

### Chapter 161: The Matter of the Gong family

After hearing Gong Tianhao's suggestion, Old Master Gong sighed. "Alright, Hao 'Er, you can arrange it."

"Grandpa, Taoyuan Village is a very beautiful place..." Gong Tianhao was already ready with his spiel, but he stopped. "Grandpa, you agreed? You're not going to argue with me?" Gong Tianhao was shocked.

Old Master Gong looked at his grandson's surprised face, and he grumbled, "Since you said the place is so beautiful, the people are so nice, and there's an auntie whose cooking skill is better than our chef, so why would I object?"

"But Grandpa..." Can you leave the second branch of the family behind? But he didn't ask. Gong Tianhao thought he would need to try his best to persuade his grandfather, but the fact that Old Master Gong yielded so easily flustered him.

Old Master Gong waved his hand and said, "Hao 'Er, I know what you want to say. You worry that I can't part with my second brother and his family, right?"

Gong Tianhao's mouth fell open.

Looking at his grandson's expression, Old Master Gong knew that he was right. Then, he said, "Hao 'Er, you've suffered a lot all these years." He grabbed Gong Tianhao's hands and patted him a few times.

"Grandpa!" The surprise kept on coming! Gong Tianhao shook his head. "Grandpa, I've not suffered. With you around, no one has the courage to come after me."

"That's why I have to stick around longer." Old Master Gong chuckled. "I know that you're all grown up and can take care of yourself now. But I still hope that I can protect you for as long as I can. As long as I'm around, no one will dare bully you!"

Gong Tianhao immediately said, "Of course! Grandpa, you're going to live to be a hundred years old!"

Grandfather Gong shook his head and said, "With this body, I don't even dare to think that far. However, I promise to take care of myself so that I can stick around as long as I can."

Gong Tianhao's eyes were slightly red. Even as a boy, he rarely cried. However, when he heard his grandfather say he'd stick around the best he could for him, he felt a warmth in his heart. His voice was a little choked as he said with determination, "Grandpa, you will definitely live to be a hundred years old!"

Old Master Gong didn't argue with his grandson because it was rare for Gong Tianhao to act like this around him. "Okay, I will live to a hundred years old. But look at you. How old are you already that you're still crying. Your eyes are red." Old Master Gong rarely spoke so much around Gong Tianhao. "You have always been independent and strong. You didn't make a fuss when your parents passed away. For a period after that, you just shrunk into yourself. You didn't eat or drink and hid in a corner all day.

“Do you know how worried I was? At the time, I thought, if something happened to you, what would I do? I wouldn’t be able to face my son and my daughter-in-law. Did you know? At the time, I carried a gun with me always. If something happened to my eldest grandson, I would follow you. I have to be there for you. No one is allowed to bully my eldest grandson.”

“Grandpa...” Gong Tianhao was really touched.

“But then, one day, the boy suddenly ran over to hug me. He started to cry.” Old Master Gong reminisced. “I told him that it was okay to cry. I didn’t want him to hold in all his emotions because it was not healthy.

“From that moment on, I decided that I had to live well for my eldest grandson. I would be there to watch him grow up, get married, and have children. When you have your family, I can go and find your grandmother in peace. I can face your parents.”

“Grandpa...” Gong Tianhao was always a boy in his grandfather’s eyes. “Grandpa, even if I have a family, you shouldn’t be in such a hurry to find Grandma. If that is your reason to leave, then I’d rather not get married.”

Old Master Gong’s eyes sharpened, and he snapped, “That is not a reason for you not to get married. You are not going to use me as an excuse not to start a family. You’re not that young anymore!” Old Master Gong was serious. When it came to Gong Tianhao’s marriage, he was always serious.

Gong Tianhao returned to his usual stubborn self. He muttered internally, ‘How am I old? I’m not even 30 yet.’

Old Master Gong read his grandson’s expression and, consequently, Gong Tianhao’s thoughts. He grabbed his walking stick and smacked Gong Tianhao’s back. “Do you think I don’t know what you’re thinking? If you don’t get married, when am I going to have a great-grandchild? You really know how to anger me.”

He then grabbed his chest. His face was red.

Gong Tianhao immediately patted his grandfather’s back. “Grandpa, calm down. Don’t get angry.”

Old Master Gong retorted, “If you don’t want me to be angry, then go find a wife and give me a great-grandchild!”

Gong Tianhao would always go along with his grandfather’s decision... except for this one. He didn’t want his grandfather to leave him behind simply because he had a family of his own.

Eight years ago, Gong Tianhao’s girlfriend dumped him because she wanted to go abroad. He was upset and got drunk. That night, he went home drunk and passed by his grandfather’s study. He heard his grandfather talking to his grandmother’s portrait in the study. He didn’t pay attention to it at first because his grandfather often talked to his wife’s portrait. However, as he was about to leave, he heard his grandfather say, “Dear, I can’t go yet. However, when Hao ‘Er gets married and has children, I’ll go to accompany you, okay?”

Gong Tianhao immediately shivered and sobered up. Only then did he realize his grandfather had been harboring such thoughts. Gong Tianhao was afraid of losing his grandfather, his only family. From then on, he decided not to marry and have children.

"I heard you!" Gong Tianhao suddenly said.

Old Master Gong was puzzled and asked, "You heard me? What did you hear?"

Gong Tianhao said, "When I was 21 years old, I overheard what you said to Grandma in the study. You said you'd go to find Grandma after I get married and have children."

"That's why you've been averse to a relationship?" Old Master Gong asked.

Gong Tianhao remained silent. The silence was the best answer.

Old Master Gong was silent too. Then, he sighed. "So it is me who has been dragging you down!" He thought his grandson was still nursing the wounds from the breakup eight years ago. He was still waiting for the girl to come back.

Gong Tianhao immediately said anxiously, "Grandpa, I don't mean it like that. This is not your fault. It's me... I don't want to get married and have children."

Old Master Gong sighed and said, "Hao 'Er, you're almost 30 years old. You're getting older."

"..." Gong Tianhao said, "Grandpa, no matter how old I am, I am always your grandchild. A grandchild is still a child!"

"I suppose you're right." Old Master Gong laughed lightly. "You'll always be a boy in my eyes."

"See, you agree with me." Gong Tianhao was quite thick-faced around his grandfather.

"Haha..." Old Master suddenly laughed. "Alright. If you don't want to get married, then so be it. As long as I'm around, someone will always treat you as a child, even when you're a 50-year-old child." When Gong Tianhao was 50, he'd be 100 already.

Gong Tianhao smiled.

"But, Hao 'Er." Old Master Gong said earnestly, "Promise Grandpa that if you meet a good girl, you will not let her slip away. Grandpa promises you that I will live until I can see my great-grandson running around. Then, I'll go and meet your grandmother."

Old Master Gong knew his grandson's stubbornness very well. If he didn't urge Gong Tianhao slightly, he would keep on being single.

Gong Tianhao nodded. "Okay, Grandpa."

Then, the two of them changed the topic.

Old Master Gong said, "Hao 'Er, you asked me to leave the capital and go to Taoyuan Village. One of the reasons is you want me to stay away from your second grandfather's family, right?"

Gong Tianhao didn't deny it and said, "That's right." At this point, he paused for a moment and added, "They keep coming to disturb you, and it's not good for your health."

Old Master Gong smiled, "Is it that, or you don't want me to help them anymore?"

"That is also another reason." Gong Tianhao said, "They know that your health is not perfect, but they keep on coming to bother you. They ignored your health and begged you to help them with the smallest things. They keep annoying you and want to use their family's daughter to tie me down through marriage. How disgusting!" Gong Tianhao didn't hide his disgust for the second branch.

"This is my fault for indulging them for too long." He sighed.

"Grandpa, it's not your fault." Gong Tianhao shook his head and said, "It's second grandfather's family who is too greedy and ambitious. They don't know how to be satisfied."

He paused for a moment and said, "Grandfather, I know you have to give them leeway in the past for my sake. You were afraid that if you didn't give them something, they will harm me. Even if you had given an explicit warning, they would still come after me. To appease them, you gave them what they wanted, power and money. They managed to establish a firm foundation in the capital in just a few years. They are still growing strong.

"But Grandpa, certain people will never be satisfied. The more you give them, the more they want. Even if you surrender to them the whole Gong Family, they will go so far to eliminate you and me to make their power concrete."

Old Master Gong said, "I know about their ambitions and greed. But I worry. After I'm gone, they're your only blood-related family left."

"I'd rather not have people who constantly want to harm me as my blood family. They don't treat me as one, so why should I?" Gong Tianhao's tone was very cold. Then, his tone became gentle as he said, "And Grandpa, you are not going anywhere."

Old Master Gong thought for a moment and said with a sigh, "Well, Hao 'Er is all grown up. I'll leave this for you to handle." Old Master Gong couldn't care about the second branch forever. "But, Hao 'Er, you have to promise me that you'd put your safety first, okay?" Old Master Gong was worried. "Over the years, I've given them too much power. It's not going to be easy to make them budge. I'm afraid that once you do something, they'd become desperate and harm you."

Gong Tianhao nodded. "Grandpa, don't worry. I'll be fine. Plus, you were the one who gave them all this power and money. I am merely taking them back for you. Without the Gong Family's support, what can they do? Grandpa, we have been too kind to them. That's why they are so shameless now."

Old Master Gong admitted, "Hao 'Er, you're right. Okay, I will move to Taoyuan Village. I wish to see the beautiful scenery and taste the cooking of that auntie you mentioned. I quite look forward to it."

Gong Tianhao let out a sigh of relief and said with a smile, "Grandpa, you won't be disappointed. You will be able to rest well. And I will visit you as long as I have time."

"Then, Hao 'Er, you have to be careful in the capital by yourself, understand?"

"Yes, I understand, Grandpa!" Gong Tianhao replied.

## **Chapter 162: Gomoku**

“Wow, the courtyard of the Gong Family is so grand. It’s made of green bricks and glazed tiles. The rooms are spacious and bright. It seems that they have transplanted some trees at the courtyard too.” Xiao Lingye exclaimed during mealtime. “The rich are different.”

There was still some envy in his eyes. He was wondering if he should go out and explore the world after his university entrance exam. After all, he was already 18. He could work legally already.

Mother Xiao knocked on Xiao Lingye’s head with her chopsticks. She warned sternly, “Xiao Lingye, I’m warning you. That’s their business for being rich. You are not going to resort to something sinister to earn money. If I find you you’re earning black money, I’ll break your legs!”

Even though their children were very obedient, Mother Xiao and Father Xiao still dispensed life lessons once in a while.

Xiao Lingye rubbed his head and grumbled, “Mom, that was just a statement. Did you need to hit me? Plus, I will be earning money with my hard work in the future. I will not let you and Dad down.”

“You’re always a sweet-talker!” Mother Xiao rolled her eyes and saw, from the corner of her eyes, Father Xiao reach for the chili. She coughed, and Father Xiao’s hand trembled. The chopsticks changed direction to pick up the pig’s liver instead.

He put the pig liver into his mouth with a bitter laugh. After chewing it a few times and swallowing it, he carefully said, “Dear, I want to discuss something with you!”

“We shouldn’t talk when we’re eating.” Mother Xiao said seriously, “If you have anything to say, you can say it after you’re done eating.”

Everyone, “...”

Cowed by Mother Xiao, Father Xiao finished his bowl of rice, and he said, “Dear, I’m done eating. Can we discuss it now?”

“But I have not!” Mother Xiao retorted.

The two children, “...”

Father Xiao, “...”

Father Xiao immediately turned his children. He mouthed, ‘Help me!’

His two kids looked at him helplessly and mouthed back. ‘Who told you to make Mom angry?’

Father Xiao’s face instantly fell. He didn’t intend to do that. It had been so long since he had something spicy. He yearned for them.

One time, he sneaked to grab some chili to eat from the kitchen when his wife was out. However, once the chili was in his mouth, his wife returned. The tail of the chili was still poking out of his mouth. Mother Xiao didn’t say anything. She just glanced at him and left.

However, for dinner that night, every dish had chili, except the plate of pork liver. Therefore, Father Xiao couldn't eat anything but the pork liver. It was fine for one meal, but this continued for the next few days. Father Xiao would be given chicken soup and pork liver. However, the other spicy dishes would be sitting on the table to taunt him.

He had eaten pork liver for four consecutive days already. If this continued, he would vomit.

Since his two children sided with his wife, Father Xiao had to do this on his own. He waited for his wife to finish eating.

The moment she did, he said impatiently. "Dear, I need to discuss something with you. Can you stop making pork liver for me? I'm about to vomit from eating it."

Mother Xiao said calmly, "Pork liver is good for the blood. You lost a lot of blood from the surgery. Plus, just think of the chilies waiting for you in the future. Once you're healed, you can eat as many chilies as you like. But to heal quickly, you need to eat more pork livers."

This was truly a ruthless move. Xiao Lingyu and Xiao Lingye were highly impressed. Mother Xiao was playing the long game. No wonder she didn't say anything when she caught Father Xiao with the chili in his mouth.

The siblings were astute people. They didn't dare to side with either party.

If they helped Father Xiao, they would suffer with him. Mother Xiao controlled the meals at home. If they fell in line with Father Xiao, they would be treated with an endless parade of pork liver too. They had been eating them for the past two days, and they were already fed up. Therefore, they leaned towards Mother Xiao than Father Xiao.

If they sided with Mother Xiao, they would be scolded by their dad. However, that was nothing compared to the pork liver hell.

Seeing his children, Father Xiao glared at them fiercely and signaled with his eyes, "Just you wait."

Then, Father Xiao apologized to his wife. "Dear, I'm sorry. I know I was wrong. I wouldn't dare to eat chili behind your back anymore. Can you please stop serving me pork liver?" Before this, even though he couldn't have chilies, at least there were other dishes. But now, there were only pork livers.

Mother Xiao didn't agree immediately. Instead, she asked, "You promise?"

"Of course. I wouldn't dare anymore!" Father Xiao promised, "After this lesson, do you think I dare to do it again?"

Mother Xiao nodded. "Fine, since you're repentant, I'll cook normal dishes for you tomorrow."

Father Xiao was stunned, "Tomorrow? Can you start tonight?"

Mother Xiao laughed, "There has to be a trial period first."

Xiao Lingyu helped her mother clean up the table after lunch. Xiao Lingye and his father went to walk around the village. Father Xiao still couldn't return to work, so he walked around the village as his daily exercise. After every meal, he would walk around the village. He would chat with people or sit under the

camphor tree near the village entrance. When the villagers were free, they would come to this tree to chat and play chess. Of course, chess was too cultured for most villagers.

Young people brought this hobby back to the village. They saw the elders play chess in the cities, and they thought to bring the chess back to their parents and grandparents. This way, they could do something when they were free. However, the elderly in the village was not as free as the ones in the cities.

They were already tired from working in the field. Where would they find the time and energy to play chess, something which was mentally exhausting?

However, Father Xiao took to chess since he had nothing else to do. He still couldn't work from the surgery. He didn't know how to play complicated games like chess or Go. Instead, he liked to play the simple game of Gomoku.

Gomoku was a game that even children could learn how to play after a few rounds.

However, not every adult was as free as Father Xiao. They still had to work. Therefore, a strange scene appeared at Taoyuan Village. A middle-aged man would be seen playing Gomoku with children of seven or eight years old. Occasionally, they'd even get into arguments.

"Zhengyang, are you going to the tree again?" Someone saw Xiao Zhengyang and asked with a smile, "Now that Ye 'Er is back, he can play Gomoku with you. The kids won't get the chance to beat you anymore."

Xiao Lingye was surprised. "Dad, you know how to play Gomoku?"

Xiao Zhengyang's face was a little red. It was embarrassing for an adult to be playing a children's game like Gomoku. He tried to learn the other games. Xiao Lingyu taught him countless times, but he couldn't pick them up. The only thing he managed to learn was Gomoku.

However, he had to retain his dignity around his son. He didn't want to be laughed at. He glared and asked in a stern voice, "Xiao Lingye, what do you mean? Can't your Dad play Gomoku?"

Xiao Lingye, "...?" Do you need to have such a big reaction?

He saw through his father's embarrassment, but he didn't expose him. Instead, he said fawningly, "Of course, you can! My Dad is the cleverest person I know!"

Father Xiao narrowed his eyes. He wasn't sure if his son was mocking him or not.

Eventually, the pair of father and son reached the camphor tree. There were two young kids there. When they saw Father Xiao, they ran over. "Second Grandpa, will you be playing Gomoku with us today?"

Papa Xiao's face was slightly red as he said, "Second Grandpa is full today, so I'm not playing."

"Then second grandpa, can we borrow your chessboard?"

"Sure, you can go ask your second grandma for it." Soon, the two kids ran back with the chessboard. They found a spot and started to play.

Father Xiao couldn't help but walk over to the kids. Then, he said, "Little Five, you need to go this way. Your three pieces are blocked that way. Don't waste your piece."

"Little White, you have to put here!"

"Little Five, block him!"

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"Second Grandpa, can you please be quiet?" The two children couldn't stand it any longer.

"Second Grandpa, you're a horrible chess player. I followed your advice, and I lost."

Xiao Lingye, "..."

'I'm not sure I need to be here for this. Just how bad is Dad at chess that even kids are complaining about him?'

"Haha. Zhengyang, are you back to be scolded by the children again?" Xiao Chengbang was also resting under the big tree. "Zhengyang, just how much do you like Gomoku? You have to know that you suck at it, but you still come here to play it every day!"

Xiao Zhengyang was used to being teased. He smiled. "It's because I'm too free. You guys are too busy, and I don't have someone to chat with!"

Xiao Chengbang said with sympathy. "You're right. That's why you have to resort to playing chess with a bunch of brats."

Xiao Lingye, "... Uncle Chengbang, do you need to pour salt on my dad's wound?"

Xiao Zhengyang smiled and replied, "You're right. These kids are my biggest company now." In the countryside, even the elderly had to work the field. No one at Xiao Zhengyang's age would be resting unless they were extremely lazy.

Xiao Lingye said, "Dad, how about I be your opponent for the next two days?" He couldn't bear seeing his dad being beaten by kids all day long. He would use this opportunity to teach his father so that he could come back to beat those kids!

Father Xiao shook his head. "Your exam is coming soon. You need to focus on your study."

Father Xiao knew his son's intention, but he didn't want Xiao Lingye to waste time because Xiao Lingye needed to focus on his study, and because Father Xiao knew he was a hopeless player. Xiao Lingye did try to teach him how to play Gomoku, but Father Xiao couldn't get it.

Xiao Lingye felt such despair. She had no idea why her smart father couldn't pick up something as simple as Gomoku. This was a children's game, for god's sake!

Xiao Lingye accompanied his father under the tree. He played a few rounds with his dad, and then he rushed home to do revision.

There was a reason why two kids could win his dad at Gomoku. He couldn't stay to watch the massacre anymore!



## Chapter 163: Sowing Discord

“Master Gu, this is bad. That... that...” A waiter ran into the Gu Family Hotel’s kitchen and shouted, “Zhou Huaming is coming over to our restaurant for a meal!”

Master Gu turned the wok and scooped out the stir-fried cabbage. He said indifferently, “Why fuss? This is not his first time here anyway.”

The last time Zhou Huaming was here, he was in disguise. He wore a low-brimmed hat and a pair of sunglasses. He dressed himself up as a celebrity. But did he think the Gu Family wouldn’t recognize him?

Gu Ziyue and Gu Rufeng were very familiar with their competitors. They would recognize them anywhere. Gu Rufeng directly walked to the man’s table. “CEO Zhou, you should have informed us when you decide to frequent us. Ziyue could have arranged a private booth for you. I just wonder why the general manager of the Yi Family Hotel would come to our restaurant? Have the food at the Yi Family Hotel gotten so bad?”

Gu Rufeng’s previous disappointment was swept away. When his competitor came to their hotel in disguise, his mood soared. If he didn’t take this chance to ridicule Zhou Huaming, he wouldn’t sleep at night.

At the time, when the nearby customers heard the CEO of the Yi Family Hotel was there, their eyes widened, and they stared at Zhou Huaming with curiosity. Some of their eyes even flashed with a strange look.

Was Zhou Huaming there was a simple meal or to test out the enemy’s food? Regardless, it was ashamed to be caught red-handed.

Zhou Huaming was thick-skinned too. He said disdainfully. “I don’t get why people flock here when the food is so bad.” Then, he stood up and left.

When Gu Rufeng heard that Zhou Huaming had returned, he even lost interest to meet the man anymore. The waiter said, “But Zhou Huaming has invited someone this time. That someone is President Gu’s friend.”

Gu Rufeng was interested. “Ye ‘Er’s friend? Who is it?”

“The one we mistook as President Gu’s girlfriend!” The waiter said. Gu Rufeng’s face shifted. He dropped the ladle and rushed out. He needed to confirm this.

He had mistaken Xiao Lingyu as Gu Ziyue’s girlfriend last time, but he did find out Xiao Lingyu was the new supplier of their hotel. Now their competition was having a meal with their new supplier? This was not good. He stood on the second floor and looked down. Zhou Huaming was indeed dining with a young woman. Gu Rufeng hadn’t seen Xiao Lingyu before, but the waiter had. So it was unlikely he made a mistake. He frowned and walked to the corner to make a call.

“Where are you?” Gu Rufeng demanded angrily, “Get back now! Your girlfriend is dining with Zhou Huaming!”

Gu Ziyue was swimming with his three friends. When he heard his third uncle say his girlfriend was dining with Zhou Huaming, his first reaction was to say that he didn't have a girlfriend. But then, everything clicked.

The last time Xiao Lingyu came to his hotel, his third uncle mistook her for his girlfriend. So that meant...

He shivered and immediately rushed off.

Zheng Haiyang asked in confusion, "Ye, what happened?"

Gu Ziyue wiped the water off his body with a white towel and said, "Third uncle just called. He said that Xiao Lingyu is having a meal with Zhou Huaming."

"What?" The three of them were shocked. "Xiao Lingyu is dining with Zhou Huaming? What's going on?"

"I don't know either," Gu Ziyue said in confusion. "So, I need to go back to take a look!"

"We'll go together!" Zheng Haiyang and the other two immediately put on their clothes and left in a hurry.

After they got into the car, Yuan Xuanhao asked, "Ziyue, did third uncle say where Xiao Lingyu and Zhou Huaming are now?"

"No." Gu Ziyue shook his head and said, "I'll call and ask."

After he made the call, his expression changed slightly. His friends looked at him and asked, "What's wrong?"

Gu Ziyue said in a puzzled tone, "Apparently, they are dining at the Gu Family Hotel!"

"Huh?" The three were shocked. "What is really going on?"

If Zhou Huaming wanted to poach Xiao Lingyu, he wouldn't do it at the Gu Family Hotel. But then, Gu Ziyue realized Zhou Huaming was probably meeting with Xiao Lingyu because he needed her help.

Zhou Hongwei was arrested, and Xiao Lingyu was the key witness. Xiao Lingyu's testimony was crucial to Zhou Hongwei's conviction.

"Do you think it was Lingyu who asked for them to dine at the Gu Family Hotel?" Qian Yifan guessed.

"I think it's possible!" The others echoed.

"No matter reason, we need to go back and take a look first!" Gu Ziyue said.

...

Zhou Huaming agreed to Xiao Lingyu's conditions and accepted the invitation to the Gu family hotel. Zhou Huaming wanted to book a private booth. However, he didn't have it done in his own name. He had his secretary book the room instead.

However, the Gu Family Hotel's business was so good that all the private booths had been booked. The only spot left was in the general dining room.

The Zhou Family needed Xiao Lingyu. Even if they couldn't get a private booth, they still had to abide by her rules. Xiao Lingyu wanted to have the meeting at 11. 30 am.

Zhou Huaming arrived at the destination slightly later to make Xiao Lingyu stew in anxiety. This was a power move. Then, he walked to the table he had booked two days ago. When he arrived, he saw that Xiao Lingyu was already waiting.

Xiao Lingyu glanced at him and asked with a frown. "Are you Zhou Huaming, Boss Zhou?"

Zhou Huaming sighed in relief when he saw Xiao Lingyu arrive earlier than he did. He assumed that this meant Xiao Lingyu was eager to negotiate for money and benefits. It made him feel proud, but before they reached an agreement, he didn't let it show on his face.

He pulled a chair and sat down. He nodded and replied, "Yes, I am Zhou Huaming. Miss Xiao, I have heard a lot about you." Then, he extended his hand to shake hers.

Xiao Lingyu was a person who was very good at observing people's expressions. Naturally, she did not miss the disrespectful look in Zhou Huaming's eyes. She chuckled internally.

She didn't take his hand. Instead, she looked at her wristwatch and said, "Boss Zhou, you're fifteen minutes late. Boss Zhou doesn't seem to care about this meeting since you have me wait for you."

The expression on Zhou Huaming's face instantly froze. 'What does she mean by that? Doesn't she know it's common for business people to come late? But I have to endure it.'

He forced a smile. "Sorry, there was a traffic jam." This was a common excuse for tardy people.

Xiao Lingyu raised her eyebrows and said with a smile, "Traffic jam?" Her gaze deliberately glanced behind Zhou Huaming. Through the entrance, she saw the opposite building, the Yi Family Hotel.

The two hotels were one street apart. Xiao Lingyu's meaning was clear. She saw Zhou Huaming walk out of the Yi Family Hotel earlier. He walked over from his office, so how could there be a traffic jam?

Zhou Huaming knew his lie had been exposed. He opened his mouth to explain, but Xiao Lingyu picked up her bag and prepared to leave. "Boss Zhou, I don't work with impolite people. Since you don't seem to care about this meeting, then we shouldn't waste time."

"I'm sorry, Miss Xiao!" Zhou Huaming gritted his teeth and stood up to apologize. Zhou Huaming was frustrated. He didn't expect that Xiao Lingyu would use his move against him.

Xiao Lingyu sat down again and said, "Okay. Since Boss Zhou has apologized, I'll stay."

After the two of them sat down, the waiter came over and asked for their order.

When Zhou Huaming heard Xiao Lingyu order all the expensive dishes, his eyes turned up with disdain. 'A country bumpkin will always be backward. She only knows to order the most expensive dishes. She probably hasn't even tasted them before. She is using me to have that opportunity.'

Of course, Zhou Huaming didn't say anything.

When Xiao Lingyu was done and handed the menu back to the waiter, Zhou Huaming asked, "Miss Xiao, why not order some more?"

Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said, "I'm fine."

After the waiter left, Xiao Lingyu asked directly, "May I know why Boss Zhou has invited me out?"

Zhou Huaming's breathing stopped, and a wave of anger suddenly surged out of his heart. He knew that Xiao Lingyu was doing this on purpose. She had to know why he had asked her out to meet.

He looked around and said in a low voice, "Miss Xiao, do you think we should talk about that at this place?"

People already recognized Zhou Huaming when he walked in. Therefore, curious gazes kept turning their way.

Xiao Lingyu acted dumb and asked, "Why not?" Then, Xiao Lingyu gasped in fear and shock. "Boss Zhou, you mean that thing?! I will never agree to that. Even though I'm not as rich and as powerful as you, I will not violate my principles. I can't help you with that."

Zhou Huaming, "..."

Everyone, "..."

'What is going on? What is she up to? Is she trying to ruin my reputation?'

Zhou Huaming's face darkened. He gritted his teeth and said, "Miss Xiao, you've misunderstood. I absolutely didn't mean that."

"Good!" Xiao Lingyu patted her chest and sighed. "I thought you asked me out to talk about Zhou Hongwei. He is the purchasing manager of the Yi Family Hotel. Wait, he's your nephew too.

"So, I thought you came to find me to talk about how Zhou Hongwei had kidnapped and threatened me.

"Thankfully, he is now arrested. Don't worry, Boss Zhou. I will never tolerate criminals. This time, I will make sure Zhou Hongwei will be inside for years. When he comes out, he'd be powerless to fight with you for the Yi Family Hotel."

Xiao Lingyu uttered loudly. She didn't seem like she knew she had said something wrong. Internally though, she thought, 'Your whole family has tried to threaten me with my brother. Do you think I'm a pushover? In that case, I'll turn the tricks on you and cause your family to turn on itself!'

Xiao Lingyu had gathered every intel on the Zhou Family over the past three days.

"Zhou Hongwei wants to fight his uncle to control the Yi Family Hotel? This is one big insider news!"

"That doesn't sound right. I heard that Zhou Hongwei is the Zhou Family's only heir. Old Master Zhou had already said that Zhou Hongwei would have everything in the Zhou Family, and that includes the Yi Family Hotel. So why fight his uncle for it now?"

"Because CEO Zhou is only 50 years old. He also has two daughters. Do you really think he's going to surrender everything he has worked for to his nephew and not his daughters? No one would believe that! Definitely not Zhou Hongwei."

“But, the Zhou Family is famous for favoring boys over girls. Old Master Zhou has already made the decision. Everything will go to Zhou Hongwei in the future.”

“Do you think we still live in feudal China? So what if Old Master Zhou has made the decision? Can Zhou Huaming not consider his own daughter? It’s very unlikely he’d hand over all his life’s work to Zhou Hongwei.”

“You’re right!”

## **Chapter 164: Idiot**

When Gu Ziye and the others arrived at the hotel, they walked into the heated discussion people had about how Zhou Huaming had set his nephew up so he could keep the Yi Family Hotel to himself.

Gu Ziye and the others looked at each other.

They didn’t understand what was going on.

The guests were all dining, but they were also talking about Zhou Huaming.

Gu Ziye was smart enough to know that this probably had to do with Xiao Lingyu.

He thought for a moment, then walked in and said with a smile, “CEO Zhou, it’s an honor for us to serve you.”

Zhou Huaming glared at Xiao Lingyu with an ashen face. He was furious. He was not expecting the set-up. He might not harbor ill intentions towards his nephew, but rumors were the scariest thing. Once it started to spread, the fake would become true.

He wanted to seal the lips of the people at the hotel, but he couldn’t do that. Most guests at the hotel were respected members of society. The Zhou Family couldn’t threaten all of them.

Therefore, the only thing Zhou Huaming could do to fix this was to make Xiao Lingyu take back her words and admit that she was lying. He finally knew what Xiao Lingyu was planning. She was never tempted by their money. She agreed with the invitation was to sow discord within the Zhou Family. She never intended to work with them. Since that was the case, he would not be polite to her anymore.

When he was about to strongarm Xiao Lingyu into making her confession, Gu Ziye walked over. He openly insulted him.

Gu Ziye looked at Zhou Huaming and pretended to be concerned, “CEO Zhou, you don’t look so good. Are you not feeling well? Actually, let me tell you, our vegetables here are not only delicious but also good for the body. Many clients said they felt much better after eating here. So, CEO Zhou, you should try some.”

Everyone, “...” They sympathized with Zhou Huaming. And then, someone giggled. Zhou Huaming came to his enemy’s turf and was insulted.

The manager of the Gu Family Hotel was amazing too. He was young, but he had a sharp tongue. He didn’t say a single bad word, but everything was a faceslap to Zhou Huaming.

Gu Ziyue rambled on, not giving Zhou Huaming any time to react. Gu Ziyue clapped his hands and uttered in mock surprise. "CEO Zhou, I heard that you had your cousin sent to jail so that he wouldn't steal the Yi Family Hotel from you. But I'm confused..."

Gu Ziyue continued, "Haven't Old Master Zhou already made the announcement that all the assets of the Zhou Family will be given to your nephew? The Yi Family Hotel is part of that, right? Then, why is your nephew so anxious to fight you for it? Is it because you were not satisfied with the old man's decision and decided to share your hard-earned wealth with your two daughters instead?"

Xiao Lingyu's words were the firework base, and Gu Ziyue was lighting it up. It made the rumors spread faster. The people there didn't know Xiao Lingyu, but they knew Gu Ziyue. They knew about the history between the Gu Family and the Zhou Family.

They believed Gu Ziyue's words because who would know you better than your enemy?

"Gu Ziyue, shut up!" Zhou Huaming couldn't care about his image anymore. "Don't try to start a rumor. No one will believe you."

Gu Ziyue smiled and apologized sincerely, "I'm sorry, CEO Zhou. I didn't know that was just a rumor. I merely repeated what I heard." Then, Gu Ziyue added in pain. "Actually, CEO Zhou, I feel bad for you. We're already in modern society. No one should place so much importance on a boy over a girl anymore. Regardless of a child's gender, we should raise them equally.

"But why is it so different with the Zhou Family? Rumors say that misogyny is really serious in the Zhou Family. The latest Zhou Family generation has five children, but why only one can inherit the family assets? You have worked your whole life to accumulate all this wealth, but you can't even give them to your daughters but a nephew.

"Are your daughters that bad? Do you think they won't take care of you when you're old? But then, do you think your nephew will really take care of you and not throw you into a nursing home and pretend that you don't exist?"

Gu Ziyue's words stabbed into Zhou Huaming's heart. This was something that worried him too.

If Zhou Hongwei were really willing to look after them in their old age, he would have no complaints giving everything he had to Zhou Hongwei. However, who could promise Zhou Hongwei would be filial to his uncles?

Regardless, he couldn't let his enemy know that. He would settle the rest after this matter was over.

Zhou Huaming sneered, "President Gu, mind your own business! This is the Zhou Family business! You don't need to worry about it." At this point, he turned his angry gaze back to Xiao Lingyu. He gritted his teeth and roared angrily, "Xiao Lingyu, I didn't expect you to be such a scheming woman. Do you think you can dismantle the Zhou Family with a few words? In your dreams!"

Xiao Lingyu chuckled. "CEO Zhou, when did I try to do that?" She refuted, "CEO Zhou, I don't even know the Zhou Family. In fact, I'm not even familiar with you. Why would I try to sow discord between the Zhou family members?"

At this point, she turned to look at her surroundings and said, "You were the one who invited me here for a meal. I don't even know why you'd do that. After all, we're not that familiar."

Xiao Lingyu was certain that Zhou Huaming wouldn't dare to tell the truth. After all, his plan was to bribe her with money to release Zhou Hongwei.

Zhou Huaming was furious after being tricked by Xiao Lingyu. He pointed angrily at Xiao Lingyu and shouted, "Xiao Lingyu, just you wait!" Then, he turned to leave.

"Wait." Xiao Lingyu stopped him. "CEO Zhou, you invited me so you should pay the bill."

Zhou Huaming's face turned purple. He glared at Xiao Lingyu with his sharp eyes and scolded, "You country bumpkin, I hope you choke to death on the food!"

The waiter came over with the bill. He said politely, "Sir, the bill is 3930 RMB. President Gu said that since you're a regular here, we'll only charge you 3900 RMB."

The enemy became a regular!

Zhou Huaming slammed the money angrily and left in a huff.

"Haha..." Seeing this, Gu Ziyue and his friends burst into laughter.

Gu Ziyue waved his hand and announced, "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm very happy today, so every table will get a 20 percent discount!" With the business at the restaurant, the 20 percent was actually very big.

A guest said. "President Gu, you just defeated your enemy. We deserve at least a 50 percent discount!"

"That's right!"

"50 Percent! 50 Percent!"

Gu Ziyue laughed among the noise and said, "My dear clients, with 20 percent discount, I'm already running on no profit. If I give you a 50 percent discount, you'd have me lose even my underwear!"

"Haha..." Everyone laughed and said, "President Gu, we have children with us!"

Gu Ziyue curled his lips and continued to smile, "I'm just telling the truth. So please forgive me."

After Gu Ziyue joked with the guests, the four of them sat down at Xiao Lingyu's table. The dishes were almost all served.

Zheng Haiyang looked at the dishes on the table with a strange expression and asked, "Lingyu, did you order all these dishes?" They were all expensive dishes.

Ever since Xiao Lingyu worked with them, their restaurant became famous for vegetarian dishes. Almost no one ordered expensive ingredients like abalone and sea cucumber anymore.

Yuan Xuanhao smiled and said, "No wonder the bill is almost 4,000."

Qian Yifan gave Xiao Lingyu a thumbs up and said, "Amazing! You're really amazing!"

They knew that Xiao Lingyu and Zhou Huaming's connection was Zhou Hongwei. They heard that Xiao Lingyu's testimony was crucial to Zhou Hongwei's conviction. They were worried that Xiao Lingyu and Zhou Huaming might really come to some kind of agreement.

However, they were surprised by the show when they arrived.

Xiao Lingyu looked at the dishes on the table and said, "Come and join me! I can't finish them on my own!"

Gu Ziyue glanced at the feast. "I don't think even with the four of us can finish them either."

There were five people but sixteen dishes.

Zheng Haiyang suggested, "Ling Yu, why don't you ask your brother and Yi 'Er to come to join us?"

Yuan Xuanhao said, "They are in school. They are not allowed to leave the school except on weekends." If they were, Ning Weiyi, Yang Baolin, and Kang Le would wander around town every day.

A guest smiled and said, "President Gu, we can help you finish the dishes!"

Gu Ziyue shook his head. "I'm sorry, but I'm not the one who paid for this table."

Everyone's eyes turned to Xiao Lingyu. There were curiosity and doubt. No one knew who this woman was, but she managed to make Zhou Huaming blow up with just a few words. Plus, she was very familiar with Gu Ziyue and his friends. The woman was not a simple character!

Xiao Lingyu ignored the other clients and told Gu Ziyue, "Don't worry, we can finish all these dishes."

"Ah?" Gu Ziyue was a little surprised. He really didn't think they could finish the feast. Then, with everyone watching in shock, Xiao Lingyu swept through the dishes...

Gu Ziyue searched his memory. He remembered that one time he had dinner with Xiao Lingyu and Jiang Tao. Xiao Lingyu only had a half bowl of rice. It was hard to imagine that it was the same woman who consumed the food like a vacuum.

The food was annihilated by the five. Most of them went into Xiao Lingyu's stomach, and the girl still looked hungry.

Gu Ziyue asked in surprise, "How did your appetite become so big?" She ate a portion more than the four of them combined. Of course, she ate mostly vegetables.

Xiao Lingyu smiled and said, "I've been eating a lot recently!" She didn't tell them she was pregnant, and so she had a large appetite. To be honest, Xiao Lingyu was also confused. She didn't remember having such a large appetite when she was pregnant in her previous life.

Then again, in her previous life, she hated the child so much that she couldn't care about anything related to him. She wasn't paying attention if the pregnancy had affected her in her previous life.

After the meal, Gu Ziyue invited Xiao Lingyu to join them in his private room. Gu Ziyue admitted, "Lingyu, I was scared to death when I heard that you were dining with Zhou Huaming."



Xiao Lingyu asked with a smile, "Why? Are you afraid that your supplier will be snatched away by them again?"

Gu Ziyue smiled and admitted, "That has crossed my mind."

After all, he knew how despicable the Zhou Family was. He was afraid that they might threaten Xiao Lingyu.

"However, when I heard that you were dining here, I was confused." Gu Ziyue said. If Xiao Lingyu really wanted to cooperate with the Yi Family Hotel, they wouldn't be discussing the terms at the Gu Family Hotel. Plus, with their understanding of Xiao Lingyu, she wouldn't work with someone who threatened her and her family.

However, they were still curious that Zhou Haoming agreed to come to meet her at the Gu Family Hotel.

"Lingyu, how exactly did you get Zhou Huaming to agree to have a meal here?" Zheng Haiyang asked.

Xiao Lingyu curled her lips and said, "It's not that hard. They have need of me now. For Zhou Hongwei, they will agree to everything I ask."

Then, the men said worriedly. "Lingyu, aren't you afraid of their revenge? The Zhou Family is extremely petty. Now that you've offended them, they will definitely find a chance to take revenge in the future. They aren't that powerful in Xing Yin County, but they can still harm you."

Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said, "I don't know either. We'll cross that bridge when we come to it."

To the Zhou family, she was just a nobody. In fact, they only needed to lift a finger to deal with her. However, they couldn't do anything to her yet because of Zhou Hongwei. But once that was over, the Zhou Family would seek revenge.

Gu Ziyue would help Xiao Lingyu because she was her friend and business partner. However, while he could fend them off on the surface, the Zhou Family liked to resort to dirty tricks.

It was easy to dodge an open spear but difficult to guard against an arrow from the dark!

Even if Gu Ziyue and the others wanted to help, there was only so much they could do.

Gu Ziyue said, "Lingyu, be careful. If there's anything that you need my help with, just let me know. I'll definitely do my best."

"Yes, and we will help too!" The other three also said.

Xiao Lingyu smiled and said, "Then I'll thank you in advance."

"You're welcome. We're friends, aren't we?" The four said with a smile.

...

"Dad, I knew there must be something behind Wei'er's arrest. It turns out that someone in the family is working with outsiders to set up our Wei 'Er!" Zhou Huaying was complaining to Zhou Guojian about his big brother. "Everyone is talking about it. Wei 'Er was arrested because he wanted to seize the Yi Family

Hotel. Big brother didn't want to surrender his asset, so he joined with outsiders to send Wei 'Er to prison."

A long time ago, Zhou Guojian had already announced that everything in the Zhou Family would go to Zhou Hongwei. Among them was the Yi Family Hotel and all the assets owned by Zhou Huaming and Zhou Tanxiong. As Zhou Hongwei's father, these things would belong to Zhou Huaying too. Therefore, he felt it was natural for him to make use of his eldest and third brother. He was only drawing advance on his future money.

But, when he heard his son was sent to jail by Zhou Huaming, it meant that Zhou Huaming was trying to snatch the family property away from him. He couldn't allow that!

Everything in the Zhou Family belonged to him. His eldest brother and third brother would get nothing. So, when he heard the news, he immediately came to complain to Zhou Guojian.

After Zhou Guojian heard his second son's complaint, he frowned. He called Zhou Huaming to return home immediately.

Once Zhou Huaming returned, he was interrogated by Zhou Huaying. "Big Brother, how can you ally with an outsider to send Wei 'Er to jail because of one Yi Family Hotel? Zhou Huaming, I'm telling you, if anything happens to my Wei 'Er... I'll never forgive you."

When Zhou Huaming heard this accusation, he was incensed. But he suppressed his anger and asked, "Second brother, where did you hear that I was the one who set up Wei 'Er and sent him to prison?"

"It was from a friend of mine!" Zhou Huaying shot back without thinking. "Is it not true? My friend told me that you aren't satisfied with the arrangement to hand the Yi Family Hotel to Wei 'Er and wanted to leave them for your daughters instead."

Zhou Huaming could no longer hold back his anger and asked, "Second brother, which friend did you hear this from? Can't you tell that they are merely trying to turn us against each other?"

Zhou Huaming had done so much for Zhou Hongwei. Was his loyalty not clear enough for his family to see? He assumed these words would never affect his family. But he forgot that he had an idiotic second brother.

Zhou Huaying sharply questioned, "I don't care. I'm just going to ask this question. Why haven't you handed over the position of the general manager of the Yi Family Hotel to Wei 'Er?" He harrumphed and sneered. "It's because you can't bear to part with it, right?"

Zhou Huaming suddenly felt a little sad, helpless, and bitter. He had done everything he could for the sake of Zhou Hongwei, but in the end, he was still questioned by his family.

This turned his heart sour.

## **Chapter 165: Revenge**

They failed to entice Xiao Lingyu but were tricked by her instead. Then again, if the Zhou Family didn't have cracks, to begin with, Xiao Lingyu wouldn't be able to do anything to them.

However, the center of the crack was Zhou Huaying. When he heard the rumors, he wholeheartedly believed that it was indeed his eldest brother, Zhou Huaming, who had plotted to send his nephew to prison.

No matter how Zhou Huaming explained, Zhou Huaying would not listen. Even after Zhuo Guojian said something, Zhou Huaying only replied, "If big brother really wants to prove that he loves Wei 'Er, then he should transfer the hotel to Wei 'Er now. After all, the hotel will be Wei 'Er's sooner or later. Big brother, you won't be so tired after Wei 'Er takes over the hotel. Dad, don't you agree with me?"

Zhou Huaying was trying to push Zhou Hongwei's agenda. Zhou Huaying was a tyrant before his brothers, but he was a coward around his son. Zhou Huaying feared his son and listened obediently to Zhou Hongwei's orders. Zhou Huaying understood that his carefree life came from his son, Zhou Hongwei.

Zhou Hongwei had completely inherited the characteristics of the Zhou family: Sinister, cunning, selfish, and greedy. He knew that he would eventually inherit the Zhou Family, but he was furious that his uncles wouldn't hand them over now. He was already 27. Gu Ziyi, his peer, was already the general manager of the Gu Family Hotel, but he was only just the purchasing manager.

He once asked Zhou Huaming for the post of vice president, but he was rejected. Zhou Huaming said Zhou Hongwei needed more experience and the purchasing department was the best place for him to do that.

On one hand, Zhou Huaming did intend to groom Zhou Hongwei to be his heir, but at the same time, he couldn't let go of his power just like that. Therefore, he placed Zhou Hongwei in the purchasing department for now.

Zhou Huaying said, "Big brother, Wei 'Er told me several times that he didn't want to be the purchasing manager. He wants to be the president or vice president. However, you refuse to let go. Are you trying to make the Zhou Family's future heir lose face? Or you don't intend to give him the hotel at all? He told me he is very disappointed in you."

The accusation cut through Zhou Huaming's heart. He did everything for Zhou Hongwei, but in the end, he was questioned.

At that moment, he remembered what Gu Ziyi said, 'But then, do you think your nephew will really take care of you and not throw you into a nursing home and pretend that you don't exist?'

Zhou Huaming thought with sadness. 'So that's what Zhou Hongwei thinks of me. I have treated him like my son since he was born. I did everything for him, but...'

Zhou Guojian narrowed his eyes and interrupted, "Huaming, Huaying, we can talk about that later. Now, we have to try to save Wei 'Er first."

He noticed that his eldest son was disappointed by his second brother. He felt alienated. That couldn't be allowed.

The Zhou Family only had one male heir, Zhou Hongwei. All the assets of the Zhou Family would belong to Zhou Hongwei. As for the daughters, they would be married off. Even if they didn't marry, they would not see a cent from the Zhou Family.

Zhou Huaming took a deep breath and said, "I've tried everything I could think of. Nothing is effective."

This displeased Zhou Huaying. "Big brother, why don't I believe you? Are you sure you've done everything you could?" He sneered. "Or you're trying your best to make sure Wei 'Er stays in jail? Don't you have many connections, then you should use them to haul Wei 'Er out! You must be doing this on purpose!" Zhou Huaying snorted. He never really respected his brother, to begin with.

"You..." Zhou Huaming was incensed. He gnashed his teeth and said, "Second brother, since you doubt my intentions, why don't you help Wei 'Er yourself?"

Zhou Huaying choked and turned around to complain, "Dad, you see, Big Brother never wanted to save Wei 'Er. Now he wants to leave. If I can save Wei 'Er, do we even need big brother?"

Zhou Huaming, "... " At that moment, he understood many things. No matter how he argued, Zhou Huaying would not believe him. Since Zhou Hongwei had a father like Zhou Huaying, would he be reliable in the future?

At the same time, Zhou Huaming thought of his two filial daughters.

Although both daughters were married, they often asked about their parent's health. They would return every few days to visit. If they didn't have the time, they would call to inquire about their days and so on.

But what about Zhou Hongwei? If Zhou Hongwei ever called him, it was to ask for money. Did he ever show concern to his eldest uncles? No.

"Son, what are you thinking about?" Zhou Guojian narrowed his eyes and asked very seriously

Zhou Guojian was dissatisfied with Zhou Huaming. The seed of doubt was planted. 'Is it possible that Huaming is really turning against the family?'

Zhou Huaming shook his head and then said, "Dad, our usable connection now is Deputy County Magistrate Hong."

"Big Brother, so you do have another connection. Why did you say you've tried everything earlier then?" Zhou Huaying shouted again, "I knew you were lying!"

"Shut up!" Zhou Guojian shouted sharply.

If his second son continued to do this, his eldest son would eventually turn on them.

Zhou Huaying shut up after being reprimanded, but he was insistent that Zhou Huaming had sent Zhou Hongwei to jail.

Zhou Guojian only nodded and said, "It looks like this is the only way."

Deputy County Magistrate Hong Qing was the best connection they had. Zhou Guojian once helped Hong Qing when he was young. When Hong Qing took the post, he promised to help Zhou Guojian too.

...

A week later, Zhou Hongwei's criminal case was brought to court, and he was sentenced.

He was convicted of kidnapping, illegal restriction of personal freedom, and intimidation. The three crimes were equally serious, and he was sentenced to five years in prison. In addition, he had to pay mental damages and other losses to several parties. He had to pay 300,000 RMB for each, and in total, he had to pay more than a million RMB.

And this was after Hong Qing had pulled some strings. Zhou Hongwei was supposed to sit for seven years in prison, but he got it reduced to five years.

After hearing this result, the Zhou family was furious.

The women of the Zhou family cried like the sky was falling. The men were angry.

“Dad, didn’t you ask Deputy County Magistrate Hong to help? Why is Wei ‘Er still sentenced?” Zhou Huaying turned to question Zhou Guojian. He meant that his father had not done his best.

“Shut up!” Zhou Guojian’s face darkened. He always doted on his second son, but this time, he was furious. “Zhou Huaying, how can you talk to your father like that?”

Zhou Tanxiong stood up and told Zhou Huaying, “Second brother, you’ve misunderstood father. It was thanks to Deputy County Magistrate Hong that the sentence was lighter.”

Zhou Huaying knew he had gone too far. He complained, “Still, this Deputy County Magistrate Hong is quite useless. He only managed to reduce the sentence by two years.”

“Shut up!” Zhou Guojian shouted sharply, “What do you know?!”

He was getting more and more disappointed in his second son! His second son didn’t have any brains at all. He did things on impulse. He was now worried that he would drag Zhou Hongwei down especially since Zhou Hongwei had been in prison.

Zhou Huaming also looked down on this second brother more and more. His second brother never cared about anything... except the wealth of the Zhou Family. Of course, he wouldn’t dare comment about the main contributor to the Zhou Family lineage.

Zhou Huaming explained, “Second brother, Deputy County Magistrate Hong has tried his best. Chief Jiang Tao, who arrested Wei ‘Er, comes from deep background. Furthermore, we have to face Deputy County Magistrate Qian, who is good friends with the Gu Family. Deputy County Magistrate Hong has done everything he can. We shouldn’t blame him. If anything, we should thank him.” Then, he turned to his father. “Dad, what should we do now?”

“That’s right, Dad. Wei ‘Er is now in jail. What should we do?” Zhou Huaying asked impatiently and anxiously.

Zhou Guojian glanced at him and scolded, “You need to shut up first!”

Then, he looked at Zhou Huaming and Zhou Tanxiong and said, “The situation is tense now. When people forget about this, we’ll do something.”

The two brothers nodded and said, “Okay, Dad!”

Zhou Guojian's sharp eyes looked forward, and a hidden hatred flashed in his eyes. Then, he added, "But now, it's time for us to settle the scores with the culprit! This Xiao Lingyu is really too arrogant. To think she can bully the Zhou Family to this extent!"

If Xiao Lingyu were there, she would be speechless. She was just a country bumpkin in their eyes who had no power and influence. How could she bully the Zhou Family?

The Zhou family was really too shameless.

Zhou Huaming and Zhou Tanxiong agreed and said, "That's right. If we don't do something, she will trample all over us!"

They had both fallen for Xiao Lingyu's trap. It was their nephew who suffered. Previously, they had to suffer mutely because Xiao Lingyu was the key witness in Zhou Hongwei's case. However, now that Zhou Hongwei's case was settled, it was time for revenge.

...

Zheng Haiyang signed the new shop lease with Xiao Lingyu. Xiao Lingyu also gained a satisfactory design proposal from Li Yang.

"I like this a lot!" Xiao Lingyu scanned the blueprint. "I knew I was in good hands with Director Li. Director Li, just have your people follow this design!"

"Okay!" Li Yang smiled and said, "Then, Miss Xiao, when do you plan to open?"

Xiao Lingyu thought for a moment and said, "Director Li, I want to open on the 21st. Can you make it?"

Li Yang calculated for a moment and said, "Today is the 1st. There are still 20 days until the 21st. It should be okay."

Xiao Lingyu nodded. "Director Li, I don't have any requirements about the construction materials but one. You can't use toxic and chemical ingredients like formaldehyde or things that have strange smells. Is that okay?" She was going to sell vegetables and fruits. She couldn't abide by any pollution.

Li Yang smiled. "Of course. Serving our customers is our mission."

Xiao Lingyu smiled and left the renovation company.

On her way back home, a person rushed out with a shining dagger as she turned the corner.. He stabbed at her.

## **Chapter 166: Stab Her**

A low-key and luxurious black car drove through the main road of the small county.

"Hao 'Er, so this is Xing Yin County?" Old Master Gong asked curiously.

"Yes, Grandpa!" Gong Tianhao replied.

“Old master, this place isn’t bad, right?” Li Yuanhang said, “Although this county is a little remote from our capital, the transportation isn’t very developed, the standard of living here isn’t that high, the local government is an expert at preserving nature.”

Old Master Gong smiled. “That’s because most poor counties don’t have good transportation. Their industries aren’t developed. Therefore, they have good preservation of the natural environment!”

Nowadays, many developed cities, such as Beijing, were particularly polluted, often causing smog. The fundamental reason was industrialization. The cars and factories caused a lot of pollution. Beijing was infamous for its heavy smog. It caused respiratory infections.

Li Yuanhang said with a smile, “Old master, you’re right. This county is famous for its peaches, but they don’t have a good system to sell them out of the county. Taoyuan Village is especially famous for its peaches. Therefore, if this county is connected to a highway or a railway station, the people here will become rich.”

When Old Master Gong heard this, he thought about it with a frown. “Hao ‘Er, do you plan to invest here?” If Gong Tianhao did that, many other investors would do the same. Gong Tianhao laughed, “Grandpa, I’m indeed considering it!”

Li Yuanhang explained, “Old Master, we’re still investigating if this place is worth investing.” They were businessmen and not charity organizers. The specialty of this county was peaches. However, that was too little to justify investment for the Imperial Group. What were they supposed to do? Build a peach factory to sell peaches?

Old Master Gong nodded. “I didn’t know much about business, but you should be careful.” Then, he thought of something and asked, “I heard that the Jiang family’s kid is here too, right?”

Gong Tianhao nodded and said, “That’s right. Jiang Tao is training here as the chief of the county police station!”

“But shouldn’t he move after three years? Why is he still here?” Old Master Gong asked.

Gong Tianhao said, “The Jiang Family has prepared everything for his return. But he doesn’t seem to want to leave now.”

“Oh? Why?” Old Master Gong asked.

Li Yuanhang said, “Old master, you didn’t know this, but Young Master Jiang took a fancy to a girl here. He’s so happy that he doesn’t want to leave!”

“Oh?” Old Master Gong commented. “The old man from the Jiang Family kept complaining that the Jiang kid is like an iceberg. He only knows how to work. He doesn’t have any extra time to find a girlfriend.”

“Well, he sure is lucky now. Maybe when the kid returns, he’d bring back a great-grandson with him!”

“Haha...” Li Yuanhang laughed. “Old master, the girl is not that easily pursued. Young Master Jiang is still working hard.” Even though he had not seen Xiao Lingyu in person, from her parent’s personality and Jiang Tao’s description, they knew Xiao Lingyu wasn’t a person who valued family background.

They arrived at the county and settled at the Gu Family Hotel. When Li Yuanhang drove his car into the parking lot, he realized that there was no parking space. The huge parking lot was full, and many cars there were expensive. It was quite surprising to see so many good cars in such a small county.

“Damn, Tianhao, the parking lot here is full.” Li Yuanhang was really surprised. “Is the business of this hotel so good?”

Of course, it was possible that some big companies had booked the hotel for meetings.

“Tianhao, you should go and check-in with the old master. I’ll go find another parking space!” The hotel didn’t have a valet service. After all, they were in the countryside. Therefore, he had to find his own parking.

Gong Tianhao carefully helped Old Master Gong out of the car. “Grandpa, be careful!”

Old Master Gong got out of the car, and his sharp eyes looked around and said, “This place isn’t bad!” It was clean and comfortable.

“Grandpa, let’s go this way!” Gong Tianhao said.

When Gong Tianhao and Old Master Gong entered the lobby, they were surprised by the large crowds. They were queuing up.

Old Master Gong said, “This hotel has good business.”

Gong Tianhao walked to the front desk, took out an ID card, and said, “Room 8818!”

“Okay, please wait a moment!” The front desk attendant replied politely. He turned on his computer, checked, and said, “Sir, it’s ready. I wish you a pleasant stay!”

Gong Tianhao brought Old Master Gong to his room to rest. But when he passed the filled restaurant, Gong Tianhao frowned. ‘This hotel is full of people. Will this be bad for Grandpa’s rest?’ After they reached the room, he said, “Grandpa, how about we eat first? Then, after some rest, we’ll depart for Taoyuan Village!”

“Okay.” Old Master Gong was also very curious about Taoyuan Village.

Gong Tianhao called the front desk and ordered a few dishes. Most of them were vegetarian.

Old Master Gong’s blood pressure was high, and he needed to maintain his health. He couldn’t eat too much meat.

When Li Yuanhang arrived, the plates were empty... except for small bits of meat. He saw Gong Tianhao and Old Master Gong put down their chopsticks and wipe their mouths elegantly.

Li Yuanhang asked curiously, “Tianhao, are you that hungry?”

There were six empty plates on the table. Gong Tianhao and Old Master Gong were picky eaters. Normally, they would barely finish a plate of food. However, all six plates on the table were cleaned up!

Li Yuanhang had been with Gong Tianhao for a long already, but this was only his second time seeing Gong Tianhao exhibit such a good appetite. The first time was at Taoyuan Village.



Gong Tianhao said calmly, "Yes, I was very hungry!" Then, he tactfully suggested, "You should order the vegetarian dishes. They are good for your body."

At this time, Old Master Gong said with a smile, "Haha, Xiao Hang, you must be hungry too. Hurry up and order some food. As Tianhao said, you should eat more vegetables. I'm going out for a walk!" Old Master Gong felt refreshed once he had the vegetables. He decided to go for a walk!

Of course, Gong Tianhao had to accompany him.

The confused Li Yuanhang ordered the food in the room. He ordered two meat and one vegetarian dish. He loved to eat meat. When the food arrived, he was hit by the fragrance immediately.

"It smells so good!" Li Yuanhang couldn't help but exclaim in surprise. It seemed to be just an ordinary cole salad.

The waiter nodded. "Bon Appetit!" Then, he left with the dining cart.

After the waiter left, Li Yuanhang picked up a piece of cole with his chopsticks and put it into his mouth. Suddenly, his eyes lit up with disbelief.

"The taste of this vegetable..." Li Yuanhang looked at the two plates of meat and recalled what Gong Tianhao said. He was hit by regret.

He finally understood why Old Master Gong and Gong Tianhao managed to finish all six plates of dishes. If he had known earlier, he would have ordered all the vegetarian dishes. However, he didn't order more because he didn't want to waste food. In the end, there were a few pieces of meat left.

He burped and rubbed his stomach. "It seems like I need to go for a walk too!"

...

Old Master Gong was aged. He felt tired after walking around for a while. He wanted to return to rest. While Old Master Gong was resting, Gong Tianhao and Li Yuanhang walked around the town. They wanted to see if the place was worth investing in or not. They were always thinking about business. It was the reason why Imperial Group managed to grow so big.

When they passed by a remote road, they encountered two other people. There was a man in sunglasses and suit, and a beggar with dirty and messy clothes. At first, Li Yuanhang and Gong Tianhao didn't pay them much attention. However, they heard the man in the suit say as he took out a picture and showed it to the beggar. "This is Xiao Lingyu. Kill her, and we'll give you 100,000!"

The beggar was not stupid. He said, "No. I'm not going to die for money."

"Then injure her with this dagger." The man in the suit said. "Don't worry. The police won't arrest you because you have a mental history."

'Xiao Lingyu?'

Gong Tianhao and Li Yuanhang looked at each other.

**Chapter 167: The Hero and The Damsel**

When Xiao Lingyu turned the corner, a person suddenly rushed out with a dagger. He stabbed at her with a vicious force.

Her pupils contracted, and her mind went blank. She was caught by surprise. She didn't know what to think.

She had taken revenge on the Chen Family, but she hadn't given birth to Xiao Tong. She hadn't made amends to him. No, she couldn't just stand there!

Her instinct kicked in, and she lifted her legs. Before she could knee her assailant, there was a loud bang. It was the sound of a person falling to the ground. Then, there was a ding. That was the dagger hitting the floor.

The assailant was kicked to the ground. He curled up in pain, and he groaned. He struggled to stand up.

Gong Tianhao grew up in the army with his grandfather. From a young age, he followed the military leader and learned all sorts of combat techniques. So, while his kick was light, he aimed at the man's weak spot. It weakened the man instantly.

Xiao Lingyu finally came back to her senses. Her face was slightly pale. Her eyes flashed with fear. She turned to look at her assailant. It was a dirty beggar who was dressed in shabby clothes and had his hair clumped with mud. Xiao Lingyu couldn't see his face because he was facing the ground.

Then, she saw the dagger on the floor. To prevent the beggar from getting back the weapon, she picked it up from the ground. She then stepped away from the beggar.

This surprised Li Yuanhang and Gong Tianhao, who were watching. 'Wouldn't a normal person's reaction be running away? Why would she claim the dagger instead? This is surprising.'

After Xiao Lingyu snatched the dagger, she still didn't feel so safe. She ran to the beggar and kicked him in the belly to fully neutralize the threat.

The man screamed.

"Pfft!" Li Yuanhang couldn't help but laugh out loud. He poked Gong Tianhao beside him and asked with a smile, "This girl is really interesting. No wonder Young Master Jiang likes her."

Gong Tianhao's face had always been cold and emotionless. He didn't say anything. He narrowed his eyes slightly, and his mouth curved with an imperceptible angle.

Xiao Lingyu turned around when she heard the laughter. It was her saviors. When she saw their faces, she was really surprised.

"It's you!" Xiao Lingyu cried out in surprise. Her heart was filled with complicated emotions. She didn't expect to see these two. She recognized the bespectacled man. He was the one who rear-ended her tricycle. They even got into an argument.

She had never seen the other man before, but she remembered the perfect curve of his side profile. He was Xiao Tong's father. Xiao Lingyu was very sure! Xiao Tong looked 80 percent similar to this man.

The facial features looked cute on Xiao Tong, but when transferred to this adult man, they were sharp and handsome. It was as if they had been sculpted by a sculptor with perfect proportions. The most impressive was his pair of deep, dark eyes. They shone with a sharp light, mysterious and unfathomable, yet they had a fatal attraction.

However, for Xiao Lingyu, the thing that crossed her mind was not the expensive clothes or handsome looks. It was the first time she encountered Xiao Tong's father. She would not be mistaken. Xiao Lingyu's hands moved to her belly. She sighed. 'Xiao Tong, did you see that? Your dad saved us. He is a good person, I guess.'

No matter why they were there, it was true that they had saved her. Even though Xiao Lingyu might have survived on her own, her late reaction meant that she still might be hurt. Considering the fact that she was pregnant, she couldn't bear to imagine the consequences. Therefore, Xiao Lingyu was really grateful.

Then, she realized she was still stomping on the beggar. Her face turned red from embarrassment. She stopped and looked around. She saw an abandoned wire and rope under the wall. She picked them up and ran to tie up the beggar. Then, she clapped her hands and said, "Done. Time to call the police!"

Li Yuanhang and Gong Tianhao were amused.

After she called the police, Xiao Lingyu ran to Li Yuanhang and Gong Tianhao and said gratefully, "Thank you very much. If it weren't for you, I don't know what would have happened!"

Li Yuanhang said with a smile, "Xiao Lingyu, it looks like violence cements our relationship." They never thought the gentle and kind lady Young Master Jiang favored was also the unreasonable countrywoman who argued with them last time.

When she heard Li Yuanhang utter her name, she was wary. She knew she hadn't told them her name, so how did they know. "Who are you guys? How do you know that my name is Xiao Lingyu?"

The two men acted like they had known her for a long time, but Xiao Lingyu was sure this was only the second time they had met. However, they managed to call out her name. Therefore, she couldn't help but feel a little panic. She was afraid that the man had found out what happened and came to demand her to go for an abortion.

After all, these two obviously came from powerful backgrounds. Their family wouldn't allow the existence of a bastard child. They would be laughed at and criticized by others.

However, Xiao Lingyu was overthinking. Ever since Xiao Lingyu used his name to get the surveillance footage from the hotel, Gong Tianhao had been annoyed with her. He didn't think about investigating her. He didn't care about her. So how would he know she was pregnant?

Ever since she was pregnant, Xiao Lingyu became overly suspicious. Then again, perhaps this was her mother's instinct kicking in. Xiao Lingyu herself didn't notice it.

Li Yuanhang and Gong Tianhao also noticed the wariness on Xiao Lingyu's face. Her eyes that looked at Gong Tianhao moved from initial curiosity to extreme hostility. They were confused, but they did not think too much about it at this moment.

They would regret that in the future. If they had decided to investigate things this moment, then Gong Tianhao wouldn't miss out on so much bonding time with Xiao Tong, and Xiao Lingyu wouldn't have to suffer on her own. Then, again, regret was pointless.

If Gong Tianhao had known that he would fall in love with Xiao Lingyu, then he would have investigated Xiao Lingyu's identity immediately after they had sex.

However, fate was strange. It was invisible and fragile, it was like a thin thread that tied people together until they were inextricably entangled.

At that moment, Xiao Lingyu and Gong Tianhao couldn't see the fate between them.

Li Yuanhang saw how guarded Xiao Lingyu was, and he feared a misunderstanding. He explained, "Miss, we only know your name because of Young Master Jiang."

"Young Master Jiang?" Xiao Lingyu was still suspicious. She only knew one friend with the surname Jiang, Jiang Tao. 'These two are friends with Jiang Tao?'

Soon, Xiao Lingyu's guess was confirmed.

Li Yuanhang said, "Yes, Young Master Jiang is Jiang Tao, the police chief here."

Xiao Lingyu secretly heaved a sigh of relief... As long as it was not because of Xiao Tong.

Xiao Lingyu then remembered something and said with widened eyes. "Were you two the ones who came to Taoyuan Village and ate at my home claiming you were my friends?"

A hint of awkwardness flashed across Li Yuanhang's eyes. He smiled and said, "Hehe, that was also a misunderstanding. But Auntie's cooking is really delicious!" Li Yuanhang quickly changed the subject.

Xiao Lingyu nodded. "My mom is indeed the best cook in the village." In fact, her mother was so famous among the nearby villages that she would be invited to be the main chef during big events. After that, the host would give her a red packet. The generous ones would give a big packet.

Li Yuanhang secretly let out a sigh of relief. Thankfully, Xiao Lingyu stopped mentioning that embarrassment. Li Yuanhang added, "Auntie's cooking is not only best in the village, but also she is comparable to five-star chefs."

Xiao Lingyu smiled and said, "Sir, you are exaggerating!"

Li Yuanhang said, "Miss Xiao, my name is Li Yuanhang."

"Okay, Mr. Li!" Xiao Lingyu smiled and said.

"Ahem!" Gong Tianhao suddenly said.

Li Yuanhang realized he had forgotten Gong Tianhao.

He immediately introduced him to Xiao Lingyu, "This is my good friend, Gong Tianhao. He is a walking ice block and doesn't like to talk. Don't bother with him." Gong Tianhao's face turned cold from that introduction. Then, he greeted Xiao Lingyu, "Hello!"

Li Yuanhang, "..."

Xiao Lingyu, "..."

When Xiao Lingyu heard Gong Tianhao's voice, her heart couldn't help but tremble. She was suddenly very nervous.

Xiao Lingyu stuttered and greeted him, "Hello... Hello!"

Li Yuanhang, "... 'Why is she stuttering? Her tongue was so sharp last time. She was even courageous enough to sneak a peek at Tianhao. Wait a minute...' Li Yuanhang suddenly had a very frightening thought. 'Xiao Lingyu is not in love with Tianhao, is he? What should I do? Young Master Jiang fancies Xiao Lingyu!'

He then remembered the many times Gong Tianhao had helped out this woman even though they were against his normal habits of meddling into other people's business.

'Tianhao likes this woman too?'

Li Yuanhang's entire body shuddered and trembled. Li Yuanhang suddenly didn't know what to do about this love triangle.

He sneaked a glance at Gong Tianhao, meaning to ask him, 'What to do?'

He really didn't want the two good friends to turn against each other.

Gong Tianhao, "..."

'Why is Yuanhang looking at me like that? This is baffling.'

Xiao Lingyu was panicked due to her stammering. She was afraid that the men would have a misunderstanding. She mustn't allow that to happen.

She calmed herself down and then asked very seriously, "Mr. Li, Mr. Gong, why are you here?"

When she asked this question, although she tried her best to remain calm, her tone could not help but reveal a trace of panic.

Gong Tianhao frowned slightly.

Li Yuanhang asked doubtfully, "Miss Xiao, did you have a huge grudge with someone?"

Xiao Lingyu frowned slightly and asked in confusion, "Mr. Li, what do you mean?"

Li Yuanhang explained, "Well, Tianhao and I were walking around town when we ran into a conspiracy against you. A man in a suit held a photo and said to this beggar, 'Kill Xiao Lingyu'. This beggar was smart. He knew he'd hang if he murdered you. The man thus asked the beggar to injure you instead. The beggar would get paid 100,000 RMB once he did that." Li Yuanhang asked in confusion, "Who have you offended that they wanted to kill you?"

"Huh?" Xiao Lingyu was also surprised when she heard that someone wanted her life.

Li Yuanhang took out his phone and opened one of the photos. "Look, it's this man!"

Li Yuanhang took this picture earlier. After all, this involved the woman Young Master Jiang favored, so he had to do something.

Xiao Lingyu saw the man in a suit and sunglasses in the photo and said in confusion, "I don't know this man!"

"That's strange!" Li Yuanhang frowned.

"Then let Jiang Tao investigate!" Gong Tianhao suddenly said.

Li Yuanhang was slightly stunned and then said with a smile, "That's right, we'll let Young Master Jiang handle this! It's fine you don't know this man. Young Master Jiang can make this beggar talk.." The Jiang family was best at interrogating prisoners.

### **Chapter 168: Don't Want Father**

When Jiang Tao arrived at the crime scene, he was shocked to see the other two people present.

"Tianhao, Yuanhang, why are you here?" Jiang Tao asked in surprise. When he saw the beggar lying on the ground, he asked, "Were you the ones who saved Lingyu?"

Li Yuanhang said, "Young Master Jiang, Tianhao saved Miss Xiao."

Strictly speaking, it was the two of them who saved Xiao Lingyu, but the one who really did it was Gong Tianhao.

Li Yuanhang wasn't as strong as Gong Tianhao.

"Thank you so much, Tianhao!" Jiang Tao said gratefully, "If it weren't for you, I don't know what would have happened to Lingyu."

Gong Tianhao frowned. He seemed to be displeased. He said plainly, "Since you're handling this, we'll leave."

Jiang Tao, "..."

Li Yuanhang, "..."

'What is going on with Gong Tianhao? His reaction feels weird.' Then, Li Yuanhang thought of something, and his expression was consumed by shock. His eyes were wide open, but he quickly recovered.

Gong Tianhao noticed his expression and asked in puzzlement, "What's wrong with you?"

Li Yuanhang immediately shook his head and said, "Nothing. I'm just worried about the old master." Li Yuanhang found an excuse. He couldn't tell Gong Tianhao that he believed Gong Tianhao and Jiang Tao had fallen for the same woman.

Li Yuanhang felt something was not right.

Li Yuanhang spent most of his time with Gong Tianhao, so he knew everyone Gong Tianhao knew. However, Gong Tianhao seemed to know Xiao Lingyu, someone Li Yuanhang didn't know. If he didn't know her, why helped her cover up her superhuman speed the first time they met; why would Gong Tianhao apologize to her the second time they met; and this third time, he directly saved her from danger.

Ever since they arrived at Xing Yin County, Gong Tianhao had broken his usual habits many times for Xiao Lingyu, and Li Yuanhang still couldn't understand why. Xiao Lingyu was a normal country girl. Gong Tianhao stayed in the capital and went overseas for business, and he rarely ventured to other counties. The only exception was when he came to investigate Xing Yin County, and Xiao Lingyu came from Xing Yin County. After some time, Li Yuanhang sighed, "Fate is a strange thing!"

These two shouldn't have interacted in their lives, but they kept meeting each other.

Jiang Tao was still close when Li Yuanhang mentioned the old master. When he heard that, he became serious. "You two are not real friends. How can you not tell me that Grandpa Gong is here? If this didn't happen, I would never have found out."

Li Yuanhang coughed, "Young Master Jiang, we had just arrived. Plus, you're too busy with work. The old master doesn't want to trouble you."

Jiang Tao said suspiciously, "Oh? Where is the old master now? As his junior, I need to visit him."

"He's at the Gu Family Hotel!" Li Yuanhang said. Then, he glared at Gong Tianhao. He didn't know why Gong Tianhao hadn't said anything and pushed his secretary out as sacrifice instead. Didn't he know Young Master Jiang could be very scary when he was angry?

Jiang Tao didn't say anything else.

He walked towards Xiao Lingyu, who was being questioned by the police officer.

Jiang Tao asked, "Lingyu, what's going on? Why would someone want to kill you? Do you know this person?" Jiang Tao pointed at the handcuffed beggar.

Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said, "I don't know him. I haven't even seen him before. But..." At this point, she paused, pointed at Li Yuanhang, and continued, "Mr. Li and Mr. Gong heard that someone instructed him to assassinate me."

"That is serious!" Jiang Tao said, "Tell me, who instructed you to kill Xiao Lingyu?" The beggar didn't seem to understand human language. He opened his mouth and said, "Ah, ah..."

Li Yuanhang came over and said, "Young Master Jiang, we have a photo and recording. They should help you with the case!"

He took out his phone and showed it to Jiang Tao. Then, he fiddled with it a few times and heard the notification sound of Jiang Tao's phone ringing.

Jiang Tao said to Xiao Lingyu, "Lingyu, don't worry. We'll investigate this properly and provide you with an explanation!"

"Thank you, Chief Jiang!" Xiao Lingyu said gratefully. However, her tone seemed a little distant.

Jiang Tao opened his mouth, wanting to explain, "Lingyu, I..."

Xiao Lingyu immediately interrupted him and said in a very understanding manner, "Chief Jiang, you don't have to explain. I understand. I don't blame you!"

Jiang Tao, "... " She still misunderstands me.

Sensing the coldness between the two, Li Yuanhang raised his eyebrows in surprise. He was confused.

'How come they look estranged from each other? Did Jiang Tao fail to pursue Xiao Lingyu? Does this mean Tianhao has a chance?'

If Gong Tianhao knew what Li Yuanhang was thinking, he would probably be furious. 'When did I say I like this woman?'

Jiang Tao wanted to explain himself, but he looked around. 'I'll explain myself next time. There are too many people here.' He said, "Lingyu, I'll bring the man back to the station. If you have time, shall we have dinner tonight?"

Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said, "Sorry, Chief Jiang, I have to rush home this afternoon. How about a raincheck? I'll treat you next time." She was still reeling from fear. She didn't have the mood to eat.

"Okay!" Jiang Tao was embarrassed that he didn't consider the impact the near-death incident had on Xiao Lingyu. 'How can I be so inconsiderate?'

Li Yuanhang was flummoxed when he saw this. 'No wonder Young Master Jiang failed to get the girl.'

Pursuing a woman required more than just a few words. It required action. Furthermore, based on what he observed, there was some existing misunderstanding between the two. Young Master Jiang should buy her a gift like flowers or gems. But Young Master Jiang...

Li Yuanhang couldn't bear to look straight at him as he rubbed his forehead. Of course, Li Yuanhang didn't give Jiang Tao any pointers.

It had to be said that Li Yuanhang was instrumental in matching Gong Tianhao and Xiao Lingyu. Granted, it started as a mistake, but in the end, it was a happy ending. It was also why Jiang Tao fought Li Yuanhang for three days and three nights. Of course, Li Yuanhang was the one getting beaten up.

"Mr. Li, Mr. Gong, I don't know how to repay you for saving my life. If you don't mind, come to my home for dinner when you arrive at the Taoyuan Village." Xiao Lingyu told them.

"That's great," Li Yuanhang answered without any courtesy. "Miss Xiao, honestly, we miss Auntie's cooking too much."

Xiao Lingyu smiled. "Mr. Li, you're too polite. You saved my life. I don't know how to repay you. I hope a meal is enough." Then, Xiao Lingyu paused. "Mr. Li, can I trouble you to keep this secret from my family?"

After all, this was a serious issue. If her parents found out, they wouldn't let her come to the county town alone anymore. She also didn't want them to be overly worried.



“Of course!” Li Yuanhang agreed and then reminded, “However, before this case is solved, you shouldn’t come to the county town alone!”

They were told Xing Yin County had a low crime rate, but they had just witnessed an attempted murder.

Li Yuanhang found the whole incident strange. He was confused by the IQ of the culprit. Murder was a serious issue. Yet, they dared to order an assassination in broad daylight. It was unbelievable. If anyone passed by, they would call the police. The beggar was 100 percent going to be caught.

Li Yuanhang was also impressed by Xiao Lingyu’s good luck. They were passing by and heard the assassination plot. They would have walked on and only called the police if it was someone else, but when they heard Xiao Lingyu’s name, they knew they had to do something.

Hence, they secretly followed behind the beggar.

It was unknown whether the beggar was really mentally ill or fake. The man was about to injure someone, but he didn’t seem to have any precautions. He didn’t even notice the two men following him. The beggar reached the corner and then hid there.

Li Yuanhang and Gong Tianhao hid at the other corner to observe the beggar. If the beggar had looked around then, he would have spotted the two men. However, the beggar only looked ahead.

It was then that Li Yuanhang confirmed the beggar was indeed mentally challenged. However, the culprit was probably mentally challenged too. Did he think having a madman murder someone would void them of the responsibility? Did he think the madman would not betray him?

He was too naive.

It was why Li Yuanhang told Xiao Lingyu to be careful. It was because the mastermind hadn’t been caught yet.

With Young Master Jiang at the helm, he would solve the case in no time, even if the beggar was mentally challenged.

Xiao Lingyu understood Li Yuanhang’s kind intention. She nodded and said, “Yes, I understand.”

Xiao Lingyu had a feeling she knew who the mastermind was. She believed she should stay away from the county town in the recent future.

She was three months pregnant. Xiao Tong couldn’t be scared that often.

As for the supply for the Gu Family Hotel, Xiao Lingyu decided to deliver them every three days. Since the vegetables could be kept fresh for ten days, it shouldn’t be a problem.

When the vegetables could be harvested, she would ask the people at the hotel to come directly to her house.

With that in mind, Xiao Lingyu asked, “Mr. Li, you will go back to the Gu family hotel after this, right?”

Li Yuanhang nodded and said, “Yes, that’s right!”

“Then can I trouble you to tell Wang Zhimin, the purchasing manager of their hotel, to come to my place later?” Xiao Lingyu said.

“It’s a small matter. Of course, there’s no problem.” Li Yuanhang nodded.

...

When Xiao Lingyu returned to the rental, she collapsed on the bed weakly. Other than the assassination, another incident that drained her was meeting Xiao Tong’s father. She guessed that Xiao Tong looked like his father.

Now that she had seen him, it was confirmed.

She began to worry again.

She did not expect things to be so coincidental. Xiao Tong’s great-grandfather would live in Taoyuan Village. When the elder saw Xiao Tong, he would be suspicious. Then, the rest would be easy to investigate. Xiao Lingyu and Gong Tianhao were both at City Z during the time of conception.

Plus, there was something called paternity testing!

What if they wanted the child back after he was born? What if they refused to let her take care of Xiao Tong? Was Xiao Tong going to have the same fate as his previous life?

No, she wasn’t going to allow that! She swore that she would treat Xiao Tong well and let him grow up happily and healthily if she was given a second chance.

A moment later, Xiao Lingyu made up her mind. She touched her stomach and said, “Xiao Tong, you won’t hate me, right? Mommy didn’t mean to stop you from being with your father. It’s just that Mommy can’t tell how your father will react. I can’t take this risk. So, I need to stay away from him.”

Xiao Lingyu didn’t know if that man was from City Z, but she could tell from his extraordinary temperament that he came from a wealthy family.

She had never heard of this man in City Z either.

‘Gong Tianhao? Wait, I think I’ve heard of that name before. Where is it...’

Xiao Lingyu calmed down and thought for a while. Suddenly, her eyes widened in disbelief.

She immediately jumped off the bed and said, “No, I need to look into this. Please don’t let it be that person.. It has to be a coincidence that they have the same name.”

## **Chapter 169: I’m Not Gay**

When Xiao Lingyu came out of the internet cafe, her face was pale. When she learned the result, she almost ran out of the internet cafe. Her steps were dragging.

A little girl pointed at Xiao Lingyu and asked her mother, “Mom, what’s wrong with the sister across the street? Is she sick? Should we send her to the hospital?”

Her mother replied with a smile, "The sister is already an adult. If she's sick, she will know to go to the hospital on her own."

"Okay." The little girl nodded.

"Let's go, baby. Let's go. Daddy is waiting for us at home."

"Okay, let's go, Mommy. Let's go home quickly!"

Xiao Lingyu came back to her senses after the mother and daughter left, and she heard the cellphone in her bag ringing.

She answered the call in a daze. A concerned voice immediately came from the other side and asked, "Miss Xiao, this is Wang Zhimin. Are you alright? I've already made a few calls, but you didn't pick up. I thought something happened to you."

Xiao Lingyu shook her head and said, "Oh, I'm fine." Then, she remembered she did ask Wang Zhimin to come to her place. Her mind immediately snapped back to reality.

She said, "Manager Wang, are you still at my place?"

Wang Zhimin said somewhat helplessly, "Yes."

"I'm sorry. I had an urgent matter, and I forgot to inform you." Xiao Lingyu immediately apologized, "Please wait a moment. I'll be back soon."

...

After returning to the hotel, Li Yuanhang and Gong Tianhao returned to their own rooms.

However, Li Yuanhang kept staring at Gong Tianhao with a strange expression.

Gong Tianhao said impatiently, "Alright, just say what's your mind. You've been staring strangely at me all the way back. Do you love me or something?"

Li Yuanhang almost choked on his saliva. He took a few breaths and said loudly, "Tianhao, I am not gay!"

Gong Tianhao rolled his eyes.

Li Yuanhang patted his chest. Then, he looked at Gong Tianhao suspiciously and asked, "Tianhao, do you really not know Xiao Lingyu?"

Gong Tianhao frowned and said, "No!" He was just a little confused.

"But didn't you notice that you treat Xiao Lingyu differently?" Li Yuanhang pointed out. "You never meddle in other people's business, but you have meddled in her business many times already! This is not normal." Of course, Li Yuanhang phrased this in a teasing manner.

Gong Tianhao's deep and dark eyes narrowed, but he remained silent.

Li Yuanhang was shocked when he saw Gong Tianhao's expression. He widened his eyes in disbelief and asked, "Tianhao, don't tell me that you have really fallen in love with Xiao Lingyu at first sight?" Then, Li Yuanhang shook his head. "Tianhao, this can't be. Xiao Lingyu is just a simple countrywoman. How can

she attract Young Master Gong and Young Master Jiang at the same time? I don't see how she is that charming."

Gong Tianhao glanced at him and said unhappily, "How come I didn't realize my secretary is so dumb? What you say is impossible. Plus, Tao Zi likes her. I will not fight my brother for a woman. Besides, I don't even like her."

In the future, Gong Tianhao would eat his words. He dug such a big hole for his good brother that Jiang Tao couldn't climb out of it.

Li Yuanhang didn't believe Gong Tianhao, but he didn't say anything. Relationships couldn't be forced.

After the old master was well-rested, they continued their drive to Taoyuan Village.

It took about half an hour to drive from Xing Yin County to Xing An Town. The road from Xing An Town to Taoyuan Village had been repaired. The previously bumpy road would have taken more than an hour to traverse, but now it only took less than half an hour.

Old Master Gong got tired as they reached Xing An Town. But when they got close to Taoyuan Village, and he saw the peach trees, he was energized. "No wonder this place is called Taoyuan Village. There are peach trees everywhere."

"It's a pity because, in the past, most of the peaches would be left rotting on the ground due to bad roads." Li Yuanhang lamented.

"But this road is new." Old Master Gong looked out. "Hao 'Er, did you have someone fix this?"

"Yes, Grandpa!" Gong Tianhao nodded. "The roads were too awful before."

Since Old Master Gong would stay at Taoyuan Village, even if they didn't come often, having a good road was more convenient. Plus, they needed to transport things over. Fixing the road didn't cost much. It was convenient for Old Master Gong and would help the people of Taoyuan Village.

"This place has beautiful mountains and rivers, and the scenery is pleasant. It's indeed a good place!" Old Master Gong was very satisfied. "Hao 'Er, Yuanhang, you guys are really thoughtful."

Taoyuan Village was a remote mountain village in China, thousands of miles away from the capital. Gong Tianhao and Li Yuanhang must have done plenty of research to find this place.

Li Yuanhang said with a smile, "Grandfather, this is all thanks to my subordinates. We have people who like to travel. They will visit places around the country. One group likes to visit mountain villages. They like nature. And they told me about this place."

Old Master Gong nodded. "Yes, these mountain villages are the most primitive tourist attractions."

"I asked in the company chatgroup for good, quiet spots with scenery, and they recommended me a few places. We investigated most of them and determined this village is the best!" Li Yuanhang explained.

In reality, there were many reasons why they picked Taoyuan Village.

First, Taoyuan Village did have good natural scenes.

Second, Young Master Jiang was here. He could look after Old Master Gong. When Gong Tianhao wasn't around, Jiang Tao could deal with everything.

Third, there was a very good cook, Auntie Chen, living in Taoyuan Village.

As Old Master Gong got older, he became a pickier eater. Gong Tianhao inherited this bad habit from his grandfather. However, Gong Tianhao finished the dishes cooked by Auntie Chen. In that case, it was highly likely that Old Master Gong would like her cooking too.

Old Master Gong repeated, "You two kids are really thoughtful!"

Perhaps it was the good scenery or the good air or the good food ahead, Old Master Gong was in a good mood.

When they arrived at Taoyuan Village, it was already five or six o'clock in the afternoon.

It was April, and it was still early. The sky was bright. They took Old Master Gong to his new house.

Old Master Gong liked the place very much.

It was just an ordinary green brick and glazed tile house. The house wasn't big. There were three side rooms, a living room, a kitchen, and a woodshed. Then, there was this big courtyard. There were a few big parasol trees and a few apricot trees.

There was also a pavilion in the courtyard to rest and relax. There were also some precious flowers and plants in the surroundings. There was a small pond with a few goldfish. The courtyard mirrored a panorama from the imperial garden.

Old Master Gong was very satisfied. "Thank you for this."

Gong Tianhao said, "Grandpa, as long as you like it, it's worth it." Then, he paused for a moment and said in a very serious and pleading tone, "Grandpa, from now on, you can rest in peace and recuperate. Don't trouble yourself with anything else, okay?"

Old Master Gong sighed lightly and made his stance clear, "Hao 'Er, I will keep to my promise. I've handed everything over to you, so I won't bother with things back home anymore. I'll stay here to cooperate. I'll live to a hundred years old and see your grandchild run around."

"Haha, okay, Grandpa!" Gong Tianhao's lips curled into a smile.

Their arrivals naturally attracted the villagers' attention and curiosity.

They knew that two young men built a house in the village for their grandfather to live in. When the house was built, many people came to take a look. They all sighed, "The house is really beautiful, and the courtyard is huge. One look, and you can tell that they are rich." But at the same time, they also said in puzzlement, "The rich are strange. It's nice living in the big city. Why would they move to this poor village?"

As locals, they knew the inconvenience of living in the poor countryside. Of course, some villagers suspected that the young men were going to abandon the old man here so he wouldn't interrupt them in the capital. It was how the Tv dramas portray such things.

However, when the black cars drove into the village and stopped at the big house, they saw the young men help the old man with respect. It was clear that they cared about the old master.

Many people stood at the door and took a look inside. They were still a little stunned. The courtyard was too captivating.

After Gong Tianhao showed the old man around the new house, he asked, "Grandpa, do you need to make any changes?"

The old man waved his hand and said, "No need. Everything is fine. Grandfather is very satisfied."

"It's time to eat! It's time to eat!"

At this moment, a child's voice sounded.

### **Chapter 170: Xiao Lingyu's Loss of Composure**

"It's time to eat! It's time to eat!" Xiao Xiaohui's voice came from outside the courtyard. Then, he squeezed through the crowd and ran into the courtyard. "Uncle Li, Uncle Gong, it's time to eat!"

Someone saw Xiao Xiaohui and immediately shouted, "Little Loach, this is someone else's home. How can you just casually enter?"

Xiao Xiaohui raised his head proudly and said, "I'm here to get them." He knew these people were going to his second uncle's house for dinner that night.

"Who is them?" Someone asked curiously.

"Those uncles! I'm getting them to come over for dinner!" Xiao Xiaohui pointed in the direction of Gong Tianhao and the others.

"You're inviting them for dinner?" Someone whispered, "You're really bold!"

Gong Tianhao's people were all in black suits and sunglasses. They looked very fierce. They were not people to be trifled with.

The adults looked at them with fear. Xiao Xiaohui was really bold. He did not show any fear.

Xiao Xiaohui said, "How am I bold? My second aunt told me to come to call them to go for dinner!"

"Ah?" The others were puzzled. "Your second aunt prepared so much food? That is a very big bunch!"

Xiao Xiaohui said, "Yeah. I'm not going to talk to you guys anymore. I'll get in now!" With that, he ran away.

"Little Loach is getting bolder and bolder. We're all scared of those people, but he ran over like it is nothing!"

"Little Loach is bolder than most." Someone said, "Xiao Baotou's children and grandchildren are all very impressive!" His tone was envious. Xiao Baotou was Xiao Zhengyang's father and Xiao Lingyu's grandfather.

“That’s right. There’s no hurt when there’s no comparison!” Someone said with a smile, “Xiao Baotou’s eldest brother, Xiao Jingyang, and his family are doing business in the big city. Their lives are quite good. Xiao Baotou and his wife have a good life, living with their eldest son. Their second son, Xiao Zhengyang, has a pair of promising children. Their third son, Xiao Leyang, works in the big city. He is planning to buy a house soon. Their fourth son, Xiao Mingyang, is a master builder and earns quite a lot in a year.” There was a hint of envy in the voice.

“How can the whole family be so prosperous?”

Xiao Xiaohui jumped over and ignored the fierce man in black. He shouted from afar, “Uncle Li, Uncle Gong, the food is ready. My second aunt asked me to come over and invite you!” To be honest, Xiao Xiaohui did this on his own. He wanted to come to watch the big crowd.

Old Master Gong’s face was full of curiosity when he saw the boy run over. He immediately asked with great interest, “Hao ‘Er, who is this little guy?”

Gong Tianhao introduced, “Grandpa, this kid is Auntie Chen’s nephew!”

Old Master Gong looked at Xiao Xiaohui with a smile and asked curiously, “Little Guy, aren’t you afraid of them?” Old Master Gong pointed at the men in black suits.

Xiao Xiaohui frowned and asked curiously, “Grandpa, are they bad people?”

“...” Old Master Gong said, “Of course not!” But they were soldiers. Soldiers had a fierce and murderous aura that was trained on the battlefield. They would scare normal people easily.

“Well, since they aren’t bad people, why should I be afraid of them?” Xiao Xiaohui replied matter-of-factly. After saying this, he paused for a moment and thought for a while, “Those uncles are obviously here to protect you, Grandpa. If they are bad people, it means that Grandpa is a bad person. If Grandpa is a bad person, then my second aunt and eldest cousin definitely won’t invite you for dinner. Besides,” Xiao Xiaohui looked at Gong Tianhao and Li Yuanhang and continued, “Uncle Gong and Uncle Li built a new road for Taoyuan Village, so they must be good people. Since they are good people, then Grandpa, you are also good people. Since you are good people, then the uncles in black are good people too. Then, why should I be afraid of them?”

Everyone, “...” Is the boy playing a tongue-twister?

“What a clever little fellow.” Grandfather Gong was stunned for a moment before laughing out loud.

“Haha, this child is very smart. I like him!”

Xiao Xiaohui’s face turned red hearing the praise. He rubbed the back of his head in embarrassment and said, “Grandfather, I’m very dumb. I can’t study well. My parents call me dumb every day. I’m not as smart as my cousins!”

Old Master Gong patted the boy’s little head. He smiled and said, “No, little guy, you’re very smart. Tell Grandpa, what is your name?”

“My name is Xiao Xiaohui!” Xiao Xiaohui replied. “But everyone calls me Little Loach.”

“Little Loach!” Elder Gong smiled and said, “What an interesting name! Why do people call you that?”

Xiao Xiaohui was a little embarrassed.

His eyes drifted as he said, "Everyone says that I'm like a loach, very slippery."

"Haha. You are very honest!" Old Master Gong praised with a smile. "You're a very good child."

Xiao Xiaohui rubbed his head in embarrassment again and said with a smile, "Hehe, our teacher taught us to be honest." Then, he remembered something. "Grandpa, uncles, second aunt has prepared the meal. We should go eat."

"Okay." Old Master Gong nodded and replied, "Let's move!"

The first sentence was meant for Xiao Xiaohui, and the last was for the others.

As they prepared to leave, Xiao Zhengyang, Xiao Lingyu, Jiang Tao, and village chief Xiao Taiyang rushed over.

When Xiao Xiaohui saw Xiao Zhengyang and Xiao Lingyu, he called out happily, "Second uncle, eldest cousin!"

"Grandpa Gong!" Once Jiang Tao entered, he greeted him respectfully.

"Little Peach!" Grandfather Gong was also very happy when he saw Jiang Tao.

Little Peach?

When Xiao Lingyu heard this, she gave him a strange look.

She didn't expect a cold and stern person like Jiang Tao to have such a cute nickname.

Xiao Lingyu held back her laughter.

Jiang Tao's ears turned slightly red when he heard that.

The nickname Little Peach was given to him by his parents after he was born. Even after he grew up, the elders still called him Little Peach.

"Why didn't you inform me that you're coming. If I didn't run into Tianhao and Yuanhang earlier, I still wouldn't have known!" Jiang Tao said. Then, he glanced at Tianhao and Yuanhang with displeasure.

"You're too busy." Old Master Gong said, "So I told them not to inform you."

Jiang Tao smiled and said, "Grandpa, I always have time for you!"

"Little Peach, you're always so considerate!" Old Master Gong nodded. "It's been so long since we met. Little Peach is so much older now."

Jiang Tao, "... I'm 30 years old, of course, I'm older.

Old Master Gong quickly noticed Xiao Zhengyang and Xiao Lingyu. He was a little puzzled and asked, "You are..."



Jiang Tao introduced, "Grandfather Gong, this is Taoyuan Village's chief, Xiao Taiyang. This is Xiao Lingyu, a friend of mine. The person beside him is her father, Xiao Zhengyang. They are all villagers here."

Old Master Gong didn't think much of this. He thought Jiang Tao was introducing him to these people so that they could look after him in the future. He was grateful for Jiang Tao's good intentions.

Old Master Gong looked at them with a smile and greeted them first, "Hello!"

Xiao Zhengyang was excited, but at the same time, he introduced himself in a reserved manner, "Hello, Sir. I'm Xiao Zhengyang, a villager here. This is my daughter, Xiao Lingyu. We look forward to learning from you."

Compared to the other villagers, Xiao Zhengyang was more cultured. One, he had been to other counties. Two, he had been to Southern Capital when he sent Xiao Lingyu to university. Back then, Xiao Lingyu was admitted to the Southern Capital University.

Southern Capital was a big city, and the Southern Capital University was ranked tenth among the top universities in the country.

Xiao Zhengyang was always courageous, but when he faced Old Master Gong, he couldn't help but be respectful.

Old Master Gong said happily, "Mr. Xiao, I'll have to trouble you to look after me in the future."

"Sir, we wouldn't dare!" Xiao Zhengyang shook his head.

Then, Old Master Gong looked at Xiao Lingyu and asked with a smile, "Mr. Xiao, your daughter is really beautiful. Have you found an in-law?"

When Jiang Tao heard that, his heart tightened. He went over to whisper to Old Master Gong, "Grandpa, Lingyu has returned from City Z recently. She just broke up with her boyfriend." He was telling Old Master Gong not to dig into her wounds.

Seeing the anxiety on Jiang Tao's face, Old Master Gong was confused. But he was a good people reader. He studied Xiao Lingyu and nodded with a smile. "Okay then." Old Master Gong didn't say anything else but, "Mr. Xiao has the good luck to have such a beautiful daughter."

"Sir, you are too kind." Xiao Zhengyang was very polite. Then, he looked at Xiao Lingyu and said, "Yu 'Er, you should greet your elders."

Xiao Zhengyang nudged Xiao Lingyu, who was in a daze. He was a little confused. 'Why is Yu 'Er in such a state?'

Xiao Lingyu reacted. She tried to calm herself down as much as possible. She tried to smile, but she couldn't. In the end, her expression was convoluted. "Hello, great... Sir!" She almost called him great-grandfather.

She couldn't help studying the old man when she knew he was Xiao Tong's great-grandpa. Her heart shivered with panic and fear. She couldn't control her feelings, especially after she found out Xiao Tong's biological father was 'that person'.

Xiao Lingyu wanted to keep a distance from their whole family.

Jiang Tao and Li Yuanhang assumed Xiao Lingyu was nervous in Old Master Gong's presence when they heard her stutter.

Jiang Tao said, "Lingyu, don't be nervous. Grandpa Gong is a very nice person."

Li Yuanhang also nodded and said, "Miss Xiao, the old master won't eat people, so don't be nervous."

Only Gong Tianhao had a strange feeling in his heart. He had a feeling that Xiao Lingyu was not afraid of his grandfather per se, but she didn't want to get too close to him. But why?

Li Yuanhang smiled and said, "Miss Xiao, you have such a glib tongue. I can't believe I'd hear you stutter."

"Oh, Yuanhang, are you very familiar with Miss Xiao?" Grandfather Gong asked curiously.

Li Yuanhang nodded and said, "Old Master, we've met two or three times before."

"This is interesting!" Old Master Gong said in surprise, "So all of you know Miss Xiao one way or another." Based on his understanding of his juniors, they wouldn't befriend ordinary people. So there had to be something special about Xiao Lingyu to gain the approval of Li Yuanhang and Jiang Tao.

"Grandpa, uncles, can we go back and eat first?" At this moment, Xiao Xiaohui couldn't help but rub his belly and asked with a frown. The child was naive and spoke what was on his mind. Xiao Xiaohui was growing. He could eat a lot, but he'd go hungry easily.

He was hungry, and he couldn't bear to listen to these adults rambling on. He didn't understand them anyway.

However, there was a rule in his house. If they had a guest, they were not allowed to eat before the guests took their seats. So if the adults kept standing there, he wouldn't get to eat!

Xiao Zhengyang immediately remembered. He said seriously, "Sir, my family has prepared a meal. Please come and have dinner with us!" The villagers were simple people. They were direct.

Old Master Gong was very polite, "But Mr. Xiao..."

"Sir, please call me Zhengyang." Xiao Zhengyang said.

"Okay, Zhengyang. Will it be too much trouble for you?" Old Master Gong was still very polite.

Xiao Zhengyang smiled and said, "Sir, you're too polite. Mr. Gong and Mr. Li spent so much money to build roads for our village. It's my family's honor to invite you over for a meal!"

At this moment, Li Yuanhang said, "Old Master, Auntie Chen we mentioned is Miss Xiao's mom. She is a very good cook."

In the county town, Xiao Lingyu had already invited them to come to her place for dinner.

Old Master Gong smiled, "Then, I will have to impose on you."

After that, the group went to Xiao Lingyu's house for a meal.... including the men in black.

