

Trapped In Paradise

Volume 3 Chapter 18 / Chapter 523: Like a Dream

On a stage decorated with flowers, Wen Yang knelt on one knee, a rose in his hand, gently holding Ning Chu's hand.

She lowered her head shyly, wanting to look away, yet her gaze remained fixed on his sincere face, filled with love.

"I..."

Below the stage, friends and family cheered and shouted encouragement. Zhang Shaoqing was especially loud, repeatedly yelling, "Kiss her!"

She bit her lower lip as excitement swelled in her chest, emotions building to the point where she could barely contain them.

Just as she nodded and was about to speak, she suddenly froze.

Raising a hand, she touched her own rough face.

Why am I a man?

Right... I was a man to begin with...

She stared blankly for a moment.

When she looked up again, Wen Yang had already stood up in panic, while disappointed murmurs and boos rose from the audience.

...

The noisy commotion abruptly shattered the dream.

Ning Chu suddenly opened her eyes and stared blankly at the ceiling, her heart still racing.

What a strange dream...

Almost instinctively, she raised a hand and looked at it.

The hand was slender and fair, as beautiful as carved white jade. Her fingertips were adorned with pink nail polish.

The fear in her heart gradually faded.

Weakly resting her hand on her forehead, Ning Chu closed her eyes again in exhaustion, but the scenes from the dream replayed in her mind like a slideshow.

She couldn't fall back asleep.

A bitter smile appeared on her face as she turned to look at Black Bean sleeping beside her.

The cat girl was sprawled out in a starfish position, occupying two-thirds of the bed. Her tail rested across Ning Chu's waist, its fluffy texture making her skin itch slightly.

Black Bean was sleeping soundly. Her breathing was steady, accompanied by faint, soft purring sounds. The pair of cat ears atop her head were folded against her hair, as though shielding her from the outside world.

Outside the room came the sounds of their mother cleaning and preparing breakfast.

It was quite noisy.

No wonder Black Bean had covered her ears.

The sweet little cat girl didn't really hold Ning Chu's attention.

Instead, she stared blankly at Black Bean's youthful face while continuing to think about the dream.

Perhaps it was because she had once been a man.

Perhaps it was because everything she had now felt as though it had simply fallen into her lap.

She had inexplicably transmigrated.

Inexplicably returned to her middle-school appearance.

Attended a university in this hentai world.

Then inexplicably become a girl.

Ning Chu always felt uneasy about her current life.

She constantly feared that one day she would suddenly wake up and discover she was still that man crouching alone in a rented apartment, with no mother, no friends, and only a few hundred yuan to his name while being forced to start an internship job.

Even after all these years, it still felt unreal.

Like a dream.

It was as though she had somehow landed a high-paying job she didn't deserve, while believing herself to be completely ordinary, constantly worrying that she could lose it all at any moment.

Now that Wen Yang was no longer by her side, that faint sense of insecurity had only intensified her anxiety.

Lowering her eyes, Ning Chu picked up the phone beside her pillow.

She opened her chat with Wen Yang and began typing a message describing her dream, wanting to confide in him.

But after hesitating for a while, she deleted everything.

Instead, she simply sent "Good morning." along with a cheerful sticker.

Setting her phone aside, she let out a long sigh.

Carefully, she climbed out of bed, trying not to wake the sleeping Black Bean.

Yet the slight movement of the mattress still interrupted Black Bean's steady breathing.

"Big Sis?"

Black Bean blinked sleepily at Ning Chu, who was sitting on the edge of the bed.

"Time to get up."

"Mmm~ Are you in a bad mood?"

"No."

Black Bean gently grabbed the heart-shaped tail hanging down beside the bed.

"Then why isn't your tail wagging?"

"I'm not a dog. Why would I wag my tail?"

Ning Chu frowned slightly in discomfort and pulled her tail free from Black Bean's grasp.

"But you always wag it when you're happy."

She increasingly felt that Black Bean treated her like a dog.

Rolling her eyes silently, Ning Chu got up and headed out of the room.

Most of the time, she wrapped her tail around the top of her thigh and hid it beneath her skirt. Aside from certain intimate moments when its presence became impossible to ignore, she usually forgot it even existed.

She hadn't expected Black Bean to be able to read her emotions through her tail.

Outside the bedroom, her mother was mopping the floor and cleaning the house. The place was thoroughly cleaned every couple of days, and the floors were always spotless.

Compared to this, Ning Chu's rented apartment could practically be called a doghouse.

"Breakfast is on the table."

Seeing her daughter come out of the room, her mother casually reminded her.

"Okay. What are we having today?"

"Fried oyster cakes and oyster soup."

Ning Chu's eyes immediately lit up.

The tail hanging behind her shot upright, the heart-shaped tip swaying excitedly from side to side. She hurried toward the dining table while complaining to her mother:

"The oyster cakes near my school are ridiculously hard to find. Wen Yang bought me a couple once, and they tasted awful."

"Go brush your teeth and wash your hands first. You're already an adult—do I still have to remind you?"

"Okay~"

The dream from earlier had long since been forgotten, and her gloomy mood had been completely replaced by anticipation.

She returned to the bathroom and began brushing her teeth.

"Mom, when are you and Uncle planning to register your marriage?"

"Why do you sound even more anxious than I am?"

"I've got things to do. I can't just keep waiting forever, can I?"

Holding a mop, Ning Juan stopped in the bathroom doorway and looked at her daughter, who was standing before the mirror.

With a teasing smile, she asked, "Don't tell me you've been home for less than a day and you're already thinking about going back to Wen Yang? You're always taking his side."

"No way! I'd love to stay home every day, okay?"

Ning Chu immediately denied the accusation and hurriedly pressed the issue, "So when exactly?"

"I still need to find an internship for the summer."

"How about next month?"

She instinctively shook her head.

"That won't work!"

"I'm getting married. Since when do I need your approval?"

Looking up into the mirror, Ning Chu saw her mother's smiling, teasing expression reflected behind her.

Realizing she'd been played, she could only turn around and try acting cute.

"Mooom~"

The sugary sweet voice was so exaggerated that even she found it cringe-worthy.

But Ning Juan loved that sort of thing, and her smile widened.

"The week after next. On my birthday."

As expected...

But that was still more than ten days away.

Ning Chu cautiously tested the waters.

"Mom, how about a few days earlier?"

Ning Juan paused for a moment before immediately understanding her daughter intentions.

With a sigh, she said:

"And you were saying you weren't in a hurry to go see Wen Yang?"

"I'm really not. I have an interview scheduled..."

She desperately tried to defend herself, but under her mother's amused gaze, her stubborn facade quickly crumbled.

Lowering her eyes guiltily, she admitted:

"Okay, fine. I want to go see Wen Yang."

Ning Juan rolled her eyes.

"If you want to go, then go. What does my marriage registration have to do with you?"

"Really? Then today I—"

Almost visibly, Ning Juan's expression darkened.

Ning Chu suddenly remembered that her talent for stubborn denial had probably been inherited from her mother.

"At the very least, I should stay until you've registered the marriage before leaving, right?"

To save herself from getting smacked, she forcibly corrected what she had been about to say.

"Mooom~ Registering a few days earlier wouldn't make any difference. Why does it have to be on your birthday?"

Only then did Ning Juan's expression improve slightly.

With a soft snort, she turned and walked away.

"You've barely gotten home and you're already thinking about leaving. Why don't you spend more time with your little sister?"

"Uncle will be back from his business trip soon anyway. It won't be many more days. When he gets back, he'll take you out to a restaurant."

"Stay home and behave yourself these next few days. All you think about is men."

Ning Chu could only grin sheepishly.

"When have I ever~?"

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Link for character illustration:

<https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1IxOucqi87ss3bmqfO9zl2gYiM1Gy8Hz2>