

Chapter 30: Can You Smell It?

Zhao Lei explained the general situation to Jiang Ci and checked the equipment again. There was still no abnormality, but the earlier pheromone concentration data on the equipment couldn't be fake.

Something must have gone wrong in one of the steps.

Could it be that the patient somehow self-repaired midway? But that had never happened in medical history.

No, they had to figure it out.

Zhao Lei said, "I'll go call the director."

He turned to leave, but Jiang Ci's expression changed. She immediately called out to stop him and yanked out the IV needle, "Doctor, no need to call the director. I'm fine."

Gu Feiran looked at her hand, her brows tightening.

Ignoring the blood oozing from the needle hole, Jiang Ci lifted the blanket, got out of the hospital bed, and walked barefoot to Zhao Lei. She explained, "I went to a party tonight. The guests were all alphas and omegas, including some top-tier alphas and omegas. Their pheromones might have affected me, causing a fluctuation. I'm fine now and want to be discharged."

"This..." Zhao Lei hesitated.

The patient's vitals were normal, and discharge procedures were in order, but her situation was special. What if...

Jiang Ci added, "Don't worry. I can sign a liability waiver. After leaving the hospital, no matter what happens, I won't hold you or the hospital responsible. How's that?"

Since the patient offered to sign a waiver, as a doctor, he had no reason to block her discharge.

Zhao Lei said, "Alright, wait a moment."

He turned and left, and the nurse followed.

Only the two of them remained in the room.

Gu Feiran looked at her, "Your condition is special. Staying in the hospital for observation is the right thing to do. Why are you in such a hurry to leave?"

Once they were gone, Jiang Ci felt the stinging pain in her hand. The TV shows where actors pulled out IVs without pain were fake. It not only hurt but also bled.

Wincing through the pain, she explained, "You said it yourself—my condition is special. If he tells your hospital director, and the director can't figure it out, they might call a group meeting for a seminar. If they can't conclude anything, they'll call in gland research experts. Then I won't just be a patient but a subject for gland mutation research."

"Gland mutation research?"

Gu Feiran had heard of it. Since gland mutation cases were rare, only one biotech company was researching this area's genetics.

But her reaction was so strong...

Gu Feiran asked directly, "Have you been taken for research before?"

Jiang Ci nodded, "Hmm."

Gu Feiran slowly lowered her eyes, thought for a moment, and said, "This Dr. Zhao from the gland department is soft-natured, henpecked, and usually avoids trouble. Especially since this might involve an incident's responsibility, he probably won't tell anyone."

Jiang Ci said, "I hope so."

As they spoke, the door opened again. The nurse who had left returned with a treatment tray, "Let me treat the wound on your hand. It's bleeding."

Jiang Ci dropped her serious expression, her face softening, and sat on the bed's edge, gently saying, "Thank you, Sister Nurse."

The nurse, charmed by being called "sister," smiled and said, "It's fine, it's my job. By the way, Dr. Jiang knew you were in the emergency room and was really worried. She cried until her eyes were red. After you finish the discharge, remember to go see her."

"Okay," Jiang Ci replied obediently.

Gu Feiran stepped out, closing the door.

She stood at the door, her left hand gripping the notebook with recorded data in her pocket. Earlier, Dr. Zhao had said that if a top-tier omega or an S-level omega marked her successfully, her condition might improve. If that was the case, she could try.

Her gland had been stable with no issues until after the marking...

An abnormality.

Gu Feiran suddenly realized something.

The last time she ate with Dr. Jiang and Little Aunt, Jiang Ci, drunk, kept touching her neck gland. Could her gland issue have started back then?

Damn it, Gu Feiran hurried away.

After Jiang Ci completed the discharge, she went to find Little Aunt to tell her she was fine and not to worry. But Jiang Lan was in the operating room saving a patient and wouldn't be out soon. Several patient family members sat on the bench by the door.

The atmosphere was heavy and sad.

Seeing this, Jiang Ci's mood sank. She turned and left without disturbing them.

At Gu Feiran's office.

Knock, knock. Jiang Ci tapped the door.

She instinctively checked the handle first—it could open, meaning someone was inside. She didn't enter directly and knocked instead.

Gu Feiran, who had changed and was about to leave, heard the knock, slung her bag over her shoulder, and opened the door.

Seeing Jiang Ci, she wasn't surprised.

"Dr. Gu, I..."

Jiang Ci wanted to ask Dr. Gu to tell Little Aunt she was fine. But as she looked up, Dr. Gu had taken off her white coat and was ready to leave work. Asking for help now might be too much trouble.

Gu Feiran said, "What is it?"

Jiang Ci hesitated, "Little Aunt was really worried when she heard I was in the hospital, but she's in surgery now, and I can't see her to let her know I'm okay. Dr. Gu, can you tell her for me?"

Gu Feiran stepped out, "I already contacted the operating room earlier. Dr. Jiang knows you're fine."

“Thank you,” Jiang Ci sighed in relief.

Dr. Gu was so reliable.

Gu Feiran, holding her denim jacket, said, “I have something to discuss with you. Come with me.”

Not knowing what it was, Jiang Ci agreed, “Okay.”

Gu Feiran led Jiang Ci outside the hospital to her car’s backseat. The driver had already taken a taxi home.

Jiang Ci had just notified the company to give her a bonus at the end of the month.

The car was dark, with only scattered streetlights shining in, casting light on them.

Jiang Ci asked, “What do you want to talk about?”

Gu Feiran took out a small notebook recording pheromone concentration data from her pocket, opened it to the data page, and showed Jiang Ci, “When Dr. Zhao was in the room, he roughly explained your gland situation. You must know already. My view is that your gland abnormality is likely related to marking me.”

Jiang Ci turned on her phone’s flashlight to look at the data: 0, 78, 79, 12, 0.

It fluctuated like this within a minute.

Gu Feiran said, “The first page is the pheromone concentration changes when you were unconscious. The second page is the changes in your pheromone concentration after being affected by mine.”

Second page?

Jiang Ci flipped to it.

0, 25, 35, 47, 59, 70, 80.

Within a minute, the pheromone concentration reached 80 and stayed between 70–80 without major fluctuations, remaining stable. This showed Dr. Gu’s pheromones could indeed affect hers.

But...

Looking at the second page, Jiang Ci turned and asked, "This was tested while I was unconscious?"

Gu Feiran said, "Hmm. You woke up shortly after the test. I suspect that because you marked me, my pheromones affected yours, causing this series of reactions. My idea is to continue testing. It might resolve your gland mutation issue."

Jiang Ci didn't understand, "How do you want to test?"

Gu Feiran hesitated, then slowly said, "Every Saturday and Wednesday, fixed, you come to my place. Other days depend on our schedules."

Jiang Ci still didn't fully get it, "Every Saturday and Wednesday, fixed for what? Pheromone tests?"

Gu Feiran looked ahead, "..."

Gu Feiran said, "Marking tests."

"Okay," Jiang Ci agreed but felt a bit worried, "Won't this be too much trouble for you? You're so busy with work, and helping me with tests must be tiring."

Gu Feiran said, "Do you want to die from heat cycles?"

Jiang Ci shook her head, "Of course not."

Gu Feiran said, "If you don't, starting today, carry suppression patches and inhibitors to prevent what happened tonight. If the patches and inhibitors don't work, come straight to the hospital to find me."

If suppression patches and inhibitors failed, her pheromones might work. Hopefully, that was a constant, or frequent heat cycles would be a deadly time bomb for her.

Jiang Ci said, "Got it."

Gu Feiran gave all her instructions and, while waiting for Dr. Jiang's surgery to end, did a small test.

In the car, Gu Feiran released her mandragora pheromones for Jiang Ci to smell while placing her left hand on Jiang Ci's neck to feel gland temperature changes, checking for effects.

After a while, worried her pheromones might leak out and affect passersby, Gu Feiran asked, "Can you smell it?"

Jiang Ci shook her head, "Hmm... I can't smell it, but I can smell the fried chicken from the street stall. Are you hungry?"

Gu Feiran lowered her hand, her voice cold, "Not hungry."

Jiang Ci cautiously checked her expression, "I haven't eaten much since noon, and I'm a bit hungry."

Gu Feiran took a deep breath, "If you're hungry, go eat."

"Okay." Jiang Ci turned to get out but paused halfway, slowly turning back to look at Gu Feiran, comforting her, "Dr. Gu, don't worry too much. At least I'm fine now, no problems. Maybe this was a one-time thing, and we won't need many tests."

Gu Feiran said coldly, "I'm not worried."

Jiang Ci, "..."

Her tone didn't sound like it.

Jiang Ci got out and bought two portions of fried chicken, a pancake, stinky tofu, and a grilled pig's trotter from the nearby food street.

Just as she finished buying, Little Aunt messaged that her work was done and she was heading down.

Jiang Ci carried the food to meet her at the hospital. When Jiang Lan saw her standing there unharmed, she teared up, hugged her, and said, "Xiao Ci, you're okay. That's great."

"I'm fine, Little Aunt, I'm fine," Jiang Ci soothed gently.

Jiang Lan let go, wiped her tears, and said, "You say you're fine now, but what about later? Dr. Zhao said to cure gland mutation, you need a top-tier omega or S-level omega to counter-mark you. But these days, where do you find so many top-tier omegas or S-level omegas..."

"Dr. Jiang."

As Jiang Lan spoke, Gu Feiran approached from behind.

Jiang Lan turned, slightly stunned. Speak of the devil—here was an omega.

An S-level omega, rare in the world.

No, no.

The thought barely surfaced before Jiang Lan dismissed it.

Though Jiang Ci's gland mutation was urgent, they couldn't gamble with Dr. Gu's future. They needed to find someone Jiang Ci mutually loved. No, that wouldn't work either.

If they fell in love but the marking failed and Jiang Ci died, how heartbroken would that girl be?

"Xiao Ci, what are you going to do?"

Jiang Lan hugged her again, sobbing.

Jiang Ci comforted, "Little Aunt, life and death are fated. Live each day as it comes, a year if you get it. Think positively. I don't even mind, so don't worry."

Slap. Jiang Lan smacked her arm, angry, "Sure, you'll leave carefree, but have you thought about those left behind?"

Jiang Ci mumbled, "No one will miss me if I'm gone."

Jiang Lan said, "What did you say?"

"Nothing, I didn't say anything."

Jiang Ci quickly put on a smile, sidestepped, and nudged Jiang Lan toward the car. Passing Gu Feiran, she elbowed her lightly, "Alright, alright, you two worked hard all day. I'll drive you home. Take this food to eat on the way."

Jiang Lan looked at her hands full of food, "You bought so much. How do you still have the appetite?"

Jiang Ci said, "Well, not really."

On the way back, Jiang Lan drove. Gu Feiran and Jiang Ci sat in the back, one eating heartily, the other silently passing tissues or water occasionally.

An odd silence filled the car.

Normally, they'd drop Dr. Gu off first, but Gu Feiran had said she had something to do near Jiang Lan's neighborhood, so Jiang Lan drove straight to her own place.

Getting out, she didn't say much, just gave Jiang Ci a deep look and walked away.

Jiang Ci instantly lost her appetite.

Jiang Lan entered the neighborhood and was out of sight.

Jiang Ci was about to move to the driver's seat when Gu Feiran suddenly said, "Sit in the passenger seat. I'll drive."

Jiang Ci asked, "Don't you have something to do?"

Gu Feiran said, "I'm doing it now."