

Trapped In Paradise

Volume 3 Chapter 37 / Chapter 542: Gathering Together

"Cut it out! Let go!"

Lily, who was usually as cold and aloof as an iceberg, was in an unusually disheveled state. She darted around the cramped dorm room, but Yan Xinya quickly caught up, tackling her against the wall and pinning both of her hands.

"Let me go!"

Lily struggled with all her strength, but Yan Xinya was far stronger than she was and subdued her with ease.

"Ning Chu! Hurry, hurry!"

Grinning mischievously, Ning Chu reached out with her "evil" little hand and gently pinched the flesh around Lily's waist.

"There's so much fat on your waist!"

"And on your tummy too!"

"It's so soft! How much weight have you gained?"

Lily's face flushed bright red as she glared at Ning Chu. But a succubus's intimidating aura had always been rather weak; her defiant expression was more like that of a stubborn little kitten refusing to admit defeat, making people want to tease her even more.

Seeing that look, Ning Chu finally understood why Wen Yang always got even more excited whenever she tried to act tough.

"You've gained at least thirty pounds, right?"

The outrageous guess instantly shattered Lily's composure.

"Only seven pounds!"

"You really can't tell," Yan Xinya said enthusiastically. "Want to sign up for my personal training? It's great for losing weight!"

"That's probably because her long dress covers everything."

After fooling around for a while, the two finally let Lily go. The icy succubus goddess had been thoroughly messed up—her clothes were rumpled, her hair was disheveled, and one strap of her long dress had slipped off her shoulder, making her look as though she'd just been ravished.

Pouting with a stern face, she quietly straightened her clothes and fixed her hair. Before long, she had regained her usual cool, ice-queen demeanor.

Ning Chu asked in confusion, "How did you manage to gain so much weight?"

After all, Lily was a magical girl. Normally...

Well, most physical chores could be handled with magic, so maybe gaining weight wasn't that surprising.

But wasn't there some kind of slimming or weight-loss spell?!

"I know!" Yan Xinya chimed in. "When she was studying for the graduate school entrance exams, she was super stressed and kept eating sweets. I was still living in the dorm with her back then!"

"When I'm stressed," Ning Chu said, "I just want to lie in bed, zone out, and sleep. I don't feel like eating anything."

"When I'm stressed," Yan Xinya said, "I like having a few drinks and punching a heavy bag~"

After everyone shared how they dealt with stress, Yan Xinya shamelessly scooted right back beside Lily, clinging to her like an adhesive bandage.

Glancing at the time, it was just after seven in the evening.

Ning Chu looked at Yan Xinya in confusion.

"Where's Xi Xi? Doesn't she live with you?"

The young magical girl had failed to graduate and ended up moving in with the wolf girl as roommates.

The wolf girl didn't seem to mind looking after a younger girl. Rumor had it that the two of them were even raising a cat together.

"She's working overtime," Yan Xinya said casually, propping her legs up on the desk. "She said she'll come over tomorrow. Besides, where we live isn't that far from the university."

Ning Chu suggested, "Then why don't we just stay at your place tonight?"

"How could that work? There's only one bed. It's already cramped enough with just Xi Xi and me sleeping together."

Lily replied expressionlessly in her cool voice,

"You slept with Xi Xi."

"...???"

Question marks practically popped over both of their heads.

Ning Chu was the first to recover, pointing accusingly at Yan Xinya with exaggerated indignation.

"You're worse than an animal!"

"I did no such thing!" Yan Xinya exclaimed, her tail standing straight up. "Sure, Xi Xi's adorable, but I like boys! Besides, she's so flat! There's nothing to touch!"

"Huh? She's still that flat?"

Yan Xinya nodded vigorously.

"I measured with my hands. She's totally an A-cup! There's barely anything there."

"And you just said you couldn't be bothered to touch her!"

Yan Xinya often took advantage of her height and strength to get handsy with her close friends, something that had troubled Ning Chu for quite a while.

Grrr~

The sudden rumble instantly silenced the dorm room. The three girls looked at one another.

"I'm hungry..." Yan Xinya raised a hand with a red face. "I skipped lunch, and my stomach is protesting. Let's go eat? I haven't had the school cafeteria food in ages."

"That was *loud~*"

Ning Chu muttered. She had never heard someone's stomach growl loudly enough to echo through an entire room.

"So what if it was! I haven't eaten all day!"

She turned to Lily.

"Want to eat at the cafeteria?"

"Mm!"

"Then I'll call Wen Yang and the others too..."

Back when they were students, Ning Chu had always complained about the school cafeteria. A meal with two meat dishes and one vegetable cost over ten yuan, and every now and then you'd find something unpleasant mixed into the food.

But after entering the workforce—especially in a city like Shanghai, where even a simple meal easily cost twenty or thirty yuan—she found herself unexpectedly nostalgic for the cafeteria.

The three of them left the dormitory one after another. Yan Xinya, weakened by hunger, seemed a little listless, while Lily, socially anxious as ever, immediately put on a stiff expression the moment they stepped outside, once again assuming the demeanor of the icy goddess.

"Have any of your classmates figured out what you're really like?"

"No."

"Huh? None of the other succubi tried to swap experiences with you?"

Lily shook her head with a cold expression.

"I don't hang out with them."

That made sense. Ning Chu had once come into contact with circles of other succubi. They were complete chaos, with all sorts of lifestyles and antics. Every succubus seemed like the heroine of a hentai doujin. It was probably better that "disgraces to the succubus race" like her and Lily stayed far away from that crowd.

As they exited the dormitory area, Wen Yang and Wang Jie approached from the opposite direction.

The moment Ning Chu saw Wang Jie, she couldn't help exclaiming. She jogged over to him.

"Holy crap! How did you get *this* fat?!"

She had thought Lily gaining seven pounds in a year was already surprising, but Wang Jie looked like he'd put on at least twenty pounds. His whole body had filled out noticeably.

Embarrassed, Wang Jie avoided her gaze and lowered his head to fiddle with his phone.

"No, seriously—what happened to you this past year?"

Aside from gaming together, they had rarely talked about their personal lives over the past year.

"Eat, sleep, sleep, eat..." Wang Jie explained without looking up.

"That's a bit extreme~"

Out of habit, Ning Chu moved beside Wen Yang, wrapped herself around one of his arms, and asked, "Wen Yang, where's Shaoqing? Hasn't he come back yet?"

"He's traveling. Yesterday he said he was going to book a flight home, but something came up. Looks like he won't be able to make it."

"I see..."

The situation she had imagined before leaving last year had finally come true. From now on, it would be almost impossible for their whole group to gather together again. Someone would probably be absent at every reunion.

The shameless guy she used to enjoy arguing with wasn't here anymore. Ning Chu suddenly realized she didn't even have anyone to bicker with, and oddly enough, she felt a little disappointed.

"Wen Yang~ You've gotten even more handsome~"

Only then did Yan Xinya and Lily stroll over.

The wolf girl greeted him with her usual enthusiasm, while the icy succubus merely gave him a restrained nod.

"So, when are you planning to marry Ning Chu? Lily and I are still waiting to attend your wedding~"

"Didn't you ask me that already? I told you there's no rush."

Ning Chu shot Yan Xinya a glare, but instinctively hugged Wen Yang's arm even tighter as she looked up at him expectantly.

After all these years, she really had started wanting to build a family of her own—to have a home that truly belonged to them.

Noticing the eagerness in the little succubus's eyes, Wen Yang's smile stiffened for a moment. Looking slightly uncomfortable, he brushed the question aside.

"Maybe in a few more years? My career's only just getting started."

"Tch~"

Ning Chu lowered her gaze in disappointment.

"Aren't you worried someone might steal Ning Chu away? You know the saying—'start a family before building a career!'"

Ning Chu nodded her little head vigorously in agreement.

"Exactly! Exactly!"

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Link for character illustration:

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