

CHAPTER 1.

The heat from the man's body surrounded her slowly from behind as the moisture in his breath came closer to her ear when he whispered, "Is this your first time?"

The unfamiliar atmosphere near her ear sent a chill down her spine, yet she dared not make any sound.

Lin Xinyan could feel the man paused for a bit, then came the man's voice again, "There is still time to say no."

She nervously clenched her hands, shook her head, and said "I will not regret it....."

She was 18 years old. This was supposed to be the most wonderful years in her youth but yet.....

It hurts!

The excruciating pain made her trembled in the man's arms.

Keeping the only dignity left for herself, Lin Xinyan bit her lips and stayed quiet the whole time. This was her first sexual experience. She was nervous and fearful of the man. At the same time, she could feel his muscular body with unbelievable strength.

He didn't seem to tire out and kept conquering her body, fulfilling his lust in this long and miserable night.

After he was done, the man got up and entered the bathroom. Lin Xinyan rose from the bed exhausted; she put on her clothes and left the room.

In the hotel lobby, stood the middle-aged women who sealed the deal for her. When she saw Lin Xinyan coming out, she passed her a black plastic bag and whispered, "This is your reward."

Lin Xinyan took the bag without hesitation and hurried out of the hotel with the money. She rushed to the hospital in the shortest possible time and paid no attention to the pain in her abdomen.

The corridor was quiet before daybreak. Two stretchers laid waiting before the operation theatre. They were blocked for they hadn't make the payment yet.

When Lin Xinyan saw that, she was devastated and started sobbing, "I have money, I have the money! Please save my mother and brother....." While sobbing, she quickly handed the money to the doctor. Then the doctor had the nurse counted the money and ordered the staff to push her mother into the operating to prepare for surgery.

Seeing that her brother was not being pushed into the operating theater, Lin Xinyan begged the doctor, "Please save my brother as well."

"I'm sorry. It is too late. There is nothing we can do now." The doctor answered with a heavy heart.

Too late?

The truth hit Lin Xinyan like a heavy club shattering all of her hopes brutally.

The pain was so unbearable that it felt like she was stabbed on the chest with a knife while the cramps and spasms made her weak and she was unable to stand on her feet. Eight years ago, when she was ten, her father had an affair and left her and her pregnant mother. He had them sent overseas to a place that was completely strange to them.

After that, her brother was born. He was diagnosed with autism when he was three years old. This brought more hardships to their already tight financial situation. She and her mother worked many part-time jobs to get by. When the accident struck suddenly, she felt complete hopelessness as she had no relatives, no money nor the support of this cold and ruthless society.

As the last resort, she sold herself. Yet, she was not able to bring her brother back to life.

She felt miserable but she had not lost herself just yet. Life was very cruel but she had to take it with a smile for she had her mother to take care of.

Her mother needed her.

After the treatment, her mother was slowly recovering. But, she was completely heartbroken after knowing that her son had passed away.

Lin Xinyan cried as she hugged her and said, "Mom, I'm right here. Please be tough and continue to live on."

For one month in the hospital, Zhuang Zijin always sat by the bed and was in a daze all day. Lin Xinyan knew that she was missing her brother. If it was not for her, her mother would have died along with her brother. She was expelled from school as for her long absence as she had to take care of her mother. Luckily, her mother was getting better by the day.

The woman brought some food to the hospital. Just when she was about to open the door into the ward, she heard some voice from inside.

It sounded familiar to her. Even though it had been eight years, she could still remember the look on his father's face when he forced her mother into a divorce.

He never came to see them even once after bringing them here; his sudden appearance today baffled them.

"Zijin, you were once very close to the madam from the Zong family and you agreed to an arranged marriage. According to the promise, your daughter should marry a member of the Zong family."

“What do you mean, Lin Guoan?!” Zhuang Zijin wanted to beat him up so badly with her weak body that was yet to fully recover from the injuries. How inhumane he was to do this to her!

He never cared about them after moving them to this god forsaken place. And now he was here to take her daughter back to have her marry the Madam’s son.

“Young Master Zhishen is your best friend’s son. He is good-looking and his family is very well off. If she marries into the family, she would surely be having a much easier life there”. He softened his voice as he spoke.

Young Master Zhishen was virtuous and good-looking. But one month ago, he was bitten by a poisonous snake when he was on a business trip overseas. That accident paralyzed his nervous system, leaving him disabled and impotent.

Once married, she would not be happy there.

“I will marry him.”

Lin Xinyan opened the door and said, “I will marry him but on one condition.”

Lin Guoan was stunned when he saw Lin Xinyan. She was only ten when he last saw her. Now she had grown up with a fair and beautiful skin, yet she looked seriously skinny and physically underdeveloped.

He had another adorable daughter in the family.

She wasn’t beautiful though. With that look, it would still be reasonable for her to marry an impotent person.

That made Lin Guoan feel better. He then asked, “What are your terms?”

“I want to go home with my mother and you need return everything that is rightfully hers. Only then will I marry him.” Said Lin Xinyan slowly as she calmed down.

Although she was not in her home country, she had heard so much about the Zong family’s great successes and remarkable wealth when she was little. Lin Xinyan thought that the offer was too good to be true because Young Master Zhisen could be a man who was very ugly with birth defects.

Even so, this was a good opportunity for her to go home. With that, she could claim her mother’s dowry she brought with her when she married her father.

“Yan Yan...” Zhuang Zijin tried to advise her because a marriage was a serious matter. After all the hardships they went through, she did not want her daughter to risk marrying the wrong person.

Worried that Lin Xinyan could be persuaded by Zhuang Zijin to turn down the marriage proposal, Lin Guoan quickly said, “Alright, you can go home as long as you promise to marry him.”

“What about my mother’s dowry?” Lin Xinyan asked him with an emotionless tone.

When Zhuang Zijin married Lin Guoan, she brought with her a considerable amount of dowry. It would be very difficult for him to give it back.

“Dad, I suppose my younger sister is very pretty. Therefore, she deserves a better life. She would be doomed if she marries an impotent man. Furthermore, you and my mother are divorced. Which means you should return everything she brought into the family.”

Lin Guoan looked away from her diffidently.

How did she know that Young Master Zhishen was impotent when she had been living overseas all these years?

Lin Guoan did not know that Lin Xinyan was just assuming.

The man then reluctantly said, “I’ll give it back to you once you marry him.”

With her pretty look, why would his younger daughter marry an impotent man?

Being impotent was no different from being useless regardless how distinguished the man was.

Thinking about that gave Lin Guoan a sense of relief.

But now he hated Lin Xinyan even more for ripping him off.

Lin Guoan smirked at the young woman and barked, “How rude of you! I see your mother has not been educating you properly!”

Lin Xinyan thought that it should have been his responsibility also. He left her here and had not cared about her since.

However she knew she mustn’t say that because she had no bargaining chip over him. Annoying Lin Guoan would not be a wise move.

“Get ready, we are leaving tomorrow.” Lin Guoan then threw his arms out of his vest and walked out of the ward.

CHAPTER 2.

“Yan Yan, getting married is a lifetime decision. I will not let you marry him.” Zhuang Zijin knew why Lin Xinyan wanted to do that.

Lin Xinyan put down the food on the cabinet beside the bed and said, “I’m not marrying an outsider anyway. Isn’t he your friend’s son?”

“She passed away many years ago. I don’t know her son at all. You should marry the man you really like, even if it means to break the promise. You should not use as marriage as your bargaining chip. I would rather stay here for the rest of my life.”

The one she likes?

Even if she meets one, she would not be worthy of that.

It wasn’t important to her who she would be marrying. What really mattered was taking back everything they took away from her mother.

Zhuang Zijin didn’t manage to convince Lin Xinyan to change her mind. They went back to the home country the very next day.

Lin Guoan didn’t let them in the family home of the Lins because he disliked them. Instead, he had them lived in a rent house. When the day came, Lin Xinyan would have to go to the Lins.

Lin Xinyan never wanted to go there because her mother would need to face the woman who destroyed her marriage. Therefore, they would rather stay here.

It was quiet.

Zhuang Zijin was still worried, and she said, “Yan Yan, the opportunity would not come to you if this is a good marriage arrangement. Not even if Madam Zong and I were close.

Lin Xinyan didn’t really want to talk about it so she tried to change the topic by saying, “Mom, just eat your food.”

Zhuang Zijin sighed; she knew that Lin Xinyan didn’t want to continue the topic. Lin Xinyan had suffered with her all these years and now she even had to sacrifice her marriage.

Although Lin Xinyan was holding the chopsticks, her appetite was spoiled due to morning sickness.

“Are you alright?” Zhuang Zijin was concerned about her.

Lin Xin Yan didn’t want to worry her so she lied saying that it was jetlag.

She put down the chopsticks and entered her room.

After closing the door, she leaned on it. Although she had never been pregnant before, she had seen the symptoms when Zhuang Zijin was pregnant. Her mother was sickened with the smell of food and lost all her appetite.

And now, she had the same symptom.

It had been over one month since that night; her period had been late by more than 10 days.

She didn't want to think of the humiliation she endured that night. If it was not for her mother and her brother's sake, she would not have sold herself.

She started trembling.....

"You are six weeks pregnant."

Even after leaving the hospital, those words from the doctor kept repeating in her mind.

That was the result from Lin Xinyan checkup at the hospital without Zhuang Zijin's knowledge. She was worried and did not know whether she should keep the baby or have an abortion.

She could not help but caress her tummy. Although it was both an accident and a humiliation, she was somehow unwilling to have her baby removed.

It brought her both the joy and the excitement of being a first-time mother.

She sat quietly for a long, long while.

When she reached home, she hid the ultrasonography report before opening the door.

However, Lin Guoan was also there. Her expression turned grim immediately.

Why was he here?

From the look on Lin Guoan's face, he was not in a good mood because he had been waiting for her for some time. He then said without emotion, "Change your clothes."

Lin Xinyan asked "Why?"

"Since you are going to marry into the Zhong family, you and the Young Master Zhishen are going to meet. Are you going to meet him looking like this? Do you want to embarrass me again?"

What was the feeling that came with pain?

She thought she would be numb after selling herself and losing her brother.

Yet the heartless words from Lin Guoan still caused her pain.

He had never cared for her since he sent her and her mother to a poor western country.

Where would she get money from?

If she had the money, her brother would not need to die because of a delay in treatment.

She clenched her fists.

Lin Guoan seemed to have noticed that. His looked a little awkward and said, "Let's go, the Zong family should be there already. Don't make them wait for too long."

"Yan Yan....." Zhuang Zijin was worried and still tried to convince Lin Xinyan. She had lost her son and now she just wanted to take good care of her daughter. Wealth was not important anymore.

She would not want her daughter to go near the Lins nor the Zong family.

As everything in rich families could be complicated. What more, they did not know the character of the young master yet.

Her mother was worried.

"Mom." Lin Xinyan gave her the comforting look to give her a sense of relief.

"Hurry up." The man was afraid that Lin Xinyan would change her mind and he urged her hurriedly, grabbing her by the arm.

Lin Guoan did not like her and in return Lin Xinyan had no affection for her father as well.

Their bond as a family had completely vanished in this eight years of separation.

Unwilling to bring Lin Xinyan to meet the Zong family with her poor appearance, Lin Guoan brought her to a boutique and bought her some decent clothes.

Once they got inside the store, a shop assistant welcomed them. Lin Guoan pushed Lin Xinyan forward and said, "Recommend some clothes for her."

The shop assistant glanced at her and estimated her size as she said, "Please come with me."

The shop assistant then brought her a light blue dress and said, "Please try this on in the fitting room."

Lin Xinyan took the dress and walked to the direction she pointed.

"Hao, must you marry the Lins?" The woman's voice was laced with grief.

Lin Xinyan turned her head towards the room next door when she heard voices coming from it. She peeked through the gap and saw a woman circling her arms around a man's neck, and said shyly, "Don't marry another woman, alright?"

Zong Jinghao looked at the woman with the slightest interest. He had no control in this matter. This was a marriage arranged by his mother and he could not turn his back on it.

And yet when he thought of that very night, he felt that he could not bear to disappoint her.
“Was it very painful on that night?”

About a month ago, he had gone abroad to a developing country for a project. He was bitten by a poisonous snake and would have died if he did not go to bed with a woman as that was the only way out.

It was Bai Zhuwei who gave herself to him as an antidote.

And he knew how out of control he was at that time.

It had been said that it could be painful for a woman doing it the first time but he never showed her any mercy. Now that he thought about it, it must have been rather painful for her?

Yet she endured the pain quietly. All she did was trembling in his arms.

He knew Bai Zhuwei was interested in him from the beginning but he never gave her a chance.

One of the reasons was he had no affection for her and there was an arranged marriage made by his mother.

Yet she had always stood by him quietly. After that incident, he felt it was only right for him to give her a place she deserved.

Even until now, he could remember that striking crimson on the sheet.

Lying on his chest, Bai Zhuwei hummed softly.

She had always been in love with Zong Jinghao. She found a way to stay by his side as his secretary. She could not let him find out that she was no longer a virgin as she knew how seriously a man would take a woman's virginity. And so, she paid a local a handsome amount of money to send a virgin to take her place that night.

And when the girl left, she entered the room and made it look like it was her all along.

“If you like the clothes from this store, you can buy more.” Zong Jinghao said lovingly as he patted the top of her head.

“That room is reserved only for VIPs. Turn right for your room.” The shop assistant reminded Lin Xinyan.

In all luxury boutiques, every fitting room was an individual space. For the VIPs, these fitting rooms were even more extravagant. There was a space inside for fitting and the section outside was a lounge for accompanying guests to rest.

“Oh.” Lin Xinyan walked towards the room on the right.

As she changed in the fitting room, she thought about the couple. If she had not heard wrongly, she had overheard them talking about The Lins. Perhaps the man was—

CHAPTER 3.

After putting on her clothes, she took a peek to the left as she walked out of her fitting room. However, the door was now closed.

“It fits you perfectly.”

The shop assistant had good fashion sense and could dress someone up with almost no effort. Lin Xinyan was wearing a long light blue dress which made her skin look even fairer. The ribbon by her waist insinuated her figure. Although she looked a little skinny, her delicate facial features made up for it.

Lin Guoan looked at her for another time and went to the cashier when he was satisfied. It was only then did he realize that the dress was 30,000! However, seeing that this was the dress she would be wearing to meet the Zongs, he paid somehow. “Let’s go.” He said coldly.

Lin Xinyan was used to this attitude of indifference but the coldness in his tone still gave her a wave of sorrow.

She followed him into the car with her head lowered.

In a blink of an eye, the car stopped in front of the Lin’s villa.

The driver opened the door for Lin Guoan and Lin Xinyan walked after him.

For a few seconds, she stood still in front of the villa. Her father and his mistress had been enjoying the time of their life here while she and her mother were living a miserable life taking care of her ill younger brother.

She clenched her fists unconsciously.

“What are you doing there?” Lin Guoan looked back when he realized that there were no signs of her. He took a quick glance and saw that she was still standing by the entrance.

Lin Xinyan came out from her thought and caught up with him. When they arrived, the maids told them that the Zongs had yet to arrive so Lin Guoan told her to wait in the living room.

Near the French windows was a Seidl & Sohn piano made in Germany. It was an expensive gift from her mother when she was five.

She loved it since young. She had started learning to play the piano since she was four-and-a-half-year-old but stopped when she was sent away. She had not touched the piano since then.

Without realizing it, she reached for the piano. It was a familiar presence that excited her.

Her thumb gently pressed onto the keyboard. Plink. A clean sound rang in the room. Her fingers were stiff from the lack of practice.

“That’s mine! Who gave you the permission to touch it?” A clear voice came from behind her and it sounded angry.

Her piano?

Lin Xinyan turned around and saw Lin Yuhan standing behind her. Lin Xinyan could almost see the steam coming out from the other girl's ears. Lin Yuhan was now seventeen; she was younger than Lin Xinyan by a year. Lin Xinyan could see that Lin Yuhan took after Shen Xiuqing's genes as she was beautiful.

She felt angry that she was gritted her teeth and stared at her.

"Yours?"

They destroyed her mother's marriage and took the money. And now even her mother's gift to her belonged to Lin Xinyan?

She clenched her fists and told herself to calm down. She did not have the power to claim the things that belonged to her yet.

She could not afford to be act recklessly now!

She was no longer the little crybaby who was sent away from her father eight years ago. She had grown up.

"You're Lin Xinyan!" It was now that Lin Yuhan realized that today was the day the Zongs were coming and her father had brought the mother and the daughter back from overseas.

Lin Yuhan could still remember the pitiful look on Lin Xinyan's face on the day when Lin Guoan sent Lin Xinyan and her mother out of the country. Lin Xinyan knelt down and begged her father not to send her away.

"Weren't you happy that dad went to pick you up?" Lin Yuhan crossed her arms and looked at her in disdain. She said, "Don't be so happy. You're back just to marry into the Zongs. I heard that man—"

Halfway through her sentence, Lin Yuhan started sneering.

She couldn't help but felt gleeful when she thought about Lin Xinyan marrying an infertile, handicapped man.

Marriage was one of the major events in life. It would ruin Lin Xinyan's life if she were to marry a man like that.

Lin Xinyan frowned.

And at this moment, the maid came over and told them, "The Zongs are here."

Lin Guoan went to the door and invited them into the house.

The instant that Lin Xinyan turned around, she could see the man being wheeled in. He had strong facial features and looked dignified. Despite being in a wheelchair, she doubted that anyone would ever look down on him.

His face... wasn't this the man she saw in the fitting room?

He is Young Master Zong?

Yet back at the fitting room, she saw clearly that he could stand and hug the woman! She saw nothing wrong with his legs then.

What was going on?

Before she could find out why the man was pretending to be handicapped, Lin Guoan called her over. "Xinyan, come here quickly. This is Young Master Zong."

Lin Guoan had a look of reverence on his face then he bowed and smile. "Young Master Zong, this is Yan."

A wave of sympathy rose in Lin Guoan's heart. He was the young master of the Zongs but he was now nothing but a handicapped.

Zong Jinghao's gaze fell onto Lin Xinyan. She looked quite young and skinny. He frowned as she was so skinny as if she was malnourished.

This was the marriage his mother had arranged for him. As her surviving son, he could not break the promise. That was why when he was bitten by a snake, he made sure the news about him never recovering from the poison spread like wildfire. Now everyone believed that he was handicapped and impotent. That was his plan to make the Lins back out of the engagement instead.

However, he had miscalculated. The Lins never did back out of it.

Zong Jinghao remained silent with a gloomy face and Lin Guoan thought he was not happy with his daughter. He explained quickly, "She's only eighteen and still young. She'll be a beauty when she grows older."

Zong Jinghao sneered in his heart. He could not see any beauty. Instead, he saw the abnormality for a father to eagerly marry off his daughter to him, a "handicapped".

He had sharp features but it looked more like a smirk when he smiled. "I had a serious injury when I was abroad so I won't be able to walk nor fulfil the duties of a husband—"

"I don't mind." Lin Xinyan responded instantly.

Lin Guoan had promised her that as long as she married into the Zongs, he would return her mother's dowry to her. Even if she were to marry into the family for only one day and was divorced the next day, she would still agree to the marriage.

After taking a moment to digest the information, Lin Xinyan had finally realized what was going on. He could stand but came here to the Lins in a wheelchair instead. That meant that he was not keen on keeping this engagement because of that woman but he was hoping for the Lins to break the engagement.

What he had not considered was that Lin Guoan was willing to sacrifice unworthy daughter to fulfil the promise.

Zong Jinghao watched her with his eyes half-closed.

Lin Xinyan felt a shiver running down her spine when she noticed he was watching her. She too was reluctant and did not want to marry into the Zongs.

Yet if she did not, she would not be able to come back here and claim what was rightfully hers?

She lifted the corner of her lips and gave a bitter smile, "We were engaged since young. I should still marry you regardless of what you are now."

The look on Zong Jinghao's face became even gloomier. This woman was good with her words.

On the other hand, Lin Guoan was aloof and didn't pay much attention. He asked, "The wedding date..."

There was an expression of mixed emotions on Zong Jinghao's face before he settled into a calm look. "Of course we'll stick to the promise. This is an oath and I wouldn't back out on it."

Lin Xinyan looked down and put her emotions aside. She dared not look at him as he was clearly unhappy about the arrangement.

She was merely fulfilling the promise.

"That'll be good." Lin Guoan was joyous. To be able to marry a plain daughter into the Zongs was something to jump at.

Although the Lins were also rich, they were nowhere compared to the Zongs. If the Zongs were a shark, the Lins were only shrimps.

There was no comparison.

Lin Guoan said as he bowed, "I have told the maids to prepare dinner. Please stay and have dinner with us."

Zong Jinghao frowned as he was disgusted by Lin Guoan's two-faced attitude.

"I don't think so. I still have some matters to settle." Zong Jinghao rejected. On the way out, he went past Lin Xinyan. Zong Jinghao raised his hands to signal to Guan Jing for a pause. He raised his head and asked, "Would Miss Lin be free?"

CHAPTER 4.

Even though that was a question, there was no space for rejection.

Lin Xinyan nodded. It seemed like he had something to tell her.

It was perfect as she wanted to speak to him too.

Lin Guoan eyed Lin Xinyan with a warning look and said, "You should know how to read the situation."

If she had offended him even before marrying him... Looking at Zong Jinghao's face, it seemed like he was dissatisfied with Lin Xinyan. The Lins needed the Zongs; they would be useful for their business.

He would not allow Lin Xinyan to mess up this marriage.

Lin Xinyan pretended that she saw nothing and followed closely behind Guan Jing.

She knew exactly what Lin Guoan was thinking. Why was he thinking? Did he expect her to help him after marrying into the Zongs?

Just because he was her father?

Yet he had never treated her like his daughter. Did he even know how she lived through these eight years?

Lin Xinyan was lost in her thoughts until she bumped into something hard with her head. When she lifted her head, all she saw was that perfect face, watching her from above.

As— As expected, he could stand!

And it meant that her guess was right.

Lin Xinyan could feel the hair standing up on her arms. She looked at him pretending to be calm and said, “You were pretending to be handicapped, weren’t you?”

Zong Jinghao narrowed his eyes. It did not feel great to have someone read through his mind. His tone was intimidating as he asked, “Why marry me even if you knew I was handicapped? What did you see in me? Money? Do you wish to become a wealthy mistress?”

Under his gaze, she felt a draft seeping through her body. Her heart was gripped tightly by an invisible hand, and she could barely breathe. However, she showed of that none on her face and replied, “I was two when this marriage was arranged. Could I have understood the concept of wealth at that age by begging my mother and yours to engage us?”

She paused to catch her breath before continuing, “When I was two, you were already ten. You’re older than me by eight years. Have I ever complained that you’re old?”

Zong Jinghao sneered in his heart. Not only was this woman good with her words, she was also quick-witted!

Very well!

Him? Old?

There was a whiff of gunpowder in the air.

Two pairs of eyes looked at each other. Sparks flew and no one wanted to back down.

Her hands that rested on the sides were clenched into fists. The only reason she had agreed to this marriage was because Lin Guoan promised that he would return her mother's dowry to her.

Making him the enemy was not her goal. She softens her tone and said, "Mr. Zong, I know you don't want to marry me. Actually, it's not that bad—"

She paused intentionally to watch Zong Jinghao's expressions. He hid them well but she still spotted them.

"Mr. Zong, let's make a deal." Lin Xinyan said. She never really thought about marrying into the Zongs. She had agreed to the marriage but it was just to return to this country and take back what was hers.

"Ha." Zong Jinghao laughed. It sounded like a joke to him. He would never strike a deal with her.

Lin Xinyan swallowed. Her back was layered with cold sweat from being nervous. Zong Jinghao was tall, and she had to look up to talk to him. "I know that you're pretending to be handicapped to make the Lins back out on this marriage. I will agree to keep the promise for I have my reasons."

This caught Zong Jinghao's interest.

"What do you want?" A deal that came with conditions.

“A month. We’ll marry for a month, then we’ll go for a divorce.” A month was enough. Once she got hold of her mother’s dowry, she would go for a divorce.

“This is the deal you want to make with me?” Zong Jinghao frowned.

“Yes, this is a marriage we would have go through. This was the promise made by our mothers, we can’t back out of respect for them. After we got married, we could say that we weren’t a good match then file for divorce. You could carry on with your life so I don’t see this can be unfavorable to you.”

She slowed down. “I believe there is someone else that you like. That’s why you’ve been trying so hard to make the Lins back out from the engagement.”

Zong Jinghao’s face turned gloomy. There was a slow but steady anger in his voice as he said, “Aren’t you smart?”

Yes, he wanted to give Bai Zhuwei a place she deserved. He was touched by her sacrifice and quiet suffering at that time.

Zong Jinghao rested his gaze on her pretense. “What about you? What is that you gain for a one-month marriage?”

Zong Jinghao would never believe that she did just thinking of his interest.

Lin Xinyan felt a shoot of worry. She couldn’t say that she did it for her mother’s dowry, could she?

And yet if she does not come up with a reason, he would not believe in her.

“My mother was very worried about this marriage. She’s not the best in health, so I didn’t want to disappoint her.” She glanced elsewhere when she said this. She was lying as her mother never wanted her to marry into the Zongs.

Zong Jinghao’s tone held a hint of intimidation, as if he knew what she was thinking about. “Is that so?”

Lin Xinyan felt as if there were thorns pressing onto her back. His gaze was so sharp like he was reading through her mind. When she was thinking hard for the next move, the phone in his pocket rang.

Zong Jinghao gave her one last glance before taking out his phone. When he saw the name on the screen, his was softened. He turned around to pick up the call but turned back again and said, “If it’s just for a month, there will be no need for a wedding.”

Lin Xinyan had no choice but to say yes.

On the twelfth of August, Guan Jing came for Lin Xinyan.

There was no ceremony nor a wedding. There was just signing of the marriage certificate.

Lin Xinyan didn’t feel too upset as she knew that this was just a deal between them.

They would never have crossed paths if it was not for the engagement.

After some time, the car stopped in front of a villa.

Under the bright sunlight, the magnificent stone-built villa seemed impressive.

“Do go in.” Guan Jing signaled her.

He showed no passion nor interest in her. He just did his job as usual which meant that he knew that her marriage to Zong Jinghao was just to keep the promise.

She was not a “real” young mistress in the Zongs.

Although the house was large, there was barely anyone around but only a maid. Guan Jing barely introduced her around before leaving her in the house.

Lin Xinyan did not feel very comfortable.

“This is Young Master’s house. I take care of him. You can call me Aunt Yu.” Aunt Yu brought her to the room, and told her, “If you need anything please ask for me.”

A month was not a long time and Lin Xinyan brought her own things. It was unlikely that she would ask for anything from Aunt Yu but still she replied, “Alright.”

Aunt Yu opened the door, turned around and looked at her. She hesitated then sighed and said, “Young Master might not be coming home tonight. It’s Miss Bai’s birthday today.”

Although they did not have a wedding, she was still his wife in paper. This was the first day of their marriage and yet he had gone out to spend time with another woman. Aunt Yu felt pity for Lin Xinyan; this was only the first day and she had already been treated poorly by Zong Jinghao. What will become of her in the near future?

CHAPTER 5.

Lin Xinyan seemed to have guessed the reason behind Aunt Yu's reaction. She gave no explanation and just smiled.

Her relationship with Zong Jinghao was strictly business so she had no rights to question his private life.

In fact, she felt less restrained when he was not around.

Lin Xinyan entered the room and looked at the decor. The design was unique for it looked monotonous and minimalistic but yet there was a sense of sophistication and luxury. It was splendid.

"This is Young Master's bedroom." Aunt Yu smiled. Now that they were husband and wife, they would be sleeping together naturally.

Lin Xinyan opened her mouth but realized she shouldn't say anything so she just nodded.

It was a challenge to fall asleep in a new place especially on the first night. She leaned her back on the headboard to rest while she opened a job hunting app on her phone. She could only take care of her mother and the child in her if she has a stable job.

Huh?

Lin Xinyan saw a job posting for translator. A job for translator was quite common but what not the language it required as it was Country A.

Country A was the country she was sent to by Lin Guoan. It was a developing country in the tropical region. Not many people would learn the language. Most languages used widely were languages from developed countries.

The salary and benefits were not bad.

And so she applied for it.

Then she put aside her phone and laid down to sleep

The moonlight shone through the window like white silk so soft and gentle and the night was silent.

Soon, she fell into deep sleep. A beam of headlight shone from the outside into the house. A Maybach drove in and stopped at the porch.

The door opened and a tall figure came down from the car. He walked into the house swaying a little unlike his usual steady steps.

He pulled his collar. His mouth felt a little dry so he poured a glass of water when he entered the room. His Adam's apple moved as he drank where his dark pupils were almost red from intoxication. He finished the glass of water and it soothed the burning sensation in his throat.

He drank quite a lot of white wine at the gatherings and then a few more glasses of red wine at Bai Zhuwei's birthday.

His alcohol tolerance was good but now he felt a little drunk.

He threw his jacket onto the sofa and went straight to his room.

The room was dark but he did not turn on any lights as he knew where the bed was.

He laid down on it.

In her deep sleep, Lin Xinyan felt the movement but it stopped quickly. She curled her body and continued sleeping.

Morning came.

The rays of light brightened up the room like golden strings.

On the bed, the woman curled in the arm of the man still fast asleep.

They could make a sweet couple.

The man's eyelashes moved and he slowly opened his eyes. He had a hangover and wanted to take a shower to clear his heavy head. He moved his arm to sit up and realized that there was something lying on it.

He turned his head and saw a woman in his arm.

The girl's dark hair was voluminous and splayed over his arm. She had fair complexion and her eyelashes were curled like butterfly wings. Her pink lips were slightly opened and she was breathing softly.

His gazed downwards and he saw a slim neck sitting on delicate collarbones and the rising and falling chest in rhythm. She was sleeping on her side. Through the collar of her pajama, he could see the fullness of her bosom.

Her breathing made her chest rise and fall and that was seductive.

He swallowed his saliva. He had never felt such impulse with Bai Zhuwei but he could feel it with this woman who he had only met twice.

He frowned as he irked his manly instinct but yet he could not take his eyes off her.

In her dreams, Lin Xinyan found herself in the African grasslands. She was being watched by a ferocious lion and it was about to eat her.

She woke up in a fright.

When she opened her eyes, she saw a pair of dark pupils that was trying to stay calm.

Her mind blanked out.

She opened her eyes wide and covered her chest then questioned him, "You! What are you doing in my bed?"

The man shifted his gaze calmly and pulled the blankets away slowly. "This is my bed."

Lin Xinyan opened her mouth and was about to rebut but seeing the circumstances, she just kept quiet.

"Hadn't you gone to celebrate your girlfriend's birthday? Why are you back?" Lin Xinyan came down from the bed and stood on its side.

There was a hint of questioning in her tone.

When Aunt Yu said he was not coming back last night, she let down her guard and fell into a deep sleep. She didn't even hear him entering the room.

She slept on the same bed with this man the whole night!

Her face flushed when she thought of her how she was sleeping in his arms.

Her head drooped.

Zong Jinghao was unbuttoning his shirt as he did not feel comfortable as the creased shirt still had the scent on alcohol lingering on it. He did not take off his shirt last night. He looked at woman standing by the side of the bed and gave her a cheeky smile. "My girlfriend's birthday isn't as important in comparison with the first night of marriage."

Lin Xinyan was speechless.

This was just a deal and they were not husband and wife. What "first night of marriage" was he babbling about?

Zong Jinghao took off his shirt.

Lin Xinyan turned around immediately. This man was taking off his clothes in front of her!

After that night, she rejected men. Any form of intimacy with men.

She panicked and said, "I— I'll go out."

And ran out of the bedroom instantly.

Zong Jinghao paid no attention. He took off his belt and went into the bathroom.

He needed to take a shower to clear his mind.

The gushing sound of the water came from the toilet. An hour later, there was a scent of fragrance that flowed out of the bathroom. His short dark hair was slightly damp and messy. The white shower robe shielded his slim figure with its collar slightly opened showing his firm chest that was honey-colored. It was an enticing sight of masculine charisma.

He walked over to the wardrobe and opened it. He saw a sunflower-printed bag in his wardrobe when he was about to take out his clothes. He stopped. Is this the woman's bag? It was flower-printed. How could she be so childish?

It seemed like she had made herself at home and placed her things inside his wardrobe.

He frowned and took his clothes. However, he accidentally knocked over her bag when he was putting the hanger back.

The bag was not zipped so its contents spilled out. They were just simple clothes and daily necessities.

He knelt down and was about to pick the things up when he saw an ultrasonography report.

Lin Xinyan, female, eighteen. Early pregnancy, six weeks.

That woman was pregnant?

CHAPTER 6.

Zong Jinghao frowned, feeling deceived.

Aunt Yu had already woken up to prepare breakfast in the living room.

When she saw Lin Xinyan sitting on the sofa alone in her pajamas, she smiled and asked, "Did you sleep well last night?"

She thought Zong Jinghao would stay with Bai Zhuwei and would not come back last night. However, she heard some noises during the night. As she got up to check what happened, she saw that Zong Jinghao had returned and slept in his room.

This was the wife chosen for the young master by his mother, and she was certainly good. Aunt Yu who had always been taking care of the young master felt happy to see him finally got married.

Her tone and expression were too enthusiastic and inexplicably intimate.

Lin Xinyan gave a rigid smile and replied, "I slept quite well."

"Then let's go and change your clothes quickly. I will prepare breakfast and you can eat soon," Aunt Yu said as she walked into the dining room and started to make breakfast.

Lin Xinyan looked down at her pajamas and the clothes she brought were still in the room.

The man inside the room should have gotten dressed by now, shouldn't he?

She stood up and walked towards the bedroom. As she stood at the door, she raised her hand and knocked on the door.

No one answered.

She knocked again, but there was still no response.

Having no other alternatives, she tried pushing the door. It was not locked from the inside and the door opened as soon as she pushed it.

The moment the door was opened, she was hit with a cold atmosphere that was like winter in December, swept by the chills from the icy wind that made her shiver.

The man was sitting on the edge of the bed as he stared coldly at a piece of paper.

That paper-

Soon after, Lin Xinyan saw what he was holding in his hand clearly and saw a mess on the floor. A sense of humiliation of being spied on and her privacy being invaded rushed into her. She ran into the room and snatched the paper, "How could you? You went through other people's things without their consent. Do you understand what privacy is?"

Haha.

Zong Jinghao sneered, "Privacy?"

His false smile looked particularly scary. "You married me while carrying a bastard in your belly. How dare you talk about privacy now?"

"I...I..." Lin Xinyan wanted to explain, but she could not find a suitable explanation at that moment.

Zong Jinghao stood up. His steps were neither hurried nor slow, and they were especially rhythmic. Every step was like the atmospheric pressure closing in. Dark clouds tumbled over his sharp eyebrows, "Tell me. What is your motive?"

Was she planning to make him raise someone else's child without knowing, and let the child become the eldest grandson of the Zong family?

Was the previous deal just an expedient of hers?

The more he thought about it, the more his face sank.

Lin Xinyan pursed her lips as her body trembled. She kept moving back, guarding her abdomen with her hands, for fear that he would hurt the child inside her. "I didn't mean to hide this from you. Since our marriage was just a transaction, I didn't tell you about it. There was absolutely no motive."

Zong Jinghao's tone was inexplicably creepy and intimidating, "Really?"

Lin Xinyan guarded her lower abdomen as she withdrew calmly. Holding on to her composure, she said, "It's true. How can such a matter be bluffed through? If I have any improper thoughts, I'll suffer a painful death. Besides, if I really deceived you, I think you have the means to crush me, don't you?"

Although her movements were very subtle, Zong Jinghao still noticed them as his gaze swept past the abdomen that she was protecting.

His gaze was fixed on her face, "Why didn't you explain it clearly in the beginning?"

Zong Jinghao did not believe her so easily.

Her hands guarded her abdomen as they clenched tightly. Being pregnant with this child was too unexpected for her, but this was her family member related to her by blood. She had lost her brother, so she wished to give birth to this child.

From now on, it could be like the past. The three of them can depend on one another.

Thinking of that night, she could not help but tremble with cold sweat on her palms, "I... I just found out not long ago."

She didn't even dare to tell Zhuang Zijin that she didn't dare to put the check-up list in the hospital because she was afraid that Zhuang Zijin would find it.

She didn't expect to cause such a big disturbance.

And caused Zong Jinghao to suspect her of having impure motives.

She was only eighteen years old, and she actually—

How promiscuous was her private life?

Zong Jinghao's face was extremely gloomy when he warned her, "You better behave yourself during this month. If I find out that you stir any trouble—"

"No, I absolutely won't. I'll behave myself and if I overstep the mark, I'll leave myself at your disposal." Lin Xinyan promised quickly.

Even if she could not gain his trust, she must not make him doubt her motives.

She was already in a difficult situation, and if she got one more enemy, it would be disadvantageous for her to regain her things.

Zong Jinghao stared at her, looking closely, as if he was judging the credibility of her words.

Clang, clang- Auntie Chen came over at this moment, "Breakfast is ready."

Zong Jinghao narrowed his gaze and restrained his anger, "Clean up the floor."

After that, he turned around and left the room.

As soon as Zong Jinghao left, Lin Xinyan's legs became weak. She leaned on the low cabinet behind her and took a long time to regain her strength. Then she crouched down and picked up the clothes that were scattered on the floor.

When she saw the baby's ultrasound scan in her hand, tears rolled down her face and dripped on the paper.

She wiped her face. She should not cry as it was a sign of weakness.

She must not be weak since her mother and the child in her belly needed her.

She folded the paper and put it in her bag. Then she changed her clothes and left the room.

There was no one in the dining room. Also, there were empty coffee cups and empty plates on the dining table. He probably had finished eating and left.

Lin Xinyan breathed a sigh of relief. It felt really repressive spending time with that man.

Then she went to the dining table and ate.

After breakfast, she went out as she told Zhuang Zijin that she was going back. She was also afraid that Zhuang Zijin would be worried about her.

As soon as she entered the door, she was held back by Zhuang Zijin who asked, "The eldest master of the Zong family—"

“Mom.” Lin Xinyan’s tone was very serious as she did not want to say more about this, “He’s a very good man. Don’t worry about me.”

Zhuang Zijin sighed. Her daughter who had grown up had her own opinions and did not like to hear too much nagging. Zhuang Zijin could not help but felt a sense of loss, “I cared about you.”

She was worried that he would treat her daughter badly.

Lin Xinyan hugged her. She did not mean it, but confronting Zong Jinghao and trying hard to convince him had drained her to the point of exhaustion.

“Mom, I’m just a little tired and I didn’t mean it.”

“I know, I didn’t blame you,” Zhuang Zijin stroked her back. She seemed to be able feel her exhaustion, “If you’re tired, sleep and rest for awhile.”

Lin Xinyan nodded. Although she did not want to sleep, she felt exhausted indeed. Subsequently, she fell asleep after she went to the bedroom.

At noon, Zhuang Zijin finished preparing lunch and asked her to wake up and eat.

Sitting on the dining table, Zhuang Zijin served rice to her daughter, “I cooked fish. That’s your favorite.”

Zhuang Zijin felt guilty towards her daughter. Although she gave birth to Lin Xinyan, she failed to provide her with a happy childhood and let her suffer.

Lin Xinyan glanced at the sweet and sour fish prepared by her mother on the table. It had a faint sweet and sour aroma. It used to be her favorite dish but now, it turned her stomach upside down when she smelled it.

She could not hold back. Ugh-

“Yan.”

Covering her mouth, Lin Xinyan did not have time to explain. She went straight into the bathroom and retched while leaning on the side of the sink.

Zhuang Zijin was worried and came along. Being someone who had given birth before, her face turned slightly pale when she saw her daughter’s reaction. However, she did not believe it as her daughter was very conservative and honest, and she never had a boyfriend at school. She is someone with moral integrity.

Zhuang Zijin’s voice trembled a little, “Yan, what’s wrong with you?”

Lin Xinyan’s body suddenly stiffened. Her hands clasped tighter and tighter onto the edge of the sink. Since she decided to keep this child, Zhuang Zijin would need to know sooner or later.

She turned to look at her mother and mustered her courage.

“Mom, I’m pregnant.”

Zhuang Zijin could not steady herself for a moment and stepped back. She could not believe this. Her daughter was just eighteen.

CHAPTER 7.

“What happened?!” Zhuang Zijin asked as she seemed to realize something in an instant. “Didn’t the money come from the compensation given by the perpetrator?”

Apart from arranging her son’s funeral, she was injured in a car accident. A lot of money was spent as a result. Before returning to China, Lin Xinyan even gave her some money which she said was the money left from the compensation.

Lin Xinyan did not know how she could explain as it was too difficult to talk about it.

And her silence was clearly acquiescence. How could a girl raise such a large amount of money? Zhuang Zijin was heartbroken and she did not dare to believe this, “Did you betray yourself?”

She grabbed Lin Xinyan’s wrist and said, “You can’t keep this baby. Go to the hospital with me now!”

“Why?” Lin Xinyan tried to move away from her grip.

“Your life will be ruined if you give birth to this child!” She must not give birth to this child. She was married and if other people found out about it, she would be ruined.

“Mom, please let me keep the baby.” Lin Xinyan cried and begged.

No matter how Lin Xinyan begged, Zhuang Zijin remained determined and stayed firm on her stand.

Eventually, Lin Xinyan was dragged to the hospital that day.

When she said she did not want to go there, Zhuang Zijin threatened to commit suicide.

Hence, Lin Xinyan had to go there. Several checks and scans were required before the abortion. When Zhuang Zijin went to collect the scan forms, Lin Xinyan sat on the bench at the corridor alone, with her hands covering her belly.

Her tears could not stop rolling down her face.

She felt sad and helpless.

“Hao, I’m fine so don’t worry too much. It’s just a mild burn,” Bai Zhu smiled slightly. She was wearing a black tight dress which accentuated her shapely figure, and a suit jacket over her shoulders. Zong Jinghao was wearing a white shirt with folded sleeves, revealing his strong arms.

He looked worried, “If the scalding burn isn’t treated properly, it may leave scars.”

Bai Zhuwei’s body leaned into Zong Jinghao’s arms, “Will you despise me if I end up having scars?”

“You keep talking nonsense!”

Bai Zhu giggled slightly. She knew that Zong Jinghao was not a superficial person.

This voice-

Lin Xinyan raised her head slowly and saw Bai Zhuwei leaning on Zong Jinghao as they walked towards her direction slowly.

They look like a perfect match.

On the other hand, she was like a clown who lost her innocence at such a young age and got pregnant without knowing who the father was.

Just as she became engrossed while watching them, she saw something that took her by surprise.

“Next patient,” The operation theatre’s door opened and the nurse was standing at the door. Behind him was a young woman, clutching her abdomen as she walked out of the room. She kept muttering, “Painless abortion...why is it still so painful?”

Zong Jinghao frowned and his eyes fixed on Lin Xinyan’s face. When she was in front of him, she acted like she cared a lot for the baby in her belly. Yet, within just a short while, she turned around and tried to get an abortion at the hospital.

He sneered in his heart!

Bai Zhuwei’s eyes followed Zong Jinghao’s gaze and looked over there.

The moment she saw Lin Xinyan, she felt a sense of familiarity, but she could not remember where she had seen her. Then she looked at Zong Jinghao and asked, “Do you know her?”

“I don’t know her,” Zong Jinghao raised the corners of his lips coldly.

In his heart, he had tagged many labels on Lin Xinyan. Her private life was promiscuous and got herself knocked up at only 18 years old. Also, she displayed maternal love in front of him and yet, she came to the hospital for an abortion.

What a scheming person!

“Have you considered carefully?” The nurse repeatedly sought confirmation.

Lin Xinyan did not want them to see her in such a pitiful and embarrassing situation. Even though she was reluctant, sad and helpless, she nodded, “I have already thought it through carefully.”

“Then follow me in.”

Lin Xinyan lowered her head and avoided looking at anyone as she followed the nurse into the operating theatre. When the door of the operating theatre closed, she was isolated from everything outside the room.

In the meantime, Bai Zhu was slightly disturbed since she could feel Zong Jinghao's anger. She stretched out to hold his arm and said softly, "Hao."

Zong Jinghao said coldly, "Let's go."

Bai Zhuwei held his hand tighter and looked back at the closed door of the operating theatre. She took a look at Zong Jinghao's reaction again. It did not seem that he did not know that person, but after being by his side for so long, Bai Zhuwei had never seen him with a woman before.

She knew this very well, so who was that woman?

Why was he so angry?

"Hao, that girl..."

Zong Jinghao hugged her and did not want to talk about this topic, "For those who don't matter, don't take it to heart."

Bai Zhuwei could only shut her mouth and stopped talking although she was curious.

In the operating theatre, Lin Xinyan flinched after seeing those cold instruments. No, she cannot abandon this child. No!

"Lie down." The doctor gestured.

"I don't want to do it anymore," Lin Xinyan shook her head and ran away.

She ran very fast. She was panicky and did not pay attention to the path ahead until she ran into a man who was amongst the oncoming crowd.

She covered her forehead and kept apologizing, "I'm sorry. I'm sorry—"

"Lin Xinyan?" He Ruize thought she looked like her but he was not sure, so he tried to ask.

CHAPTER 8.

Lin Xinyan raised her head slowly and saw the man's face clearly. She exclaimed in surprise, "Doctor He."

Seeing group of people standing behind him, Lin Xinyan was even more surprised, "Why are you here?"

Her younger brother had autism and He Ruize was his doctor. Lin Xinyan and he got to know each other during her brother's consultation visits.

He Ruize smiled gently and before he could open his mouth, the director of the hospital spoke, "Doctor He is here to deliver a speech."

He Ruize was a well-known psychiatrist and he was exceptionally knowledgeable in autism.

"How about you? Why are you here? Are you feeling unwell?" He Ruize asked.

Lin Xinyan thought of her mother's resolute attitude and trembled.

"Yan!" Zhuang Zijin ran from the other side of the corridor hurriedly while holding the examination checklist in her hand. She was startled when she heard from the nurse that Lin Xinyan had ran away. Now that she saw her, she let out an emotional shout.

Lin Xinyan pursed her lips and she felt like crying, "Mom-"

He Ruize said to the director of the hospital who was standing beside him, "Please go back first as I have other matters to attend to."

"Dr. He, we won't bother you since you have other matters to attend to. That said, I sincerely invite you to work in our hospital. If you have any requirements, please feel free to let me know and I'll do my best to satisfy your requirements."

He Ruize replied gently, "I'll consider."

"Auntie, let's go outside and talk about it. It's not appropriate to discuss it here." The hospital was full of people and it was not a suitable place for them to have a discussion.

Zhuang Zijin also knew He Ruize. There were times when she could not afford to pay for her son's medical fees and Dr. He often helped her to pay the outstanding amount.

As such, she respected He Ruize very much.

She held Lin Xinyan's wrist tightly for fear that she would run away again.

Just as they stepped out of the hospital, Lin Xinyan knelt in front of Zhuang Zijin, "Mom, please, Xinqi was gone already. Please let me keep him."

He Ruize frowned as he wondered what she meant. Then he arrived at a realization very quickly and his eyes were fixated on her abdomen.

Seeing the examination checklist in Zhuang Zijin's hand, it became almost clear to him that she was pregnant.

Shocking and unbelievable!

He wanted to know what happened, but that was not the right time to ask.

Lin Xinyan rarely cried in front of Zhuang Zijin. Even when her younger brother died, she cried secretly, and she never shed tears in front of Zhuang Zijin.

Zhuang Zijin did not mean to force her, but would she still have a future if she gave birth to this child?

Nonetheless, being a mother would make someone stronger. Judging from Lin Xinyan's reaction, it was going to be very difficult to make her give up. Zhuang Zijin sighed, "Let's do what you want."

After speaking, she turned around and left. She felt miserable and did not know how to face her daughter.

Lin Xinyan squatted down slowly. She was pushing herself to be strong, but she could not hold back her tears. She did not want to cry, but she could not help it. The burden of grief and pain in her heart engulfed her.

Before returning to China, he went to look for them and found out that they had returned to China, and her brother died in a car accident.

He did not know what happened during this period.

He Ruize squatted down and looked at her. She was just a teenager when he first met her, but she was already very sensible and took care of her younger brother and mother.

Once, he saw that she only had enough money to buy two meals. Then she gave the meals to her mother and younger brother. Although she did not eat anything, she told Zhuang Zijin that she had already eaten.

She was so sensible that it made him feel sorry for her.

He Ruize stretched out his hand to touch her head and comfort her, but before his hand fell on her, Lin Xinyan suddenly raised her head and looked at him, "Thank you for your help in the past. When I have money in the future, I'll definitely return it to you."

He Ruize's hand paused above her hair. He slowly grasped and retracted his palm, and said with a smile, "Fool, I helped you all willingly so there is no need to return the money to me."

Lin Xinyan shook her head, "You are kind, but I remember your help."

When I have the ability in future, I will certainly repay you.

He Ruize helped her up, "Where do you live? I'll take you home."

Lin Xinyan was worried about Zhuang Zijin at that time, so she nodded and gave him her address.

When they arrived at the destination, Lin Xinyan pushed the door open to get off the car. He Ruize asked her, "Will you go back there in the future?"

Lin Xinyan turned around to look at him. She shook her head, "I won't go back."

After a lot struggling and difficulty, Lin Xinyan finally returned.

The moment she came home, she saw Zhuang Zijin sitting on a chair. Her heart seemed to be torn apart as she wiped her tears.

Without looking at Lin Xinyan, Zhuang Zijin continued to wipe her tears and said, "I'm fine. You can go back."

"Mom-"

"It's me who didn't take good care of you." Zhuang Zijin wiped her tears away, but her tears kept falling and she could not stop crying.

Lin Xinyan rushed over and hugged her. Both of them hugged each other and cried, venting out the pain in their hearts.

After a long time, they finally calmed down. Lin Xinyan then told Zhuang Zijin about her transaction with Zong Jinghao, so that she would not worry.

Zhuang Zijin was very shocked and she wondered how marriage could be a trifling matter.

Although she did not approve of the transactional marriage, she thought that it was fine since her daughter was pregnant and she was no longer innocent. Most probably, Zong Jinghao could not accept it either.

She would take care of her daughter in the future.

Lin Xinyan returned to the villa in the evening. Zong Jinghao was not there. After dinner, she took a walk in the courtyard of the villa to help in her digestion and to see the surroundings of the villa.

As it was already late, she went back to her room. However, she made her way to the kitchen afterwards to get a glass of water as she was feeling thirsty.

When Lin Xinyan was about to go back to her room to sleep after drinking half a glass of water, she heard the sound of the door handle being turned and then the door was pushed open within moments.

A tall figure stepped in immediately, followed by a beautiful figure stepping out from behind.

Lin Xinyan was stunned for a moment.

She did not expect Zong Jinghao would bring the woman that he liked home at such late hours.

Bai Zhuwei was also taken aback when she saw her. She thought, "Wasn't this the woman we saw at the hospital that day?"

She raised her head to look at Zong Jinghao. His chiseled face looked cold and stiff.

Why was he angry that day?

Was it something to do with this woman?

Women's minds were always sensitive. Hence, Zong Jinghao's abnormal reaction made Bai Zhuwei wary of Lin Xinyan.

"Well, I'll go back to my room first." Lin Xinyan did not want to be the annoying third wheel.

"Wait," Zong Jinghao looked at her with a heavy gaze. She was wearing a conservative pajamas. With the white skirt extending to her ankles and her slim fair arms exposed, she looked quite pure and innocent.

Nonetheless, he felt more disgusted after thinking of what she did, "Zhuwei is the owner of this place other than me. Do you know what I mean?"

Lin Xinyan felt that it was entirely unnecessary. After all, she never regarded herself as the owner, so why would he need to emphasize that?

"I know. I'll go to sleep then." Lin Xinyan turned around and walked towards the room.

"Ms. Lin." Bai Zhuwei looked at her, "I'm sorry."

Lin Xinyan was confused and looked at her in surprise.

Her face was deeply apologetic, "Although you have a marriage arrangement with Hao, but Hao and I have known each other for a longer time. If it weren't for you, it would be me who marry him. We're in love, so-

"So what?" Lin Xinyan thought this woman was very strange.

She clearly knew where she stood and she did not hinder them.

Why did Bai Zhuwei say these words?

"I just feel guilty that you're married to Hao, but he doesn't love you because of me."

"There is no need for that." According to normal people's thinking, shouldn't the parties in such an awkward relationship try not to interfere with one another?

Did Bai Zhuwei say all these to show off her kindness in front of Zong Jinghao?

Inexplicably, Lin Xinyan did not have a good impression of her.

Zong Jinghao squinted his eyes and stared at her face, "What kind of attitude is this?"

Lin Xinyan pursed her lips. All she wanted was to spend this month in peace. She wanted to get what belonged to her, and leave.

This woman was the strange one who came here to say these words.

How should she answer?

"How do you want me to answer?" She did not know how to respond to Bai Zhuwei's words.

CHAPTER 9.

"How do you want me to answer?" Lin Xinyan did not know how to respond to Bai Zhuwei's words.

Should I apologize and say that I should not have a marriage arrangement with Zong Jinghao and split the both of you up?

That would be so hypocritical.

Moreover, the marriage was decided by the two mothers. What could she do?

Zong Jinghao squinted his eyes and stared at her. He began to walk with steps that were not too rushed or too slow. Unconsciously, a repressive atmosphere filled the room and Lin Xinyan could not help stepping back, "I didn't provoke you, right?"

Bai Zhuwei came up and took his arm, "Hao, don't be angry. It is my fault since I shouldn't talk about this. She just married you and I shouldn't have come. You should rest early and I'll go back first."

"You aren't the one who should leave." Zong Jinghao held her wrist and they went upstairs.

Bai Zhuwei was filled with joy. Although Zong Jinghao had already indicated that he would be with her, he never had any thoughts about her.

His action today made her felt over the moon.

After all, it was not her that night. She could grasp his heart firmly only when they shared a substantive relation.

Lin Xinyan did not look up. She just turned and entered her room silently.

Bai Zhuwei turned her head and saw the back of Lin Xinyan as she entered the room. Her figure was weak and slender, and Bai Zhuwei suddenly found that it resembled the back of the girl that night.

That night, she overcame the jealousy and hatred in her heart and got a virgin for Zong Jinghao, which was her greatest limit already. She did not want to see the girl who made love with Zong Jinghao.

She briefly saw the girl's thin figure only when she left.

No wonder she had been pondering why she found Lin Xinyan familiar.

It turned out that this familiarity did not come out of nowhere.

The thought of Lin Xinyan might be the woman that night made Bai Zhuwei panic.

She must not let Lin Xinyan stay by Zong Jinghao's side.

Close contact is needed, so as not to let Zong Jinghao discover the truth.

After all, this was the woman who had been intimate with him.

Once they entered the room, Bai Zhuwei held no reservations. She hugged Zong Jinghao's toned waist, buried her head in his arms, and said charmingly, "Hao, let me be your woman again."

As she spoke, she came up to kiss him. Zong Jinghao's expression was slightly focused, but he did not have the impulse that a normal man should have for Bai Zhuwei's initiative.

He had no desire for her except for that night!

Just when Bai Zhuwei's lips were about to touch his, he turned his head and Bai Zhuwei's kiss fell through.

"It's late, go to bed soon." Zong Jinghao pulled his collar which was actually not tight, feeling a little irritable.

He did not know what the irritability was for. He was vexed as he did not have the impulse that a normal man should have towards her and it made him feel abnormal.

Bai Zhuwei clenched her hands tightly and the feeling of being aggrieved was shown on her face, "Hao, do you dislike me?"

"Don't imagine things." Zong Jinghao kept his voice down and put his arm around her shoulder, "Sleep here tonight."

Bai Zhuwei was a woman and she understood too well what it meant for a man to be uninterested in her.

She laid down on the bed obediently. Her eyes were red and tears rolled in her eyes, but they never fell.

The aggrieved look that was obvious, was forbearing at the same time.

Zong Jinghao's heart moved slightly. She was so forbearing that night too. No matter how much he got her down, she never said anything.

His feeling became tenderer as he covered her with a quilt and sat on the side of the bed, "Don't imagine things. When we become husband and wife, I... will definitely want you."

Bai Zhuwei nodded. She had been around Zong Jinghao for a long time and had some understanding of his temperament. Even if he did not love her, he would be accountable for her due to his sense of responsibility.

Zong Jinghao took off his jacket and stepped out of the room. Then he went downstairs, threw the jacket on the sofa and he sank into the sofa. With his long slender legs leaned on the coffee table and his head leaned back on the sofa, he looked a little tired.

The next morning.

When Lin Xinyan washed up, got dressed and walked out of her room, Zong Jinghao was sitting at the dining table, reading Today's Finance. Bai Zhuwei seemed to know him well and made him a pot of hot black coffee.

Aunt Yu had already prepared breakfast. Lin Xinyan reduced her presence by not saying anything and sitting at the end of the table to distance herself from them as she ate the porridge with her head down.

When Aunt Yu served the fried eggs and saw Lin Xinyan's unpromising manner, she frowned. She was his wife but why was she so humble in front of the mistress?

Aunt Yu said aloud deliberately, "Young Mistress, you should sit next to Young Master."

Ehh?

Lin Xinyan looked up.

Zong Jinghao also put the financial newspapers down.

They were stunned for a moment as their eyes met. Lin Xinyan shuddered when she thought of how coldly he looked at her last night.

Zong Jinghao's mother died when he was very young. It was Aunt Yu who took care of him.

And he respected this elderly woman who took care of him.

As such, Aunt Yu spoke quite freely.

In this marriage, they all got what they needed. Lin Xinyan felt that she should not disturb his private life. After finishing the porridge, she smiled, "I'm done. Enjoy your meal."

From what happened last night, Lin Xinyan could tell that Zong Jinghao cared a lot about Bai Zhuwei, so she should be careful in how she behaved.

She walked quickly as if there was a monster chasing after her.

Zong Jinghao looked at the rushing Lin Xinyan's back and narrowed his eyes slightly.

Bai Zhuwei restrained her thoughts and said in a low voice, "Maybe she isn't very comfortable because I'm here. In the future-"

Zong Jinghao placed a glass of milk in front of her, "She'll leave in a month."

Bai Zhuwei lowered her eyes. This month was simply too long for her.

Lin Xin Yan returned to her room and turned on her mobile phone. She saw a reply in response to her message on the 58.com platform.

She was invited to attend a job interview. When Zong Jinghao and Bai Zhuwei left, Lin Xinyan also walked out of the villa to take a taxi and made her way to the venue for the interview.

Wanyue Group was situated at a skyscraper, towering into the clouds. How magnificent!

Lin Xinyan stood in front of the building, took a deep breath, and walked in.

She did not graduate from university, and it was not easy to find a suitable job, so she really wished to succeed in her application for this job.

The interview area was full of people. All of them were in their formal wear, holding their resumes in their hands, and seemed to be very well-prepared for the interview. On the other hand, Lin Xinyan looked a little out of place in a white t-shirt and jeans.

She did not look like she was here for the interview.

Ignoring the strange gazes cast on her from time to time, she stood quietly and waited.

It took nearly an hour before Lin Xinyan was called.

Washing dishes and delivering newspapers could not be considered a work experience. In addition, she had no academic qualifications. Therefore, she did not prepare a resume.

The interviewer frowned slightly about her lack of work experience, "How did you know the language of country A?"

After all, this was not a commonly known language.

The job advertisement was posted for a long time already but there were no applicants.

Lin Xinyan recalled the past and held her hands tightly, "I have lived there before. To better communicate with the locals, I deliberately learned the language, words..."

This voice-

Bai Zhuwei was passing by the interview area with a document in her hand when she heard this familiar voice. Then she followed the voice and looked inside. Once she saw Lin Xinyan, her heart suddenly stopped.

CHAPTER 10.

She even knew the language of Country A.

If she was still unsure whether Lin Xinyan was the girl that night earlier on, then she can be sure of it now!

“Ms. Bai?” Her subordinate did not understand why she stopped suddenly and reminded, “The meeting is about to begin.”

Bai Zhuwei handed the document to her subordinate, “You take the documents to Mr. Zong first, and I’ll be there in a short while.”

“Then you come over here tomorrow.” There were just too few people who knew the language of this country. Although Lin Xinyan had no work experience, it was sufficient since she knew the language of Country A.

Lin Xinyan stood up from the chair and leaned forward slightly, “Thank you.”

And she walked out of the interview room happily. As soon as she left, Bai Zhuwei walked into the room.

“That woman you interviewed just now doesn’t meet the job requirements, so we can’t recruit her.”

“Although she has no work experience, she knows-”

“What I said is useless, isn’t it?” Bai Zhuwei snapped.

She was Zong Jinghao’s secretary and girlfriend, and she might marry into Zong family. Who would dare to offend her?

Although the interviewer felt it was a pity, he obeyed with a “Yes”.

Lin Xinyan came out of the building with joy. She felt that she had seen the hope of life.

Life was getting on the right track bit by bit.

She hailed a taxi from the side of the road and went to the Lin’s residence.

Soon, the car stopped in front of the Lin’s villa. She paid and alighted from the taxi.

She walked into the villa with light and steady steps.

In the living room, Shen Xiuqing was wearing silk pajamas and sitting enchantingly on the sofa.

Seeing Lin Xinyan, she raised her delicate eyebrows, “Oh, isn’t this Lin Xinyan?”

Lin Xinyan's gaze fell on the jade bracelet that Shen Xiuqing was wearing. She had seen it in her mother's jewelry box when she was a child, and her mother said that it was given to her by Lin Xinyan's maternal grandmother.

It had fallen into Shen Xiuqing's hands now.

Lin Xinyan suppressed the emotions inside her, "I'm here to look for Lin Guoan."

Shen Xiuqing fiddled with her beautifully painted nails and without raising her eyelids, "Since you are married to a crippled man, I suppose you aren't having a good life, right?"

"Well, don't let it bother you." Lin Xinyan said lightly, and asked again, "Is Lin Guoan here?"

Shen Xiuqing raised her eyes and assessed Lin Xinyan, "You look like a flat eggplant. Even that crippled man from the Zong family isn't interested in you, is he?"

Lin Xinyan could not help but sneer. At this moment, she was a little grateful to Zong Jinghao for pretending to be lame on purpose so that she had a chance to come back.

If she knew that Zong Jinghao was not crippled, would she regret not marrying her own daughter to him?

As far as men were concerned, Zong Jinghao was indeed handsome, capable and rich.

Many women would flock to him in droves.

Lin Guoan was not there and she did not want to waste her time on unnecessary verbal exchanges with Shen Xiuqing.

She turned and left. When she was at the gate, a car drove towards her from the side of the road and stopped at the gate. Lin Xinyan knew that the car belonged to Lin Guoan.

Within moments, the driver pulled the door open. Lin Guoan got out of the car and saw Lin Xinyan standing at the gate. When he thought that she might have come to ask him for Zhuang Zijin's dowry, his face sank; and before she could speak, he said, "If you want to get your mother's dowry back, you have to do something for me."

Lin Xinyan frowned, "You said that as long as I marry into the Zong family, you'll return my mother's things!"

Lin Guoan snorted coldly, "Why do I want you to marry into the Zong family? Because it's helpful to the Lin's, especially in the career prospect!"

Lin Xin was trembling with anger, "How can you break your promise? Are you still a man?!"

"Sure enough, you're an ill-bred brat!" Lin Guoan's expression was very unpleasant, "I'm your father. How could you talk to me like this?"

Lin Xinyan felt cold. Her body felt cold and her heart felt even colder!

He actually broke his promise!

“If you want those things, tell Zong Jinghao to give me the developer rights for Repulse Bay, then I’ll give them to you.” After saying that, Lin Guoan walked past her and went into the courtyard. He subsequently stopped at a few steps away from Lin Xinyan, “That piece of land is very important to me. As long as you persuade Zong Jinghao to give it to me, I’ll return all the things that your mother brought here, including the piano that your mother gave you as a birthday present.”

Lin Xinyan never expected that Lin Guoan would be so shameless!

Since he was so untrustworthy, Lin Xinyan did not believe him anymore.

If she wished to get those things back, she would need to find another way.

Lin Xinyan narrowed her eyes. The land he wanted was in Zong Jinghao’s hands...

If she wanted to grasp Lin Guoan’s weakness, it seemed that she had to put some effort into her ‘newly wedded husband’.

But how should she begin?

Although they were husband and wife, they were more unfamiliar with each other than strangers.

Lin Xinyan still could not think of a way when she returned to her residence. However, she received a telephone call to inform her that her job application was unsuccessful.

“Didn’t you tell me to start working tomorrow?” Lin Xinyan said anxiously.

“Sorry, we can’t employ you because you don’t meet our recruitment requirements.” After saying that, he hung up.

Lin Xinyan looked at the phone and did not come back to her senses for half the day.