandpa's health is unstable, and with the weather getting colder, I'm even more worried about him. I'm afraid I won't be able to work with peace of mind." As the saying goes, it's hard for old folks to endure winter, and as children, extra care is definitely necessary.

"You're very filial..." His voice paused for two seconds before he added,

"It's truly commendable."

Jiang Family members silently looked to the heavens,

Was he just a step away from adding, “I really like that”?

Tang Wan’s heart trembled slightly, but her voice revealed no particular emotion. “These are things that should be done, the duties of a child, nothing commendable.”

The main hall was not far from the East Courtyard, and within a few words, they had arrived.

“Fifth Master, your room’s bathroom has been checked today; there should be no problem. You can rest well tonight. So...good night.” Tang Wan said with a smile.

“Good night.” Jiang Jinsang said no more.

**

Tang Wan returned to her room and checked emails sent by work partners.

About the Qing dynasty drama mentioned during the day, the cast was considered the pinnacle of all palace dramas in recent years, with all main actors being top-tier. Even the supporting roles could stand alone.

The luxurious lineup naturally demanded more excellence in costume and props.

The more such work arose, the less Tang Wan dared to take it lightly, too much pressure. But with such a top-tier configuration, she was certainly tempted. The contract mentioned many requirements for the Cyan Feather headpiece, which she quickly reviewed, planning to study more thoroughly after her bath.

After taking a shower, she ran to the study to get some reference books; Qing dynasty dramas are based on history. Understanding the life and paths of each concubine helps design headpieces according to age.

It was then she realized she had left her book in Jiang Jinsang's room.

Her interest in work was aroused, and she didn't want it to be interrupted. Hesitant, she sent Jiang Jinsang a message:

[Fifth Master, are you asleep?]

His room was actually still lit.

But the message seemed to sink into the sea. It was quite late, and she didn't feel comfortable knocking on the door, so she patiently waited.

About ten minutes later, he returned the call, “I’m not asleep. I was just showering earlier. What’s up?”

“I left my book in your room.”

At this moment, Jiang Jinsang’s hair tips were still dripping water. He glanced at the stack of Qing history books on the bedside table. “Hmm, they’re here. Do you need me to bring them to you?”

“It’s quite chilly outside, and you’ve just showered. I’ll come instead.” It’s embarrassing to ask someone to deliver a book directly.

“Alright, I’ll wait for you.”

After ending the call, Jiang Jinsang glanced at the people in the room, clearly implying:

Move quickly, get on with your business!

“Fifth Master, we should also get to sleep. Call us if you need anything.”

“Hehe—yeah, really tired!” They were indeed exhausted, having gotten up at dawn to help him with flowers in the courtyard.

Jiang Jinsang's gaze was faint. "You've been with me for quite some time and know my rules..."

More doing, less looking, less listening, less gossiping.

This was a disguised warning not to spread certain matters outside.

They nodded ruefully and quickly walked out.

Finishing the day's work, they huddled in a corner of the courtyard, lighting a cigarette.

"So damn shameless, went to Miss Tang's room yesterday, today brings her into his bedroom."

"Earlier, when I got a call asking about his health, I didn't dare say a word, just going 'hmm' and 'uh-huh' to everything."

"Came to annul the engagement, but went to someone's house to flirt. Have you ever seen such bold moves? Earlier, he even said, even if this Miss Tang wanted to marry, she could only be his sister-in-law?"

“Doesn’t that fit with that saying? ‘Good fun is being with your sister-in-law?’”

They looked at the one who spoke, and one of them stuffed his half-smoked cigarette directly into his mouth. If someone heard this, they’d all be sent to plant trees in the desert.

...

They crouched in the corner smoking, watching Tang Wan go out, hesitating before she finally knocked on the door. Seeing her enter the room, an inexplicable feeling like a lamb entering the tiger’s den arose.

Beijing was abuzz with talks of their master’s intelligence bordering on the supernatural, not a word exaggerated, and this demon was not one to be trifled with.

**

After Tang Wan knocked, a single phrase came from inside: “Come in.”

She pushed the door straight in, Jiang Jinsang just having finished his shower, wearing a light gray set of loungewear, simple, yet suiting him. Her book was placed by his hand.

“Fifth Master, I came to get my book.”

He suddenly said out of nowhere, “The wind at night is a bit cold.”

Tang Wan planned to grab her book and leave within ten seconds. But when she entered, she hadn’t bothered to close the door.

Hearing his words reminded her of the doctor’s morning advice to keep warm, so she turned to close the door.

Jiang Family members originally crouched in the corner, ready to sneak a peek through the open door, felt two words flash in their mind:

Crap!

What are they doing! Why close the door!

Once Tang Wan shut the door, she went to get her things. The book was handed to her by Jiang Jinsang in person. Both of them were quite close at that moment.

“Going out without wearing a few more layers?” His words were casual, as if chatting idly, yet each word dripped with a sense of flirtatiousness, burrowing into one’s heart.

“Just showered, still feeling a bit hot.”

Now close enough, Tang Wan could clearly sense the heat radiating off him.

The light casting behind him left half his body shrouded in shadow, abstinent yet lazy, full of temptation.

But at this angle, Tang Wan slightly tilted her face up, light casting down on her face, her brow bones, eyelashes, the brightness of her eyes...

Every inch was vividly clear, and upon a closer look, seemed as if etched into one’s heart.

The surroundings felt quiet, only their light breaths audible.

Both, having just bathed, breathed softly...

Yet warmth surged.

Holding the book, he moved closer, not touching her, yet his breath brushed against her face, catching her off guard as their gazes met.

“You seem nervous each time you see me. Do those people with me frighten you?”

“No.” Tang Wan laughed lightly, not fearing those people at all.

“Rest assured, they’ve all gone back to rest. Here, it’s just...”

“The two of us.”

The breath was calm, yet hot and restless.

Tang Wan’s heart pounded like a drum, uncertain of what to say next, when Jiang Jinsang spoke again, “Do you like Qing history?”

“Not really, but my work lately involves it, so I’m just browsing.”

“Matters from the Qianlong Period? Actually, for some things, just reading official history isn’t useful. After all, what makes it into official history is what those in power think fit for posterity to see...”

“I know, that’s why I’m preparing to find some other materials.”

“Which aspect are you interested in? I might be able to recommend some.”

“...”

Jiang Family’s men, outside in the courtyard, were squatting and starting to place bets:
[When will Miss Tang come out?]

Just getting a book, some betted on one minute, others on ten tops, but an hour passed.
Damn, the moon was high in the sky, and she still hadn’t come out?

*

It was almost midnight when Tang Wan finally returned to her room hugging the book.

The next morning, Jiang Family noticed Jiang Jinsang was just getting up, on the phone, seemingly with family. Due to his health, he usually woke at five or six since sleep wasn't great, so today waking late was rare.

"...I'm fine, just got up, maybe my voice is a bit hoarse." Another reason was that he had a bit to drink last night.

"Just got up?"

"Chatting went a bit late last night."

Jiang Family's members: Chatting? You two, single man and woman alone until late, just chatting? You think anyone would believe you?

Someone, acting as the elder brother, frowned slightly, not knowing it was Tang Wan he chatted with, only voicing doubts over his suspect.

"Was it that kid clinging to you?"

Jiang Jinsang smiled without admitting or denying, "I'll go freshen up. The Tang Family is having breakfast soon. It wouldn't be right to keep them waiting."

Then, someone just blocked by Jiang Jinsang found himself inexplicably targeted by his elder brother. Thoroughly infuriated, he stomped around yelling, “I was blocked by him on the phone, how could I harass him!”

But the elder brother merely coldly stated, “If you weren’t harassing him, would he block you?”

Logic was tight!

“...” The anger rendered the man speechless.

No doubt, these brothers had venom!

Chapter 28 - 28 028 Were you in my room too long last night Please

Chapter 28: 028 Were you in my room too long last night? Please get married on the spot!
Chapter 28: 028 Were you in my room too long last night? Please get married on the spot!
Although the autumn day was cool, the sun shining down still brought some warmth.

Jiang Jinsang leaned back in his chair, a light gray thin blanket over his knees, holding a copy of “Draft History of Qing” in his hands. Some members of the Jiang Family crouched in the sunshine, while two others were watering the flowers with small pink spray bottles.

His phone vibrated, and he glanced at the caller ID.

An unfamiliar number from Beijing.

He usually didn't answer unfamiliar calls like this, but when it rang a third time, he frowned and picked up, yet before he could speak, the person on the other end began yelling.

“Jiang Xiaowu, what the hell did you and your brother say! When did I ever bother you? You've been in Pingjiang for so long, and I only called you once, and then you blocked me. Now you have the nerve to slander me...”

The person on the other end ranted on, realizing there was no response, and then checked their device again.

Dammit—

Hung up again!

When he called back, the response was, “The number you have dialed is temporarily unavailable...”

“Jiang Jinsang, if you have the guts, don’t ever come back to Beijing.”

“You really create more trouble every day with your nonsense.”

His assistant stood by the side, unmoved by his boss’s tirade.

After all, if Xiaowu didn’t provoke him every ten days or so, he would come to him anyway. Therefore, his boss’s frequent tantrums were as regular as a woman’s period.

If it weren’t for the psychological checks each year that he passed without issue, he’d worry that his boss might have some masochistic tendencies.

The voice on the other end was so loud that just by hearing a few words, the Jiang Family knew who it was. Watching Jiang Jinsang hang up and blacklist the number, seeming still uneasy, he simply turned off the phone...

The whole operation was so practiced, and he finally commented, “Really noisy.”

Jiang Family: “...”

*

At about ten in the morning, Jiang Jinsang was originally leaning back in a chair under the porch, resting his eyes, when he was suddenly awakened by noisy voices. He lifted his eyelids.

A member of the Jiang Family bent down and whispered, “Old Tang went for a walk and brought back some friends.”

Although they were all elderly gentlemen, they had vigor and loud voices.

Jiang Jinsang nodded in silence and, after some time, heard that Zhang Liyun had also come. He remained lying down until he was told that Tang Wan had returned home, at which point his eyelids fluttered.

A few minutes later, he got up, “Since Madam Tang is here, I should go greet her.”

The Jiang Family wasn’t foolish and likely understood what he was thinking.

As soon as he reached the front hall, Old Tang saw him, “Xiaowu is here, come and sit.”

The old man said, pulling him to sit, and then introduced some of his friends, all grandpa-aged, regular visitors to the small park nearby for walks and bird-watching. After greeting each one, Jiang Jinsang chatted with them.

Tang Wan was making tea on the side. She thought Jiang Jinsang might not like the commotion or might not be good at socializing, but to her surprise, he got along well.

Jiang Jinsang was proud and free-spirited, pleasing to the eye in appearance, and smart too. If he wanted to win people's favor, it wasn't difficult.

After a few minutes, Old Tang was called aside by Zhang Liyun.

Tang Mo was still in the hospital, and she needed to deliver lunch and wouldn't stay at the old house. She came over knowing that Jiang Jinsang had gone to the hospital yesterday. Though frustrated by Tang Mo being hit, it was honestly her fault.

"...It was Momo's fault, causing misunderstandings. I haven't had a chance to apologize to Lord Wu yet, didn't expect he'd come to the hospital. I wasn't there at the time and didn't see him, so I bought some things today to express apologies."

Old Tang squinted and listened. This matter was a family disgrace, and since many outsiders were visiting today, Zhang Liyun couldn't easily broach the topic.

“I’m about to head back to the hospital and wanted to bother you to convey my apologies, and after Momo is discharged, I’ll bring her to apologize properly.” Zhang Liyun was very prudent.

She knew the incident that night had completely offended Jiang Jinsang, but she couldn’t afford to fall out with him. Regardless of the situation, she took all the responsibility on herself.

Old Tang listened and, in the end, said only, “You should apologize to him in person. I can’t do it for you.”

What Tang Mo did was too disgraceful. He still felt ashamed when thinking about it now and couldn’t bring himself to say anything.

“Also, if she’s sincere, she should come by herself after discharge. She’s an adult, and as her mother, you can’t do everything for her.”

Zhang Liyun’s suggestion was rejected, and her face alternated between green and white.

Old Tang glanced at her, “If you have time to dress up, why not spend more time educating your child?”

Zhang Liyun was at a loss for words, her perfectly made-up face almost collapsing.

*

A few older gentlemen and Jiang Jinsang were crowded around playing xiangqi, the battlefield clearly divided, completely unaware of the tension brewing on the other side.

Tang Wan brought tea over and saw the fierce battle, with Jiang Jinsang unexpectedly losing in the end.

“Old Wang, you won.” Jiang Jinsang didn’t get angry.

“I just barely won. I know you let me off.”

“I indeed gave you a few moves, after all, you’re older, and I thought I had a guaranteed win. I didn’t expect your skills to be so good; that was my arrogance.”

Even if it was a compliment, it was pleasing to hear.

Indeed, a few old men were all smiles upon hearing this.

Tang Wan raised her eyebrows. People always said Jiang Xiaowu was as clever as a demon; no one mentioned his silver tongue before, making him too likable.

“Lord Wu, your tea.” While the older gentlemen liked Maofeng, she specifically prepared black tea for Jiang Jinsang.

“Wanwan, didn’t you sleep well last night? Your dark circles are quite heavy. Staying up late is not good,” remarked one old gentleman, quite familiar with Tang Wan, speaking frankly.

“No,” Tang Wan replied sheepishly, smiling.

...

When chatting, elders often revolve around certain topics and inevitably talk about children, so soon someone said, “Wanwan, do you remember my grandson? The one who went abroad, he’ll be back in a few days...”

Most people didn’t know about the entanglements between the Tang Family and the Jiang Family. The elderly weren’t that gossipy, and since this matter hadn’t been made public, Old Tang wanted to bring about a match without broadcasting it.

Mutual affection is most important; otherwise, creating a public scandal would make it seem like the Tang Family was forcing a marriage.

So when talking about the grandson returning, they didn't go into details, yet everyone understood, probably here to introduce a partner.

Tang Wan just gave a wry smile, "Is that so? No wonder you seem in better spirits today; it turns out your grandson is coming back."

She didn't continue the topic.

Instead, Jiang Jinsang took a sip of tea and looked at Tang Wan, "You do have some dark circles, didn't sleep well last night?"

"No, I slept just fine."

"Were you in my room for too long last night?"

...

The old gents drinking tea were dumbfounded, Old Tang only said that he was staying with an acquaintance's grandson, but two young people spending the night together, well...

Members of the Jiang Family were standing on the side, basking in the sun:

Did you have to be so provocative?

Why don't you just marry right here?

Old Tang and Zhang Liyun had just returned and happened to hear this. One had a full auntish grin, while the other was grinding her teeth to dust!

Chapter 29 - 29 029 Fifth Master Tonight I will wait for you to come

Chapter 29: 029 Fifth Master: Tonight, I will wait for you to come over. Chapter 29: 029 Fifth Master: Tonight, I will wait for you to come over. After Jiang Jinsang finished speaking, the atmosphere among the old men in the small courtyard turned bizarre in an instant. Only Hua Mei under the porch called out, "Coo, coo—"

"Hey—people are chatting, what are you calling for, little thing!" Old Tang laughed as he walked over to the porch.

"Old Tang, your Hua Mei's tail is wagging like it's trying to find a mate," someone joked.

"This little guy is smart, probably saw people falling in love and wants a partner too."

Tang Wan said, "Who's falling in love!"

The old men weren't fools. Hearing this, their eyes wandered between Jiang Jinsang and Tang Wan, smiling subtly.

After they left, Zhang Liyun wanted to find a chance to chat alone with Jiang Jinsang. However, he barely lifted his eyelids and didn't give her a glance. She had just met a dead end with the old men and, biting her lip, had no choice but to leave first.

Tang Wan pulled her grandfather aside, "Grandpa, can you watch what you say? I have nothing going on with Fifth Grandpa!"

"Then why did you go to his room last night?" The old man held a small porcelain dish, rubbing bird food between his fingers, ready to feed Hua Mei.

"I was just getting something."

"What was so urgent that you had to get it in the middle of the night?"

"..." Tang Wan took a deep breath, "It wasn't even the middle of the night, and we just talked for a while."

"A lone man and a lone woman, alone in a room in the dead of night, and you're telling me it was just chatting?" Old Tang glanced at her with a strange look, clearly saying,

Do you think I'd believe such nonsense?

"Anyway, we are not in a relationship." Tang Wan, exasperated, decided not to explain further.

"I never said you two were dating, did I?" Old Tang smirked, "Some people just have to come forward and explain themselves, which just makes it seem like a guilty cover-up."

"..."

"Alright, don't keep staring at me. I understand that your relationship is pure, okay?" The old man handed the bird food to Tang Wan, "Standing tired me out, you feed the bird."

"Then stop saying things that make people misunderstand!" Tang Wan held the small porcelain dish, having no way to deal with him.

"Then you stop staring at Xiaowu all the time too."

"I..."

"I may have presbyopia but I'm not blind. Ever since he came over from the East Courtyard, your eyes haven't left him."

Tang Wan was left speechless and blushing. She was just worried about Jiang Jinsang's adjustment, that's why she paid extra attention.

“Wow, young people these days are so stubborn. They ask for a phone number during the day, go to someone’s room at night, watch someone intently, and still claim to be just ordinary friends!”

“...”

After speaking, the old man hummed an opera tune, deliberately singing a line: “You have a matchmaker and a betrothal, why can’t you be husband and wife—”

He altered the lyrics, clearly hinting at her and Jiang Jinsang.

Tang Wan felt stifled inside, yet she had no choice, so she put down the porcelain dish and turned into the kitchen.

Hua Mei stood on the perch in the cage, flapping its wings: Everyone’s gone, who’s going to feed me now!

When they sat down for lunch, the old man’s brow furrowed upon seeing the dishes. Although he wasn’t a picky eater, everyone has their particular likes or dislikes.

Jiang Jinsang’s gaze fell on the beef carrot soup, his expression unchanged.

Yet Tang Wan thoughtfully served a bowl of soup to both him and Old Tang. He stared at the carrots without saying a word.

“The soup’s been stewed for a long time, the beef is tender and flavorful, Fifth Grandpa, give it a try,” Tang Wan said with a smile. At this moment, she genuinely didn’t know Jiang Jinsang didn’t like carrots.

The Jiang Family stood to the side, holding back their laughter:

This is what you get for being shameless and showing off, now you’re in over your head in trouble!

“Okay.” Jiang Jinsang scooped up a spoonful, ate a few bites, didn’t chew, almost swallowing it whole, his expression somewhat stoic.

“How does it taste?” Tang Wan asked with a smile.

“Pretty good.” Jiang Jinsang’s face showed little emotion.

“Then have some more, there’s plenty.”

“...”

Jiang Jinsang ate more carrots that day than he had all year!

The Jiang Family looked up at the sky: Today's weather is really damn great, even the birdsong is so pleasant.

"The Hua Mei is singing so cheerfully today."

Hua Mei: I haven't eaten yet, I want food!

*

Speaking of the hospital, Zhang Liyun hurried over to deliver lunch to Tang Mo, only to discover she wasn't there, "Where is she?"

"She got a phone call and went out, seemed like it was someone's birthday," the nurse said helplessly. If she had to leave, there was nothing she could do.

Zhang Liyun frowned, roughly guessing who might have called her out, always these spoiled brats, gathering either for overeating or drinking, not one serious among them.

In anger, she dumped the packed meal on the table.

A rotten stick that's hopeless.

*

Back at the Tang Family

After lunch, Old Tang went for a nap. Last night, Tang Wan and Jiang Jinsang indeed just chatted, and it was all proper topics. Jiang Jinsang had recommended her a few books, so she went to the bookstore in the morning.

"Miss Tang, shall we move these books for you?" The Jiang Family had sharp minds, knowing she might be their future ally, they had to cater to her.

"Thank you then." There were a lot of books, and Tang Wan probably would have had to make two or three trips by herself, so she didn't decline the help.

After moving the books to her room, Tang Wan politely thanked everyone and naturally had to thank Jiang Jinsang too, "Thanks for the book list you recommended."

"Was Grandfather Tang chatting with you today because of something I said that made him misunderstand?" Jiang Jinsang asked directly.

"He's just like that, don't take it to heart."

"I don't mind, as long as you don't take it to heart."

“What do I have to mind? We didn’t do anything shady...”

“Do you have any plans tonight?”

“Nothing much, just reading,” Tang Wan honestly replied, thinking Jiang Jinsang had plans and wanted help with something. She didn’t expect he meant going to his room.

After she said she didn’t mind other people’s gossip and had no plans tonight, she couldn’t outright refuse, “Well, let’s see what happens then.”

She was racking her brains on how to decline.

Jiang Jinsang just smiled and said, “Then... tonight, I’ll wait for you to come over.”

He looked handsome, and when he smiled, she found it even more pleasing, leaving Tang Wan a bit dazed, her heart pounding, with a slight blush on her ear tips.

*

Tang Wan sat in a chair, staring blankly at the mint on the table. The phone vibrated, and she glanced at the caller ID, immediately sitting up straight, “Hello, Auntie—”

“Wanwan, am I disturbing you?” It was Mrs. Jiang on the phone.

“No.”

Ever since she got Tang Wan’s number, they’d been in frequent contact.

“Did you make the beef carrot soup I told you about yesterday?”

“Yes, Fifth Grandpa drank two bowls.”

“I told you so, he just loves that.”

Tang Wan didn’t know Jiang Jinsang’s preferences, and since he was a patient, she asked Mrs. Jiang.

After hanging up, Mrs. Jiang couldn’t stop laughing:

“That boy is so arrogant at home, who would’ve thought he’s just a paper tiger. At the Tang Family, even his picky eating habits were cured.”

An elder brother merely raised an eyebrow, as if he had already figured out everything:

It’s probably not the Tang Family that cured his pickiness, but a certain someone.

Jiang Jinsang had no clue, it wasn't Tang Wan that set him up, but his own mother!

Pampered by Short-Lived Bigshot

Chapter 30: 030 Ambiguous solitude, is someone coveting Wanwan? [Double 11 Message]
Chapter 30: 030 Ambiguous solitude, is someone coveting Wanwan? [Double 11 Message]
Tang Family East Courtyard

Tang Wan sat by the window, pondering how to reject Jiang Jinsang that evening. She indeed had nothing planned for the night, and bailing on him at the last minute felt too deliberate. With no other option, she called her best friend to explain the situation.

“...So you want me to call you later, giving you an excuse to slip back to your room, right?”

“Exactly.”

“I’ve never met the fifth Mr. Jiang, but his brother’s always on magazine covers, so handsome. I’m sure the younger brother isn’t bad-looking either. Even based on his looks alone, it’s worth it for a couple of extra bowls of rice, so what are you afraid of?” her friend laughed.

“Plus, you’re strong and healthy. What could a sickly guy possibly do to you? If you don’t start anything with him, he’ll be lucky.” Tang Wan’s lips twitched; strong and healthy?

“Tang Xiaowan, it’s your place, why are you acting so cowardly?”

“Anyway, make sure you call me later!” Tang Wan insisted firmly.

“Got it. It’s almost the end of the year, and all departments are scrambling to meet targets. My boss is going crazy, so I can’t stay on the line. If caught slacking at work, I’ll lose my year-end bonus.”

Tang Wan hadn’t even replied before the call ended. Their good relationship meant she wouldn’t mind such abruptness.

With an excuse to escape, Tang Wan felt much more at ease.

After dinner and cleaning up, Jiang Jinsang accompanied the old man to watch the news, while Tang Wan sat nearby playing on her phone, browsing Weibo for a bit.

“Grandpa Tang, I’m returning to my room,” Jiang Jinsang stood up.

Old Tang nodded, catching a glimpse of his motionless granddaughter. “Wanwan, aren’t you going?”

Tang Wan frowned; just because he left, why must she follow?

“It’s fine, I’ll go back on my own,” Jiang Jinsang smiled faintly; they’d have to meet again soon anyway.

The night was long... There was no rush.

Although, Old Tang’s expression had turned a bit peculiar. Sitting on the sofa and playing on her phone without anything serious to do, why not return to her room? Tang Wan chuckled awkwardly, “I’ll head back after I finish this video.”

She simply didn’t want her grandfather’s gaze fixed on her, casually finding an excuse.

Unexpectedly, Jiang Jinsang made a remark.

“Then I’ll wait for you back in my room.”

“...”

Besides the TV still airing commercials, the whole atmosphere in the foyer suddenly became stifling with tension.

Old Tang's eyes darted between the two of them, smiling with an indecipherable expression.

"We're just planning to chat a bit about Qing history. The Fifth Master knows a lot, and I need to consult him for work," Tang Wan explained.

"I didn't say anything, why so eager to explain?" the old man chuckled.

Tang Wan: "..."

**

By the time Tang Wan knocked on Jiang Jinsang's door, there were others in the room today.

"Miss Tang." Two members of the Jiang Family were there, tidying up medicine bottles and a blood pressure monitor, likely just after some medication.

Tang Wan held her books, greeting them.

“Have a seat anywhere.” Jiang Jinsang had just finished measuring his blood pressure, removing his jacket, now wearing a black coat, matching his soft white loungewear beneath, intensifying his air of stoic laziness.

His clothes were well-tailored; even the simplest attire bred an aura of noble elegance on him.

Tang Wan found a chair to sit on, placing her books on the table, and Jiang Jinsang sat down beside her. Perhaps having just taken his meds, there was still a faint bitter medicinal scent clinging to him.

“Did you buy all the books I mentioned yesterday?”

“One wasn’t available, I ordered it online, should arrive in the next few days,” Tang Wan placed her phone on the table, anxious not to miss her best friend’s call.

“What should we discuss today? Maybe go over the life of the Qing Palace Drama’s female lead?”

“Sure.”

Tang Wan had to admit that Jiang Jinsang really knew a lot; many details weren’t found in books, and she had to borrow his pen to annotate and take notes.

The two were already sitting quite close; as Tang Wan lowered her head to attentively jot down Jiang Jinsang's words, a lock of hair, once tucked behind her ear, fell and swept against Jiang Jinsang's arm.

The two members of the Jiang Family finished packing up, initially intending to leave, but the atmosphere between the duo was just right, and they dared not interrupt, standing silently as the background.

Tang Wan finished her notes and casually tucked her hair behind her ear. "Fifth Master, is everything I noted accurate..."

She didn't realize how close their proximity had become. The light touched his dark pupils, seemingly igniting sparks therein.

Suppressing her slightly irregular heartbeat, she glanced at her phone. Why haven't they called yet?

Jiang Jinsang stared at the notes in the book, unconsciously rubbing his fingers. The tingling sensation from her hair brushing against his palm was gone, yet he couldn't quiet the turmoil within.

Just then, Tang Wan's phone suddenly buzzed.

She felt delighted but frowned slightly upon seeing the caller ID.

Why was it Tang Mo?

Despite hesitating, she pressed the answer key.

“Hello—”

“Sis, are you busy? Can you come pick me up? I’m over at Fuyou.”

“You’re not at the hospital, how’d you end up at the bar?” Fuyou Bar was well-known in the Pingjiang circle for its high-end, classy ambiance.

“I snuck out from Mom, couldn’t let her see. Can you pick me up?”

“I have things to—”

“I’ll wait for you to come, you must come.” With that, the call ended.

Tang Wan stared blankly at her phone, baffled. Why was she suddenly being summoned to pick her up? Their relationship was average, barely warranting such requests.

Meanwhile, in a private room at Fuyou Bar

Neon lights flickered amid ultimate luxury, the opulent décor exuding a sense of hedonistic extravagance. After seeing Tang Mo hang up the call, the man seated in the center chuckled.

“Tang Mo, don’t be nervous. We just want to meet your sister,” one laughed, “It’s Young Master He’s birthday, so we’re just here to have fun and get lively.”

Tang Mo grudgingly nodded.

Within this circle are a bunch of spoiled rich kids; good family conditions, indulging in chaos behind the scenes. Some have coveted Tang Wan for too long...

She’s lived a too upright life, with not a hint of bad habit, leaving them no way to approach her.

Claiming to meet could fool no one. Should she arrive tonight, leaving would be a challenge indeed.

