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The call was from Bai Yinning. Upon seeing the caller id, her chest tightened a little. Lin Xinyan naturally associated Yao Qingqing to Bai Yinning.

"I'm leaving, you pick up the call," Qin Ya remarked, thinking Lin Xinyan did not pick up the call due to her presence.

However, it was not true. Lin Xinyan was actually slightly hesitant as she was afraid Bai Yinning would tell her more about Yao Qingqing. She did not want to be further involved in that matter anymore.

Yet, Bai Yinning seemed to be very persistent. The phone continued ringing despite Lin Xinyan being indecisive about whether she wanted to pick the call up.

Taking in a deep breath, Lin Xinyan finally gave in. As she pressed the 'answer' button, she heard Bai Yinning ask, "Are you leaving today?"

"No, I'm leaving tomorrow," Lin Xinyan responded.

"Let's meet today then," Bai Yinning suggested.

Lin Xinyan stared at her shoes, still feeling uncertain and tried to decline, "I think it might not be very convenient..."

"You're leaving tomorrow. Shouldn't you bid me farewell?" Bai Yinning cut her off.

Lin Xinyan remained silence.

"I won't take up a lot of your time," Bai Yinning persuaded once again.

After all, Bai Yinning had saved her before. It will be too heartless of Lin Xinyan to reject his requests continuously. Finally, Lin Xinyan gave in, "You can come and look for me."

"I'm can't see you right away. Is it okay if I send someone to pick you up instead?" Bai Yinning proposed.

"Forget it, just tell me the location. It will be too troublesome for someone to come and pick me up. I'll go there myself," Lin Xinyan answered.

"We can meet at the mansion. I'll be there in a jiffy."

Lin Xinyan paused for a moment before she replied, "Alright, see you."

Lin Xinyan stood at the side of the road and was only able to hail a taxi after a good twenty minutes.

Soon, the car stopped in front of the mansion. Lin Xinyan paid and alighted from the taxi.

Prior to her arrival, Bai Yinning had informed Liu to be prepared. Upon seeing Lin Xinyan, Liu approached her and greeted, "Ms. Lin, it's good to see you again."

Since they had interacted before, the atmosphere between them was not awkward. Lin Xinyan spoke, "It's too cold out here. Why didn't you wait in the mansion?"

"It's alright, Young Master told me you were reaching soon. Let's head into the mansion," Liu smiled.

The mansion was not an unfamiliar place for Lin Xinyan as she had stayed here for a couple of days before.

Entering the living room, she took off her outer coat and hung it onto the rack since the room had already been warmed up by the heater.

As Liu made coffee, she depicted, "I thought I would never see you again."

As she placed the cup onto the table, Liu added, "Actually, Young Master is a very nice person."

There were two females who were significant in Bai Yinning's life. For Liu, she personally liked Lin Xinyan much more than Yao Qingqing, for no particular reason. Liu just thought Lin Xinyan was friendlier; she could easily get along with her.

In comparison, the impression Yao Qingqing gave off was much more cold and gloomy.

Acting as if she didn't hear Liu, Lin Xinyan did not reply. Instead, she walked towards the fish tank and changed the subject, "The fishes are still here."

Lin Xinyan remembered that Bai Yinning had gotten her these fishes for her entertainment after she was rescued by Bai him. It was because Lin Xinyan wasn't able to move around freely.

These fishes were pretty unique; brightly colored, with distinctive features. When Lin Xinyan gently touched the tail of the fishes, they were startled and swam away instantly. Lin Xinyan was certainly intrigued by their reaction.

Liu stood beside Lin Xinyan. As she glanced at the fish tank, Liu muttered, "Young Master would feed these fishes every day."

Looking up, Lin Xinyan could not help but wonder the truth in her words. How could Bai Yinning be so free to feed these fishes every day? Seeing her confusion, Liu continued, "Young Master will only feed them when he's around. Usually, I will be the one in charge of taking care of these fishes. But, if he's here, he will definitely do it."

As Lin Xinyan continued to play around with the fishes, she seemed engrossed as she stared at their swift movement.

“It is said that fishes have seven seconds of memory. If only we can be like them, and choose to forget some memories selectively,” a voice interrupted their conversation. Turning back, Lin Xinyan saw Bai Yinning approaching in his wheelchair.

“Did you wait long?” Bai Yinning asked.

“Nope. I just reached.” Lin Xinyan shook her head slightly.

Once Bai Yinning stopped beside the fish tank, he instructed Liu, “You can take your leave first. Wait by the door and ensure no one enters.”

Liu peeked a glance at Lin Xinyan and then Bai Yinning, but did not utter a word. Gently nodding, she acknowledged Bai Yinning’s commands and left the room.

After Liu closed the door and silence enveloped the entire living room.

Breaking the silence, Lin Xinyan raised her eyebrow and probed, “What secret did you want to tell me?”

Lin Xinyan was certain that the news Bai Yinning was going to tell her was confidential, based on the very fact that he had made Liu leave and instructed her to wait by the door.

Nodding his head, Bai Yinning admitted, “Yes, I have something to tell you.”

However, it was not a secret.

“What’s it about?”

“Take a seat,” Bai Yinning signaled as he moved towards the wheelchair towards the sofa.

Lin Xinyan followed Bai Yinning to the sofa and took a seat. Taking a sip of the coffee that Liu made, Lin Xinyan finally heard Bai Yinning say, “She’s alright now. However, she refuses to speak and does not want to see me at all.”

Upon hearing his words, Lin Xinyan paused a moment. She did not reply despite knowing who was Bai Yinning referring to. At this moment, Lin Xinyan preferred to listen.

“I know she’s ashamed to see me, but the doctor told me her emotions are not so stable these days. I will admit her to the nursing home soon,” Bai Yinning continued as if Lin Xinyan was not beside him.

Bai Yinning really hoped Yao Qingqing could lead a normal life.

“I’m collecting the evidence for her abuse by the Yao Family. I will bring the culprit to justice.”

After thinking through the entire ordeal, Bai Yinning was much calmer after that night.

“I believe you can do it,” Lin Xinyan assured. Given Bai Yinning’s status, punishing those villains shouldn’t be a problem.

Hearing Lin Xinyan’s response, Bai Yinning looked straight into her eyes and wondered, “Why do you have so much trust in me?”

Lin Xinyan smiled. “It’s not that I have trust in you. It’s just that you are capable enough.”

Bai Yinning gave a bitter smile, “You are really adamant to draw a line between the two of us.”

Lin Xinyan paused for a moment, before she uttered, “If I really wanted to draw a line between us, I wouldn’t be sitting here, listening to you.”

Fate had brought them to know each other. Lin Xinyan had nothing against Bai Yinning, so she would not distance herself intentionally.

Bai Yinning beamed, “That’s good to hear.”

“Is this all you wanted to tell me?”

Hesitating for a few seconds, Bai Yinning finally conceded. “You have seen Cheng Yuxiu previously, am I right?”

Lin Xinyan was astounded by how Bai Yinning had changed the topic so quickly.

We were talking about Yao Qingqing, why is he mentioning Cheng Yuxiu out of the blue?

Besides that, Bai Yinning knew Cheng Yuxiu anyways.

However, her confusion was cleared up when she made the connections. Bai Hongfei was Bai Yinning’s foster father, so it won’t be surprising if Bai Hongfei had told Bai Yinning about the past.

“Cheng Yuxiu is in B City. How is it possible for me to see her?” Lin Xinyan denied. She did not forget her promise to Cheng Yuxiu.

Lin Xinyan did not disclose a single detail to Zong Jinghao. Similarly, she would not tell Bai Yinning anything.

Staring at her, Bai Yinning spoke once again, “Are you going to keep your lips sealed about this matter? Even if it’s I who’s asking?”

Without answering his question directly, Lin Xinyan retorted, “What if I have seen her? And what if I have not?”

“I know she told you something.” Bai Yinning finally revealed his intentions.

Without waiting for her to reply, Bai Yinning continued, “The tea silk master who taught you previously was Cheng Yuxiu’s brother, Cheng Yuwen. Cheng Yuxiu was my foster father’s, first love. He remained single his entire life for her. When he was still alive, someone severed his fingers. I’ll be honest with you, I’m investigating the mastermind who harmed him.”

Lin Xinyan clenched her fists. Bai Hongfei’s fingers were severed?

Many thoughts raced in her mind. At that point in time, Cheng Yuxiu only revealed that Wen Qing had used Bai Hongfei as his bargaining chip and forced her to call Zong Qifeng. However, Cheng Yuxiu did not say much about the means Wen Qing had used when she was threatened.

So, did Wen Qing sever Bai Hongfei’s fingers in order to make Cheng Yuxiu succumb to his threat?

“My foster father groomed me and entrusted the family business to me. I must definitely repay his kindness,” Bai Yinning stated. He knew Lin Xinyan was aware of what had happened in the past and knew who the culprit who harmed his foster father was.

As Bai Yinning spoke, Lin Xinyan was stuck in a dilemma. The Wen family were still acquainted with the Zong family. If she were to tell Bai Yinning the truth, he would definitely seek revenge.

What if Zong Jinghao’s identity was uncovered? As long as it concerned Zong Jinghao, Lin Xinyan was not willing to take any risk!

“I don’t know...”

In a frenzy, Liu barged into the living room and interrupted Lin Xinyan, “Young Master, there are some people causing a scene outside!”

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As Bai Yinning was interrupted, irritation etched across his face. Bai Yinning chided, “What happened? What’s wrong with you?”

“There’s a man at the door asking for you, Young Master. He brought an entire gang of people, threatening you to release his sister!” Liu reported.

Bai Yinning and Lin Xinyan exchanged a glance. Without a word exchanged, they both knew who was at the door.

"I will go and take a look. You stay in here," Bai Yinning told Lin Xinyan. Today, Bai Yinning had not appointed many bodyguards to follow him. There was only Gao Yuan at the door. If any conflicts were to happen, Bai Yinning had to ensure Lin Xinyan was safe.

Lin Xinyan ignored what he said. If any conflicts were to stir up, how was it possible for her to avoid it simply by staying in the mansion?

Besides that, Lin Xinyan didn't think Yao Qingqing's brother came here to 'rescue' Yao Qingqing. He probably heard that his sister knew Bai Yinning and was here to take advantage of the man.

"If you're willing to pay a sum of money, I believe there will be no conflicts," Lin Xinyan ridiculed casually. It's unbelievable such a family existed.

Formulating a plan in his mind, Bai Yinning remarked coldly, "I won't let you get hurt in my territory."

As Bai Yinning finished his sentence, he wheeled himself out of the door. Silently, Liu peeked a glance at Lin Xinyan.

Bai Yinning treated Lin Xinyan really well.

Yao Bin could not find where Yao Qingqing was, but through their cousin, he discovered that Yao Qingqing actually knew Bai Yinning. Without further ado, he quickly gathered his gang of friends he usually fooled around with and headed looking for Bai Yinning.

As Bai Yinning was disabled, he rarely appeared in front of the public. Although many knew such a person existed, many didn't know much about him, including Yao Bin.

"Get Bai Yinning to come out now! Where did he bring my sister to?" Yao Bin ordered as he held onto a cigarette.

When Bai Yinning reached the door, he heard Yao Bin and responded, "I am Bai Yinning."

Upon seeing Bai Yinning in a wheelchair, Yao Bin blinked for a moment to process the fact that he was disabled.

"Ha, ha, ha! Bai Yinning, you're disabled? Everyone is talking about how outstanding you are, but you can't even stand!" Yao Bin exclaimed as if he heard a joke.

Lin Xinyan furrowed her brows, feeling disgusted by Yao Bin's ignorance.

Expressionless, Bai Yinning did not react to Yao Bin's taunts. Yet, he suddenly realized that Yao Bin looked really familiar.

It suddenly occurred to him that Yao Bin had ridiculed him in the lift when he left Yao Qingqing's house that day. He certainly left Bai Yinning with a great impression.

Did he go looking for Yao Qingqing that day?

“Gao Yuan, you’re not as competent as before,” Bai Yinning commented. Bai Yinning remembered the time he had instructed Gao Yuan to keep a watch on Yao Qingqing, only for the man to not discover anything.

Gao Yuan remained silent. He could only station people to monitor the district she lived in. How was it possible for him to find out what happened in her apartment?

After Yao Bin was done mocking, he asked, “Is my sister with you?”

“She’s with me,” Bai Yinning quickly admitted.

Yao Bin was taken aback at how honest Bai Yinning was. At first, he thought Bai Yinning would deny everything and was prepared to take this chance to ask for some benefits. However, given how straightforward Bai Yinning was, it was hard for Yao Bin to continue with his plan.

“Hmm...Where is she now? You have two choices. You can either hand her to me or buy her from me,” Yao Bin didn’t back down.

Yao Bin’s intentions were crystal clear. He just wanted money from Bai Yinning, the richest man in Baicheng.

Bai Yinning’s expression darkened by the second. He grasped tightly onto the handle by his side. How dare he say he was going to sell her, a human being?

“Alright, I accept your proposal.”

Yao Bin was surprised that Bai Yinning did not even hesitate. He grinned, “Rich people are indeed generous.”

The crowd of hooligans behind Yao Bin echoed and agreed.

“How much do you want?” Bai Yinning asked as he kept a straight face, masking his infuriation.

Once the topic was about money, Yao Bin grew more cautious. He took a moment to consider before answering, “My sister looks decent and is able-bodied. If you’re willing to purchase her, even if you don’t like her, she would still be useful to you. How about a million? Once I get the money, she will officially be yours.”

Bai Yinning pretended to be doubtful. “She’s a living person and has the freedom of choice. How credible are you? How can I ensure she’s mine like you said?”

Yao Bin was afraid Bai Yinning would change his mind and reassured, “Don’t worry, I’m credible. In our family, I get to call the shots. Yao Qingqing is just an adopted child. She’s an

orphan who we were generous enough to raise her up. It's about time for her to repay our kindness."

"Do you always ask her for money?" Bai Yinning casually asked.

Yao Bin did not think much about the question. Although he was badly spoiled, Yao Bin was also simple-minded. "My family raised her. It's only natural for me to ask her for some money."

Bai Yinning responded with a scorn.

Your family raised her? How dare they claim they raised her?

Resisting the urge to explode, Bai Yinning asked, "How about you write me a receipt?"

Seeing that Bai Yinning was persuaded, Yao Bin could no longer hold his excitement and exclaimed, "After I give you my receipt, you'll give me the one million you promised?"

"Yes," Bai Yinning affirmed.

Without any hesitation, Yao Bin stated, "I will write it now!"

Immediately, Bai Yinning ordered, "Gao Yuan, get him some paper and a pen."

Gao Yuan instantly went to carry out his orders.

Yao Bin did not manage to finish his education since he had fooled around most of his schooling days. Holding onto the pen Gao Yuan had passed him, he asked, "How should I write it?"

"Gao Yuan, teach him," Bai Yinning instructed.

Peeking a glance at Bai Yinning, Gao Yuan whispered, "What should he write?"

"Human Trafficking," Bai Yinning commented casually.

Gao Yuan understood Bai Yinning's intentions. The man was determined to leave some evidence in order to ensure Yao Bin would be sentenced.

With only the one million in mind, Yao Bin simply wrote down whatever Gao Yuan instructed him to.

They were done within ten minutes. Gao Yuan took the receipt to Bai Yinning.

As it was barely legible, Bai Yinning took a while to read through the contents of the receipt before he nodded, "Make him sign it with his fingerprint."

Gao Yuan passed the paper to Yao Bin while he said, "Your fingerprint."

“If you don’t give me an inkpad, how can I stamp my fingerprint?”

Gao Yuan rejected his requests and answered, “We do not have an inkpad with us. Why don’t you use blood as a replacement?”

Yao Bin’s expression changed instantly. Whose blood?

“If you don’t want the one million, you can leave now. I don’t have any time to waste,” Bai Yinning remarked, pretending to be in a hurry.

However, Bai Yinning simply wanted to ensure that they did not have any time to think rationally.

The gang of hooligans behind Yao Bin immediately persuaded, “He’s giving you a million! It’s just a little cut on your finger, don’t be a coward!”

Glaring at the man who spoke, Yao Bin provoked “How about you cut your own finger!”

Yao Bin’s provocation was intentional. He didn’t want to cut his finger as he was afraid of the pain. Knowing that his gang of friends also cared about the money, he was waiting for someone to be willing to sacrifice.

“Alright, I will cut my finger, but you must give me twenty thousand in return!”

Seeing that his plan had worked, Yao Bin did not hesitate at all and agreed, “Deal.”

After all, even after Yao Bin gave away that twenty thousand, he would still have nine hundred and eighty thousand remaining. That was still a hefty sum of money.

That guy immediately bit on his finger. As blood trickled down, he offered, “There you go.”

After Yao Bin stamped his fingerprint, he threw the receipt to Gao Yuan and groaned, “Now, can I have the money?”

“Alright. I don’t have one million in cash with me right now. Let me make a call first.” Bai Yinning whipped out his phone.

Anticipation overwhelmed Yao Bin as he started to fantasize about what he could do with all that money. “Once I get the money, we shall first have a feast. Of course, it’s my treat! Later in the night, I’ll get the girls to come...What a long night it will be,” Yao Bin jested as he gave a creepy smile. The hooligans accompanying him cheered in response.

Throughout the occasion, Lin Xinyan did not speak at all. She simply silently observed how the entire incident unfolded. Lin Xinyan knew it was impossible for Bai Yinning to let Yao Bin off so easily.

Within minutes, the people who were supposed to deliver the money arrived. With more than ten cars pulling up around the mansion, more than fifty people exited those cars. They instantly surrounded Yao Bin and those hooligans.

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Taken aback, Yao Bin gaped at Bai Yinning and stuttered, "What...What are you trying to do?"

"You seemed to like using violence as a mean to solve problems. Like you, I have the same hobby," Bai Yinning smiled.

"You lied to me!" Yao Bin hollered, pointing at Bai Yinning.

His allegations caused Bai Yinning to chuckle, "Since when did I say I won't be using violence?"

Someone behind Yao Bin muttered, "I think he's right."

The realization hit Yao Bin. He had been scammed by Bai Yinning. Waves of humiliation hit him. Trying to mask his embarrassment, he kicked the person who spoke and bellowed, "How dare you tell me what to do!"

"Have you gone nuts?" the man whimpered as he crunched over on the ground. Holding onto his abdomen, he glared at Yao Bin.

"I am not scared of anyone!" Yao Bin berated. With a vicious look, he brandished a knife from his pockets before he targeted the nearest person surrounding him.

However, those people Bai Yinning had called were also skilled. Before the knife could reach them, Yao Bin was already disarmed. They twisted his arm backwards, and the knife fell onto the ground.

Bai Yinning naturally wanted to deploy legal means to punish those who have harmed Yao Qingqing. However, before that, he was determined to give Yao Bin a hard time.

"All of you can do whatever you want, just ensure that they stay alive after this. I will bear all consequences."

Upon hearing Bai Yinning's assurance, the men had no worries holding them back anymore. Lashing out some basketball bats, the crowd started to aim for those hooligans. Although they tried their best to retaliate, the hooligans were easily outnumbered.

This 'battle' came to an end quickly with the hooligans begging for mercy.

“Please...please stop! We won't dare do this anymore!” One of them pleaded.

Many of them had been punched till they could no longer stand. Wincing in pain, another continued, “Yes! We weren't the ones looking for trouble. It was all Yao Bin!”

“All of you are cowards!” Yao Bin lunged, feeling livid. If only if they had tried their hardest, they might not have ended up in defeat.

Sitting comfortably in his wheelchair, Bai Yinning instructed Liu, “Get Ms. Lin a stool. This is such a rare sight, it should not be missed.”

Lin Xinyan had her brows knitted. She had never seen Bai Yinning like that before. It was so unlike him, so violent and cold-blooded.

“We need to teach these people a lesson or else they will think that they can be let off easily. After going to the police station for a few days, they will still continue their ways regardless. Today, we shall do their parents a favor and make sure all of them turn over a new leaf!”

Placing a stool behind Lin Xinyan, Liu signaled, “Ms. Lin, take a seat.”

Lin Xinyan was not very eager to watch the scene. The hooligans were already subdued. All Lin Xinyan could hear was them grimacing in pain.

“Am I cruel?” Bai Yinning looked into her eyes.

Biting on her lips, Lin Xinyan did not share her opinions. It was difficult to define what was actually good and bad. Lin Xinyan knew she wasn't anyone to give a verdict.

Subconsciously, Lin Xinyan actually agreed to Bai Yinning's ways. However, she couldn't bear to watch it happening in front of her.

Walking towards Bai Yinning, Gao Yuan inquired, “What should we do now?”

Bai Yinning was not pleased by his question and simply stared at his assistant. Gao Yuan had stayed by his side for so long, yet Bai Yinning could not understand why he wasn't able to read his mind.

Upon seeing Bai Yinning's furrowed brows, Gao Yuan finally understood. “Send them to the police,” Gao Yuan instructed the crowd who started to evacuate the hooligans almost immediately.

A thin gentleman ambled towards Bai Yinning and called out, “Mr. Bai.”

Although this person was the one who brought the crowd in, and also seemed like a thug himself, he seemed to know Bai Yinning.

“Tell Second Master I owe him a favor. I will personally visit him one day and thank him.”

“I will pass the message to him. I think it’s time for us to take our leave. I will leave the rest to you, Mr. Bai.”

Bai Yinning nodded in response.

Within minutes, the area outside the mansion had been cleared; it was as if nothing had happened before. Bai Yinning took a glance at his watch and asked, “It’s almost noon. Let’s have lunch?”

With no hesitation, Lin Xinyan rejected, “Xichen and Ruixi are waiting for me. It’s time for me to leave.”

After finishing her sentence, Lin Xinyan headed straight towards the door. As the wind kissed her cheeks, she could still smell whiffs of metallic blood lingering. This made her quicken her pace.

As the mansion was pretty isolated, it was not convenient for Lin Xinyan to hail a taxi. She walked along the pathway and headed towards the main road.

Beep! Beep!

Lin Xinyan noticed a car approaching by the flashes from its headlights.

Lin Xinyan saw the car window being wound down and Bai Yinning’s face came into view. “Let me give you a ride. It’s hard to get a taxi here.”

“Are you scared I will abduct you?” Bai Yinning joked.

Lin Xinyan felt bad to reject him again. So she gave in and entered the car.

“Did you reject me previously because you’re afraid President Zong will be jealous?” Bai Yinning asked.

Lin Xinyan looked up and calmly spoke, “He’s my husband, I should care about his feelings.”

Bai Yinning was expecting Lin Xinyan to deny his claim. Hearing her answer, Bai Yinning could not help but felt bitter.

Forcing a smile, Bai Yinning continued, “Your feelings for each other are pretty touching.”

Lin Xinyan simply responded with a smile.

Soon, silence enveloped the car. Lin Xinyan did not bother to start a conversation, and Bai Yinning did not insist to continue the previous conversation. He did not want to feel even more terrible.

There was no other unbearable pain than you realizing that the person you love, wholeheartedly loves someone else.

Before the awkwardness set in, Bai Yinning suddenly spoke, "I have a guess."

"Regarding?"

"Zong Jinghao might be Cheng Yuxiu's 'daughter'."

"My foster father, Bai Hongfei, told me to marry Cheng Yuxiu's daughter. This means he knew Cheng Yuxiu had given birth to a child before. After that, she was married to Zong Qifeng, so who do you think her child is?" Bai Yinning asked.

"Mr. Bai, you do have an impressive imagination," Lin Xinyan replied. She was trying to maintain a calm composure despite her throbbing heart. Lin Xinyan could not believe Bai Yinning was so close to the truth.

"Am I right?" Bai Yinning continued to probe, with a small grin on his face.

Lin Xinyan smiled at his inquiry. Without divulging anything, she replied "As you said, it's a guess. You don't have any evidence, do you? Besides, why are you even asking me about it? How would I possibly know?"

As the vehicle pulled up in front of the hotel, Lin Xinyan opened the door swiftly, wanting to get out. "I shall take my leave now."

As she stood, her outer coat got stuck in the gap between the seats. Seeing that she was struggling, Bai Yinning assisted her and tugged on the coat. "My car was modified previously. There isn't supposed to be such a big gap."

His car had been specially modified so that it would be convenient for him to enter and exit with a wheelchair.

Bai Yinning leaned towards Lin Xinyan as she spoke; the distance between each other shrinking. Two of them looked like they were whispering to each other and seemed really intimate.

"Do I owe you a coat now?" Bai Yinning joked.

"It's alright. Thank you Mr. Bai," Lin Xinyan answered indifferently as she finally got down the car.

However, the moment she looked up, Lin Xinyan saw Zong Jinghao. Anger was apparent on his face, causing Lin Xinyan to be slightly stunned. What luck I have!

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“What are the both of you doing?” Zong Jinghao questioned. Lin Xinyan could hear the irritation in his tone.

She paused for 3 seconds, and tried to remain calm, before she replied, “He just sent me back.”

“Okay, he sent you back. But is there a need for him to be so close to you? Or am I seeing things?” Zong Jinghao sneered.

Lin Xinyan’s eyelids twitched upon hearing what Zong Jinghao said. This guy is so petty!

“Jinghao...” Lin Xinyan tried to explain.

Before she could finish her sentence, Zong Jinghao cut her off, “Get in.”

Lin Xinyan felt her heart skip a beat. With a heavy heart, she entered the hotel.

“Mr. Bai, could you get out of the car? Let’s have a talk.” Zong Jinghao’s voice was calm but obviously, he was masking his genuine emotions.

With the help of Gao Yuan, Bai Yinning got down from the car. Zong Jinghao went ahead towards the garden beside the hotel with Bai Yinning trailing behind him.

“What do you want to tell me, Mr. Zong?”

Stopping in his tracks, Zong Jinghao turned behind and faced Bai Yinning. Before he could react, Zong Jinghao grabbed his collar and pulled Bai Yinning towards himself. His grip was so strong, Bai Yinning was lifted up from the wheelchair.

“Did you not understand my warning?” Zong Jinghao threatened.

As Bai Yinning was being strangled by his collar, he struggled to answer, “It’s...it’s not what you think. It’s a misunderstanding. I met with Ms. Lin because I wanted to ask her a few questions.”

Zong Jinghao snickered. It was apparent that he did not believe anything Bai Yinning had said. Zong Jinghao could tell that Bai Yinning loved Lin Xinyan, even without her reciprocating his feelings.

“If you are willing to ask Ms. Lin about the past, the truth can be unveiled. We won’t have to spend so much effort to investigate it. After all, finding out the past isn’t that easy...”

Zong Jinghao strengthened his grip and stopped Bai Yinning from continuing. Zong Jinghao slightly lowered his head and intimidated, “Yes, I am interested in what happened to Cheng Yuxiu. However, I would never force Lin Xinyan to do anything that she is unwilling to. You

have passed my bottom-line. The cooperation between both of us is now over. You can rely on yourself to find out the truth.”

Finally, Zong Jinghao let him go, and Bai Yinning fell back onto the wheelchair.

Bai Yinning was not willing to concede. “Have you ever thought if someone was hiding the truth intentionally, how much of the truth can we find out? Or, how long would it take to know the truth?”

Pausing in his tracks, Zong Jinghao sniggered, “So what if the truth was never found out?”

They were not in the same situation, to begin with. Bai Yinning wanted to find out the truth to avenge for his foster father. On the other hand, Zong Jinghao was simply curious about what happened to Cheng Yuxiu.

Why did Cheng Yuxiu have to hide her surname? Also, how was it possible for Zong Qifeng to not know about it at all?

Zong Jinghao knew Cheng Yuxiu had secrets. Yet, even if he was curious, he would never force Lin Xinyan to reveal anything she didn't want to.

Actually, deep down Zong Jinghao was afraid to know the truth. He could sense that Lin Xinyan had changed her attitude towards her due to that secret.

That secret was able to change her attitude; so it would definitely cause a stir if it was unveiled. It might even involve him.

He was stuck in a dilemma. Zong Jinghao was curious about the truth, yet afraid to know it.

In the hotel, Su Zhan arranged a dinner to welcome his grandma's arrival. As everyone gathered around in the function room, the only person who had yet to arrive was Zong Jinghao.

Lin Xinyan hugged her daughter, trying to distract herself and mask her uneasiness. She was not sure whether Zong Jinghao and Bai Yinning had ended up in a conflict.

“Let me introduce you to my grandma! She was the one who singlehandedly raised me,” Su Zhan beamed.

Grandma did not cooperate with him. “Who doesn't know I'm your grandma? Save the introduction! You told me you're going to get married by the end of the year, but who is your girlfriend?”

Upon hearing what she said, Su Zhan felt something wither within him.

Grandma seemed to be possessed. In every single conversation they had, she would only ask about his girlfriend and about their marriage!

Throughout the entire afternoon, that was the only thing she was harping on. It was driving Su Zhan nuts! Now, all he wanted to do was to find any woman he could tie the knots immediately with, just to stop Grandma from nagging!

Shen Peichuan sat by the side and silently observed Qin Ya being indifferent to the entire situation. She did not join the conversation nor speak her views. Once in a while, Qin Ya would talk to Lin Xichen, who was sitting beside her while Lin Xinyan clearly looked troubled.

Grandma scanned through the crowd. Knowing Lin Xinyan was already attached, she continued to her next target. Smiling, she asked Qin Ya, "What is your name?"

Qin Ya took a glance at Su Zhan before she answered, "My name is Qin Ya."

"Qin Ya? Is your surname Qin and your name Ya?"

Qin Ya nodded in response. "Yes."

"Do you have a boyfriend?"

Before Qin Ya could reply, Shen Peichuan answered on behalf of her, "She does."

Hearing his answer, Grandma looked extremely disappointed. Why was she attached so early? Grandma couldn't help but sigh in frustration.

Qin Ya turned towards Shen Peichuan for an explanation.

Shen Peichuan bantered, "Didn't you and Su Zhan announce the news that both of you were dating?"

Su Zhan was instantly speechless while Grandma's face lit up. Su Zhan and Qin Ya are dating?

This means my dear grandson has finally got a girlfriend?

Smack!

"Why didn't you tell me about it?" Grandma chuckled as she gave a slap across Su Zhan's back.

Su Zhan did not reply as he held his breath and observed Qin Ya carefully.

Grandma was beyond overjoyed as she strode towards Qin Ya. At first glance, Qin Ya was not extremely attractive, but she wasn't ugly either. Her well defined face matched her distinctive features.

Holding onto her arm, Grandma exclaimed, "Why didn't you tell me you're dating Su Zhan? Did he bully you? If he dares bully you, I'll beat him up!"

“No... We are...”

“Grandma, don’t scare her. I didn’t want you to be too agitated so I didn’t tell you about it,” Su Zhan quickly explained, interrupting Qin Ya.

“Su Zhan...” Qin Ya tried to get his attention.

Once again, Su Zhan did not hesitate to cut her off. “Grandma, take a seat.”

Qin Ya’s face was flushed from anger. Su Zhan was such an asshole! How could he so shameless when she had already explained to him clearly!

“Alright, alright.” Grandma nodded. It was obvious Grandma was extremely satisfied to know that Qin Ya was Su Zhan’s girlfriend.

He’s lying and taking advantage of her! Qin Ya would not let him to use her to deceive Grandma.

“Su Zhan, come with me.” Qin Ya was determined to make things clear.

Su Zhan gently stroked Grandma’s back, as he said, “I will have a word with Qin Ya. We would be back soon.”

“Both of you can have a conversation right here. Why must you leave?” Grandma questioned. She could not wait to take this chance to talk to Qin Ya and get to know more about her family and background.

Su Zhan tone was firm. “Why? Do you want to invade in our privacy? We just want to have a moment, grandma.”

“Alright, alright.”

Su Zhan is finally attached to a girl. It will not be worth it if I were to be the reason that caused an argument or even their breakup.

When Qin Ya passed by Su Zhan, she tugged on his sleeve and whispered, “Hurry up.”

Trying to coax Grandma, Su Zhan uttered, “Qin Ya is a very shy girl. I’m just afraid she would get too embarrassed if I told you about her. Let me go console her a bit.”

“Okay. Go ahead.” Grandma smiled. She was willing to agree to anything as long as it was for his girlfriend.

Seeing that Grandma was appeased, Su Zhan left the room and saw Qin Ya standing by the corridor, looking infuriated. Taking a deep breath, Su Zhan braced himself before he marched towards her.

Chapter 265

Su Zhan had thought about it before. Rather than being nagged by Grandma every single day, Su Zhan would prefer to just marry someone.

Not only would Grandma stop nagging at him, Su Zhan also knew he had reached the age to settle down and have a family. Also, most importantly, he liked Qin Ya too.

Su Zhan thought if the person he's going to marry was Qin Ya, he would find it perfectly acceptable.

"What is all that about? You said we're fake dating. Once the awkward phase is over, we would announce that we've broken up. Why didn't you say anything about it?" Qin Ya interrogated.

Su Zhan held onto her arm, trying to console her. Yet, Qin Ya immediately flung his hand away and continued, "Stop. Either tell them we have broken up or tell them the truth."

"I don't want to. You are the who slept with me, so you must take responsibilities." Su Zhan had made up his mind that Qin Ya was the one.

Upon seeing how shameless he was, Qin Ya was exasperated. "Are you even a man?"

Leaning against the wall, Su Zhan laughed, "Shouldn't you know that the best?"

"Alright, if you don't want to tell them the truth, I'll do it!" Qin Ya scoffed. She wouldn't let Su Zhan have his way.

However, before she could leave, Qin Ya was grabbed by the wrist. As Su Zhan pulled her towards himself, she fell into his arms.

"Su Zhan!"

Lifting her arm, she was already prepared to give him a slap across his face. However, before she could do so, Su Zhan swiftly held onto her hand and held it behind her. After ensuring that she could no longer resist, Su Zhan pulled her closer and gave her a kiss.

Smooch!

Qin Ya was in disbelief. How could he...

Gently biting on her lip, Su Zhan threatened, "If you don't promise you'll marry me, I won't stop kissing you."

How can he take advantage of me like this!

Without Qin Ya realizing, tears brimmed in her eyes, as her voice turned hoarse, “You...you’re such a bully! How...how can you do this...”

Without completely releasing his grip, he gently tugged on her ear and whispered, “You have to pay when you buy something. Similarly, you are the one who has slept with me. Shouldn’t you give me an official title?”

Anger brimmed in Qin Ya; she could no longer control her emotions. The tears were uncontrollable and strewn down her cheeks.

Su Zhan panicked and finally let go of her. He tried to console her, “Although I had many girl friends in the past, I didn’t sleep with all of them...”

Instantly, Qin Ya’s whimpers turned into bawl.

She was a virgin. To make it equal, Qin Ya had also hoped her significant other was one too. However, Su Zhan had slept with so many women...

Realizing he had said the wrong thing, he quickly added, “Qin Ya, I promise that from now on, you’ll be my only one.”

Qin Ya ignored Su Zhan completely and continued to cry.

“Sorry, I’m the one in the wrong. Please, stop crying.” Su Zhan was flustered.

Qin Ya wiped her tears as she glared at him. “I will stop crying if you tell everyone the truth.”

Sighing, Su Zhan responded, “You can cry as much as you want then.”

“Su Zhan!” Qin Ya snapped as she started to throw punches at him.

Su Zhan did not avoid her punches. He understood Qin Ya had lost her chastity to him, and was being into marrying him. It was only natural of her to be resentful and enraged.

She could hit him as much as she wanted, as long as she could be appeased.

At that moment, the lift opened and someone started to walk in their direction. Su Zhan quickly enveloped her fists and wrapped his arms around her waist. In his embrace, Qin Ya glared at him. However, before she could say anything, Su Zhan exclaimed, “You’re really slow. Everyone is waiting for you in the function room.”

That person was Zong Jinghao. He uttered an ‘alright’ after he took a glance at them.

Upon seeing Zong Jinghao, Qin Ya remained silent.

With Qin Ya still in his arms, Su Zhan softly coaxed, “Qin Ya, it’s natural for us to get married. Am I not right?”

“We are not living in the ancient times...”

“Exactly, we are living in the modern world. Hence, we should set a good example.”

“But I don’t like you, do you not understand?” Qin Ya rebutted. This reason should be strong enough to stop him.

Drawing in a deep breathe, Su Zhan smiled. “It’s fine. I will make sure you fall in love with me. Besides, I’m not unattractive nor am I ageing. I have the confidence you’ll fall for me.”

Speechless at how thick skinned this man could be, Qin Ya retorted, “What if that never happens?”

He paused for a moment to think. “If you don’t fall in love with me by 2080, I’ll give up then.”

Qin Ya glared at the man in disbelief.

“Alright, let’s go back now. Everyone is waiting for us, don’t be so stubborn.”

With Qin Ya tried to disagree while curled in his arms, but somehow couldn’t bear to reject Su Zhan.

When Zong Jinghao opened the door, everyone was expecting to see Su Zhan and Qin Ya. Upon seeing Zong Jinghao instead, Shen Peichuan sighed, “I was expecting something else.”

Without speaking a word, Zong Jinghao sat down and held Lin Ruixi in his arms.

With Lin Ruixi being carried away from her seat, there was now an empty seat between Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao.

Lin Xinyan clenched her fists under the table. She knew that this wasn’t a suitable time for her to explain herself. Sighing in her mind, Lin Xinyan decided that she would talk to him after dinner.

“My apologies. Thank you everyone for waiting for the both of us.” Su Zhan beamed.

With his arms around Qin Ya’s waist, both of them finally entered the function room.

Grandma was very pleased with what she saw. “The year is ending soon. Both of you should take this chance to tie the knots.”

Su Zhan was taken aback by her suggestion. Yet, he quickly replied, “That works too.”

Qin Ya attempted to disagree.

However, as always, she was cut off by Su Zhan. “Qin Ya didn’t want you be worried for the both of us. She has already agreed to marry me.”

Qin Ya was going to lose her mind. How could he say that!

Su Zhan leaned in and whispered in her ears, "Grandma is getting older. She cannot be agitated. Can you bear to see her so worried for me?"

Qin Ya could understand his concerns. Yet, why must she sacrifice herself for his filial piety.

Su Zhan placed her hand onto his chest. Looking into her eyes, he asked, "Are you sure you don't like me, even one tiny bit?"

Qin Ya avoided his eye contact. It's true that she had some feelings for him. However, the fact that Su Zhan was such a glib talker made her extremely insecure. Hence, Qin Ya was reluctant to fall for him.

"You avoided my eye contact. You're guilty, am I right? You must have some feelings for me, Qin Ya," Su Zhan murmured. They leaned towards each other as they mumbled. From a by-standers' perspective, they looked really intimate.

"Okay, stop showing off your affection in public. I want to be able to eat my dinner peacefully." Shen Peichuan interrupted their conversation.

Su Zhan held onto Shen Peichuan's shoulder tightly. "If it weren't for you, I would not be able to get married."

If not for Shen Peichuan, Su Zhan would still trouble about how to introduce Qin Ya to Grandma.

Shen Peichuan chuckled, "Oh, so I'm your matchmaker?"

"I won't forget you on my wedding!" Su Zhan chirped.

"December 18 is an auspicious date. We can have the wedding held in this hotel and the marriage certification can be done after that. What do you all think?" Grandma suggested.

Upon hearing what she said, everyone went silent.

December 18 was in less than 3 days. Grandma is in such a hurry...

"Grandma..." Su Zhan began.

However, he was quickly cut off, "Enough, this is final. The wedding can be held first and the both of you can register for your marriage after we head back to B City."

Shen Peichuan went towards Grandma and whispered, "Grandma, isn't the timing too tight? There are a lot of things to prepare for the wedding. Also, all of their relatives and friends are still in B City. It's not very nice if we hold the wedding here without informing them."

Grandma mumbled, "I'm afraid there might be more complications if the wedding is dragged. Liu Feifei is back. I don't want my grandson to be hurt again because of that woman."

Chapter 266

Because of Liu Feifei, Su Zhan had been decadent and sluggish as if he couldn't get out of a broken love.

The elderly lady didn't like this woman who had broken her grandson's heart. So, in order to prevent him from turning on his words when he met Liu Feifei, she decided to let him marry someone right here before going back.

Shen Peichuan's expression changed instantly. No wonder she was always asking about Su Zhan's whereabouts. Liu Feifei was back into the picture and she feared that her grandson would return to the woman.

The elderly woman pulled on his arm, "You can't tell Su Zhan about this or you'll be dead," she threatened.

Shen Peichuan was contemplating whether he should tell Su Zhan or not. The woman that he once liked so much had returned.

But after receiving her threats, he didn't have the guts anymore. The elderly lady could be scary when she was mad.

Now he regretted asking her about this. He had to pretend that he didn't know anything.

"What are you whispering about?" Su Zhan suddenly appeared.

"Uh...I was thinking about how much I should put in the red packet for your wedding." He came up with a believable lie.

Su Zhan didn't notice that his grandmother was a little rushed to get him married. It was normal after all. She would usually urge him like this.

"As much as possible," he replied in a cheerful and happy way. Who wouldn't be delighted to receive free money?

"Okay, I'll give you a big one."

"You're lucky that your best friend is here. I think the hotel is great. So it's decided. Your wedding will be held on the 18th."

"Uh...I..."

“You’re gonna get married regardless.”

Qin Ya wanted to say that she had not agreed on this marriage. But Su Zhan grabbed her hand which made her change her mind. “Sure. On the 18th then. We’ll get the marriage certificate when we go back.”

Just like that, the marriage between Su Zhan and Qin Ya was decided.

After lunch, the elderly lady dragged Shen Peichuan to meet the person in charge of the hotel to discuss about the venue.

Meanwhile, Lin Xinyan was feeling bothered because of Zong Jinghao’s deliberate disaffection. As for Su Zhan and Qin Ya’s marriage, she didn’t express any personal opinions.

She didn’t have the chance to talk to Qin Ya when Su Zhan was pulled away by the others.

“Mommy, I see that you’re in a bad mood,” Lin Xichen tugged on her hand, “Are you guys fighting?”

Usually Zong Jinghao would always stick with his mom. But today he didn’t even sit beside her during lunch.

Lin Xinyan stroked her son’s head. Her heart was a mess but she couldn’t find it in herself to confide in her son. He was meticulous and if he noticed that something was wrong, he would be worried for her.

But it was obvious that Zong Jinghao was acting different. “It’s not a big deal. Every married couple will bicker once in a while.”

“Oh. Then please reconcile quickly,” he answered with much concern which made his mom smile.

When they arrived the room, Lin Xichen let go of Lin Xinyan’s hand and went to his own room. He was addicted to games recently and would always play them on the bed whenever he had time.

Lin Ruixi was with Zong Jinghao and they were not in the room. Lin Xinyan went to another room to find them but it was in vain when she saw that it was empty.

She fished out her phone and was about to call her husband when she felt someone tugging on the hem of her dress from behind. She turned her head and looked down to see Lin Ruixi smiling cutely at her. She squatted down to hug her daughter tightly. Then her eyes found the man standing not far away from them.

“Who did you want to call, mommy?” her daughter asked while touching her cheek.

Lin Xinyan paused to think about what to say, "I wasn't trying to call anyone. Just looking at the time."

"Oh. Where's brother?" The little girl blinked.

"In his room."

"I'll go play with him then." She hopped happily away to find her brother.

When she found him, her joyful voice echoed. "Brother!"

Lin Xinyan got up from the floor and faced Zong Jinghao wordlessly. They both stayed silent for a while as the woman was thinking about how to start the conversation. "Uh, I..."

But as soon as she spoke, Zong Jinghao refused to listen and he walked to their bedroom, leaving the woman speechless.

He sat on the couch with his laptop on his laps, sorting out the documents sent by Guan Jing. This was actually not that important as he was actually waiting for Lin Xinyan's explanation.

It wasn't like he didn't trust her. In fact, he liked that she was the one who approached him first to explain herself. Because it showed that she cared about him.

"When I went out with Qin Ya, I received a call from Bai Yinning. He asked me out and since I already met him once, I considered him as a friend and I agreed. He told me about Yao Qingqing and then when her brother went to find Yinning, there was a little conflict which took a lot of time. He asked me out for lunch but I rejected him. When he sent me back, my clothes were caught in the gap between the seats and he helped me to get it out. That's when you saw it."

Zong Jinghao's expression didn't change a bit as if her words went to deaf ears. But he heard her very clearly. He just wanted to continue acting to be angry and wait for her to persuade and coax him.

He didn't know how it happened but he felt like something had controlled his movements. He literally wrote the words 'coax me' on the signature part of the document.

Guan Jing saw the words on the other side and he was dumbfounded.

He still managed to tremblingly reply: How?

Zong Jinghao was taken aback by the one-worded reply. He felt like reprimanding the latter for not being serious but when he reread what he typed, he cringed at himself.

Lin Xinyan saw that he was quite busy so she didn't want to disturb him. "I'm not cheap. Please believe me. You can continue working." With that, she turned and left.

That's it? She's not going to persuade me?

Shouldn't she kiss him, hug him, please him, make him believe her and ask him not to be mad anymore?

I didn't say that I'm not mad anymore. How dare she leave just like that?

He put down his laptop and chased her. But he was a step late because Lin Xinyan was already in the elevator going downstairs.

The other elevator seemed to have a problem because the doors wouldn't open no matter how many times he pressed the button. Then he gave up and decided to run down the stairs instead. Yes, he was willing to do that just for her.

However, when he was downstairs, Lin Xinyan had already left the hotel.

Qin Ya was getting married so she wanted to personally design the wedding dress for her. She was running out of time. She needed to buy tools and accessories to sew the wedding dress. Cheng Yuwen had given her a white fragrant cloud yarn and she planned to use that fabric as the dress' main material. She also needed some lace for the embellishment.

She asked one of the hotel workers earlier and was informed that there was a emporium where people could find everything they wanted. So she wanted to go there herself and see if they had the things that she needed for the dress.

She already had the outline of the dress in her mind. She was just short of materials.

After a while, the car stopped at the shopping center. Lin Xinyan got out of the car and the driver followed her.

A lot of cars stopped at the entrance since the parking lot was full. People came here to buy goods and all of them were holding shopping bags.

"This place isn't that big but it's packed with people," the driver voiced out loudly.

Lin Xinyan agreed as she nodded her head. She felt that maybe there was something extraordinary in the mall that attracted this many people. With that, she quickened her pace. "Let's go in."

Chapter 267

There was a sea of people here. Fortunately, the entrance wasn't also the exit door. Otherwise, the door would have been blocked.

The driver kept up with her pace in fear that something would happen to her.

He was a driver cum bodyguard. Making sure of Lin Xinyan's safety was his job. Or else he wouldn't know how to explain if he went back without her.

There were three floors and each of it was very spacious. They could find everything and anything in here.

Her eyes were automatically attracted to a toy store. Maybe because of the fact that she was a mother of two. She felt the need to go to the store and see if there were any toys that her children would like.

Lin Xichen liked brainy toys. He wouldn't bat an eye on stuffed toys. On the contrary, Lin Ruixi liked fluffy toys the most.

A polygonal Rubik's Cube caught her attention. She picked it up and studied the toy. Each of the side had approximately fifty module of blocks. They were as small as a tiny fingernail and there were a total of six sides.

This looks difficult. She thought as she turned the cube around.

"A lot of people can't solve that. If you're buying for your child, I suggest you to buy this." The owner of the store approached her and pointed to a shelf. There were different types of Rubik's Cubes on it. Some were triangle and some were the normal square ones. "These are suitable for children between five to ten. How old is your child?"

"Five," she replied but she still liked the one she was holding. Those are too easy for Xichen.

"I suggest you this one." The shop owner picked up a triangular one which was more novel than the square one. There were only a few sides and it seemed relatively simple which was very suitable for a five-year-old.

Lin Xinyan smiled as she took out her purse, "I still want this one. Please pack it up for me."

The owner could only beam out a smile. It didn't matter if she didn't listen to his suggestion as long as he made sales.

"I'll get a new one for you." He went inside and fished out an unopened package of the same toy for her, mumbling softly, "What a weirdo. Does she think her child is a genius or something?"

The toys were originally put inside boxes. People would only look at them and not buy them. There was no way they were going to be sold out if this continued. So he decided to take them out for the customers to try playing them. He managed to attract a lot of people after that but there were still no buyers.

However, he sold one today and he was very happy with it. The cube was difficult and quite pricey so he didn't expect that it would be bought.

He went back to the woman with a smile while putting the toy into a bag and handed it to Lin Xinyan. "Your kid must be very smart."

She returned the smile wordlessly. For her, her son was the smartest child in the world. She was no different from the other mothers who thought that their children were the best. "How much?" she asked.

"Three hundred and sixty."

Lin Xinyan gave him four hundred and he refunded her fifty, saying, "I'll spare a ten for you. This cube's opening price is three hundred fifty. The poor toy has been here for two years and someone finally bought it. I'm not at a loss."

She took the money and walked out of the store as the driver approached her. "Let me carry it."

"No need," she answered while waving her hand.

The driver had been guarding her going between the various shops. It was so crowded that they were unaware of a man wearing a blue parka, a baseball cap and a black mask stalking behind them.

This floor was full of toys and accessories. She couldn't find her materials here so she decided to go to the second floor. When they were in the elevator, Lin Xinyan felt eyes on her. She turned her head around but didn't see anyone looking at her.

"What's wrong?" the driver asked.

She shook her head but glanced back again. Indeed, no one was looking at her.

She turned to the front suspiciously. The elevator reached the second floor in no time. She found that the materials that she needed were here and immediately quickened her footsteps. The suspicion of someone watching her was quickly pushed to the back of her mind.

She rounded the floor for a good few minutes before finally coming across the type of lace that she wanted. The texture of the yarn was soft, delicate and thin. Exactly what she was looking for.

"This is kind of expensive." The shop owner voiced out as he saw the fascination on Lin Xinyan's face.

As a fashion designer, she had a broad knowledge about fabrics and the price that it should come with. "Is this sold by feet?"

"Yes, one thousand eight hundred and eighty per foot."

"Can't it be cheaper?" She looked at the boss and smiled.

“That’s the cheapest price. In this entire mall, this fabric can only be found in my store. No one wants to sell it because it’s expensive.”

Lin Xinyan rubbed the fabric in her hand and said, “This material is woven from silk. That’s why it’s soft and delicate. But the price that you’re offering is a bit expensive.”

The boss didn’t dare to argue seeing that she was an expert that could make out the element just by touching it, “Uh, how much do you want? I’ll make it cheaper for you.”

“I’ll need maybe a few feet.”

The boss smiled brightly as soon as she said that, “I’ll give you a discount then.”

It wasn’t like she couldn’t afford the price. The material was indeed expensive but it shouldn’t be as expensive as what he was offering. “One thousand and eighty per foot.”

“That’s too low.” The smile on his face was quickly wiped off.

“It’s not. You earn around eighty per foot with that price. I need six meters. Three feet per meter which makes it eighteen feet. You still can gain around one thousand four hundred and forty.”

He was dumbfounded. This isn’t a bargaining tactic. She’s actually a pro.

“You’re also in this field?” It would be impossible to know the price this clearly if she wasn’t.

“Kind of,” she answered without clarifying anything.

“Okay, then.” He finally agreed. It wasn’t everyday he could get customers after all. Her showing up and buying a few feet was already a huge blessing.

There were a lot of imitation products similar to this with a lower price. It was hard to sell the original one.

“You have a good eye.” He gave her a big thumbs up.

After cutting the fabric accordingly, he neatly stacked it into a delicate box before putting it into a shopping bag.

He gave her the bag as she fished out her card and handed it to him, saying, “No password.” She didn’t carry that much cash on her.

“Okay.” He took the card with both hands and walked to the cashier to swipe it. He printed the receipt then gave it to her along with her card. “I have other materials here. Do you need it?”

“No. By the way, do you know which store sells pearls?” she asked as she put her card back into her purse.

It was really unfamiliar for her. She used to have her own purchase channel and all the clothes’ accessories had their own sources. She wasn’t in Country A nor B City now so she could only rely on the locals here.

“If you need only a few, you can go to the jewelry store. But if you need lots of them, you can go to the factory. It’s affordable. You can even personally choose them.”

She thought for a while and concluded that she needed quite a lot. “Do you know where the factory is?”

“Do you need a lot?” the boss asked. She nodded her head in response.

“How about this? Give me your address and tell me which type of pearls you want. I’ll get it for you.” He smiled, “I can earn a bit more with this. And you can save yourself some trouble.”

“Sure,” she agreed after pondering for a moment. It would cost her a lot of time if she went there by herself. Someone was offering to help and she only needed to pay a bit which was rather convenient for her. She wrote down her address and the pearls’ specifications. “Can you give me by tonight? I’m really in a rush for it.”

“I will. Don’t worry,” he reassured.

When she exited, the driver carried her things. They were ready to drive home as she had already bought everything that she wanted.

“You can wait for me in the car,” she said to the driver when they were on the first floor.

He looked at the sea of people and feared that it wouldn’t be that safe for her. “I’ll wait for you at the door.”

Lin Xinyan only wanted to use the restroom. She nodded.

She asked someone for the restroom’s direction and when she was done, she walked out. She was looking for the driver at the door when she was suddenly grabbed by the wrist.

Chapter 268

She jolted up in shock and felt cold sweat travelling down her body at the contact. “Who are you?” she nervously asked with a trembling voice.

He Ruize turned his head and pulled down his mask. Lin Xinyan’s face paled as soon as she recognized the face.

It was He Ruize. The man she feared the most. He was the one who imprisoned and hurt her.

“Let me go!” she shouted.

“No!” He gritted his teeth as the hand on her wrist tightened its grip.

It had been so long since he last met her so of course he wouldn't let go!

The scene caused those who were passing by to stop and look at them.

Lin Xinyan didn't wish to be taken away from him again, and she shouted, “I don't know you! Please let me go immediately! Or else I'll call the police!” Her loud voice attracted people's attention.

He panicked but managed to calm himself down as he pulled her into a hug. “Don't make a big scene.”

He released her before explaining to the crowd. “I'm so sorry for that. She's my girlfriend. We're just having a little quarrel.”

A sigh was heard after that and someone approached them to help him persuade her, “Little girl, that attitude is not good. There are so many people here. If you continue quarrelling with your boyfriend like this, he'd hurt his pride.”

“I'm not his girlfriend. I don't even know who he is.” Lin Xinyan furiously shook her head.

“I'm sorry. It's my fault, Yan. I shouldn't have angered you. Can we stop quarrelling? Let's go home now.”

He wrapped his arm around her waist and dragged her out. Nobody helped her since they thought that it was a quarrel between the 'couple'.

On the contrary, they were supporting He Ruize. They thought that the woman was so ignorant that she didn't care about her boyfriend's image in public.

No one would help her. She clenched her hands and sank down, making it hard for him to pull her. When he was grasping her, she held his arm and bit on it harshly.

He Ruize grunted in pain as his grip loosened. She took this opportunity to escape from him. When she was about to run, a stranger pulled her arm.

“Don't be stubborn. Can't you see how hurt your boyfriend is from the bite?”

“I am not his girlfriend!” She roared word by word which stunned the person as he let go of her hand.

“Yan...” He grabbed her hand again.

“Let her go!” the driver yelled as he sprinted towards them. He Ruize panicked and he let her go before quickly running away.

The driver wanted to chase him but was stopped by Lin Xinyan. “Don’t bother. There are a lot of people here. He can hide anywhere. It’d be hard to find him.”

The driver retreated and stood in front of her. “Are you okay?”

She nodded her head, “Let’s go.”

“Are you really not his girlfriend?” the previous stranger asked dumbfoundedly. He just wanted to help but it turned out to be making more trouble instead.

Lin Xinyan threw him a glare without replying. That shameless bastard. Everyone misunderstood because he said they were lovers. They even interceded for him.

If it weren’t for the driver who came here on time, she wouldn’t know if she could escape from him.

The driver kept her within his sight when they were exiting the mall. When they were in the car, Lin Xinyan slowly released the tension. What happened just now kind of traumatized her.

Is he always watching me in the dark and appears once he gets the chance?

She didn’t know. There were a number of speculations in her heart that was unsettling for her. Nobody knows when he’ll show up again.

He Ruize’s existence was like a untimed bomb that would explode any time. It was also the kind of bomb that threatened her at all times.

Too lost in her thoughts, she didn’t notice that they were back at the hotel.

“We’re here, Ms. Lin.” The driver opened the door for her.

His voice was what pulled her back to her senses. She bent down to get out of the car and once she was out in the open space, she couldn’t help but glance back. What happened just now had planted a paranoia in her. She felt like He Ruize was creeping somewhere, peeking.

“This is our territory. He won’t show up,” the driver assured her.

She nodded her head before entering the hotel.

During the journey from the hotel's lobby to the upper floor, she would fearfully look around from time to time. Though she knew that they were all Zong Jinghao's people, she just couldn't help but feel uneasy.

She couldn't control herself.

When the elevator stopped, she walked out.

"Ruixi, can you stop being so childish?" Meanwhile, Lin Xichen was talking to his sister through gritted teeth.

"I'm not childish. I just like playing Plants vs. Zombies. What's wrong with it?" she defended herself.

"Oh! I picked up a lot of suns! I can make a pea shooter!" The little girl said to herself, completely dismissing her brother's slander.

She didn't find herself childish. She just enjoyed playing the game.

Lin Xichen ruffled his hair. He couldn't look at her any longer. But she just had to raise her voice which irritated him.

"Xi," Lin Xinyan called him at the door.

Lin Ruixi was concentrated on the game so much that she didn't notice her mother's presence.

"Mommy." Lin Xichen walked over with a deep frown even at such a young age.

Lin Xinyan stretched out her hand and stroked his brows. "You're a good boy. You've been taking care of your sister for me. So I have a gift for you."

With that, his eyes lit up. "What gift?" he asked happily.

Lin Xinyan handed him a shopping bag which he quickly took. "A Rubik's Cube!" he exclaimed after taking out the box.

His mother nodded her head and said, "The boss said it's hard to solve so I don't know if you can do it." She deliberately provoked him.

Lin Xichen looked up and stared at her. His hands never stopped messing with the box. He wanted to see how difficult it was. The boy liked challenging games.

He finally opened the box and took out the cube. "Mommy, where did you buy this?"

"I...I bought it outside. Why?" She was confused by his attitude.

"I like it." He was already eager to try solving it. "Thank you, mommy."

"I'm glad you like it." She smiled while rubbing his head.

"Can I go play now?"

"Of course."

With that, he ran to the couch in his room and began studying the cube.

Lin Xinyan saw that her children were quietly doing their own stuff so she went to the other room.

Zong Jinghao was still on the couch with his laptop, dealing with some company stuff. He was in the same posture as when she left. He looked really busy.

Lin Xinyan's eyes drooped as she walked into the room with her light footsteps.

She put the things down, fished out a paper and pen from her bag before strolling out again. She didn't want to disturb the man.

Zong Jinghao had been waiting for her. He was elated when she came back. He noticed that she had bought Lin Xichen something when she walked through the door.

He didn't want her to notice him so he slowly retreated back to the room. He sat on the couch while pretending to look busy and still angry at her.

Where did she go earlier? She bought something for Xichen. Did she buy anything for me?

He anticipated for her to enter the room. But once she did, she didn't even greet him before silently leaving again.

He put down his laptop after that. Can't this woman just come and coax me? Doesn't she see how unhappy I still am? Doesn't she care about me? What the hell was she doing outside?

He had never been this anxious before. Finally, he couldn't hold it anymore. Fine. If she doesn't come find me, I'll go to her instead.

He wished not to argue with his own wife. After persuading himself, he walked out the room and saw Lin Xinyan at the end of the corridor.

Chapter 269

The sunlight shone through the French window. She was sitting at the corner with a drawing board in her hands. She was drawing the design of the wedding dress.

The rough outline of the dress was already imprinted in her mind as her hand sketched back and forth smoothly. Once she was in her working mode, she would be lost in it. Even the incident of bumping into He Ruize wasn't in her mind anymore.

When Zong Jinghao was about to approach her, the driver who accompanied her just now approached him. He usually didn't need to personally report on such things. But Su Zhan and Shen Peichuan weren't there today.

He thought that Zong Jinghao should know about He Ruize's appearance.

"I went shopping with Ms. Lin today. We bumped into He Ruize."

Hearing that, the light on the man's face instantly dampened.

"He wanted to take her away but failed. I think that he might be watching us in the dark all this time."

There wasn't a doubt that he would do that. He was just waiting for the perfect timing.

"Okay, you can go now." Zong Jinghao waved his hand at him.

They were in the light while He Ruize was in the dark. If they wanted to catch him, then they must pull the snake out of its hole to avoid future troubles.

He made up his mind. But Su Zhan was getting married soon so he could only put the plan on hold.

"Wait," he called out when the driver was about to leave.

"What did she buy?" He pretended to be serious. She bought Lin Xichen a gift so she must have bought him something too.

The driver thought for a while before answering, "Pearls, a Rubik's Cube and some fabric."

He remembered that the Rubik's Cube was for Lin Xichen which was something the child liked.

But it was obvious that the rest of the things weren't for Zong Jinghao.

Which meant that he had no gift.

This woman! Am I even in her heart at all?

"Okay, you can leave," he calmly said. With that, the driver left.

On the other side, Lin Xinyan was immersed in her designing, completely unaware that somebody was approaching her. She didn't even notice the shadow hovering over her.

The black pencil kept going back and forth on the paper. She already drew the rough outline of the dress. Now she was just trying to figure out the details.

Zong Jinghao leaned down as his eyes were fixed on her design.

The woman was so lost in her world that she didn't notice him. Then her hand suddenly paused.

Wedding. What a sacred ceremony.

She once had such a longing to put on a wedding dress and marry her desired man that she could spend her life with. They would walk through this life hand in hand. But... She slowly lowered her eyes.

"What are you thinking?" He was so close that she could feel his breath on the spot between her ears and neck. She quickly looked up to meet his gaze.

The moment she raised her head, Zong Jinghao caught a concealed disappointment in her eyes that quickly disappeared.

Something flashed in his eyes. When they were getting married, he didn't give her anything. She was also like any other woman who wanted a wedding dress.

"N-nothing." She lowered her head and scooted away to distance herself from him. She busied herself tidying up her things to hide her disappointment.

"Where did you go?" He neared her again.

"Went out and bought some things." She held the drawing board and pencil in one hand. She used the other hand to support herself to get up. But then she felt that her leg was numbed.

"Are your legs numb?" He crouched down and touched both of her legs. "Which leg?"

She hesitated a bit before saying, "Left."

"Here?" he asked, rubbing her left calf.

Lin Xinyan looked at his hand. His palm was broad, warm and covered with rough crisscrossing palm prints which she could feel. A layer of sweat travelled down her body, soaking her clothes. His gentle and feather-like touches penetrated warmth into her heart.

"Yeah." Her voice unknowingly became low.

Zong Jinghao was wearing trousers so crouching was uncomfortable. He simply sat down and put her leg on his lap. "Stretch out."

Lin Xinyan did as he told while he massaged her leg with his head down.

“Don’t you have anything to tell me?” he asked after a minute of silence.

“There’s really nothing going on between us,” she explained once again as she thought that he was still mad about the whole Bai Yinning affair.

He raised his head and studied her. He hoped that she would take the initiative to tell him about meeting He Ruize. He wished that she would be more open to him and be frank about anything when she was with him.

As for Bai Yinning, he said, “Don’t go anywhere near him from now on.” His voice was stone cold.

“Okay,” she responded, nodding her head.

She was being so obedient that he couldn’t blame her for not telling him about today’s incident. “You met He Ruize today?”

Lin Xinyan suddenly raised her head and stared at him, flabbergasted. How did he know about this?

Then she remembered the driver she was with. He must have reported it.

“Did he hurt you?”

Her chest still felt tight when she recalled about He Ruize’s sudden appearance. “No.”

It was terrifying that he almost succeeded in taking her away. Being able to escape from him was truly lucky.

Zong Jinghao could see that she was hiding how she really felt. He Ruize’s appearance meant that he must had the intention to take her away again. He took her into his arms and held her close. I’m glad that he failed. “Stay by me from now on. If you push me away, where am I supposed to look for you?”

Lin Xinyan lowered her head and said nothing. He pushed her forehead lightly, “Do you hear me?”

She remained silent as he pulled her closer. She could feel the warmth from his body which made hers tense involuntarily. “Yes,” she whispered.

He glanced down. Her long hair was matted down on his chest and he tried to smoothen out the hair knots. While brushing her hair, he said, “Good girl.”

He clasped her by the waist and picked her up from the floor. “Can you walk now?”

She moved a bit to feel the sensation on her numbed leg. “Yes.”

She tried to push him away to walk on her own. But she was swept off the floor out of the blue. She panicked when she thought of her children who were in the room and the bodyguards in front of the elevator. She wanted to yell but that would just attract unnecessary attention so she didn't.

Zong Jinghao beamed a smile. She buried her face in the crook of his neck. "Aren't you afraid of being seen?"

"Why should I?" Both his face and tone turned serious. "Let's have a wedding ceremony when we go back."

When she heard that, she felt a lump in her throat and her eyes welled up with tears.

Meanwhile, Su Zhan kept chattering in Qin Ya's ears. "How about we use flowers as our main theme?" The latter didn't respond. It was as if she hadn't come back to her senses.

"Qin Ya, please say something." A big man like him acting like a baby with his hand on her arm made her shudder. Goosebumps travelled all over her body as she looked at him. "Can you be a bit more serious?"

"Ms. Qin, how serious do you want me to be?" Almost instantly, his entire face changed. He stood straight as if he was going to fight a very serious lawsuit.

He looked so serious that Qin Ya was in a trance for a second. Is he really the Su Zhan I know?

The voices of Su Zhan and Qin Ya coming from the elevator were getting louder and soon they would appear at the corridor.

Lin Xinyan suddenly looked up and said, "Put me down."

"I'm afraid it's too late."

As soon as he said that, Su Zhan and Qin Ya walked over.

Lin Xinyan shut her eyes in panic and pretended to be asleep. Otherwise, she would feel embarrassed if people saw her being carried like this in broad daylight for no absolute reason.

Su Zhan's eyes travelled from Zong Jinghao to Lin Xinyan, then to the window to make sure that it wasn't nighttime yet.

"You two..."

Chapter 270

"What are you doing?" Su Zhan smiled vaguely.

Zong Jinghao could feel how stiff the woman in his arms was. It felt like he was carrying a rock. Knowing that she was thin-skinned, he ignored Su Zhan and entered the room.

"When did they get so close like this?" Su Zhan asked himself.

Qin Ya glanced at him before turning around, also walking into the room. The man quickly followed her. "Ya."

"Stop talking!" she groaned. "Can you be a bit more mature and make me feel safer?"

"Of course." Su Zhan hugged her and said, "Just tell me what you don't like. I'll change."

Qin Ya was taken aback when she saw how serious he was. "Really?"

"Yes," he replied without hesitation and stared at her seriously. "Let's get married. Give it a chance. Who knows? Maybe we're meant to be."

She fell silent while gazing at him for a moment. "Okay, let's try this," she slowly replied, which made the man smile and hug her tighter.

At night, the boss that Lin Xinyan met at the mall delivered the pearls as promised. There were two types of them. One of them was as big as a bean while the other one was as small as a mung bean. There were eight hundred of them in total. All of which were nice, round and also well-colored.

The boss voluntarily did this in hope of making extra money. She was very satisfied with the products. She paid for the pearls and gave him extra money for his service as well as his honesty.

Lin Xinyan carried the pearls back to her room and began sewing. After all, she really didn't have that much time left.

The lace that she bought was to make a six-meter long veil with pearls sewn on the edge of it. She added the pearls for two reasons. One was of course for a good image. While the other one was so the veil wouldn't be crumpled when being dragged on the floor.

After dinner, Zong Jinghao played with the kids while she sewed. Then he took a bath after the kids were asleep but she was still busy sewing on the couch.

The man frowned, "I'll give you money. You can use it to buy whatever type of wedding dress that she wants."

She's sewing hundreds of pearls on that. She must be exhausted.

She shook her head, "I want to do this. It's nothing to do with money."

Besides, this was her job so she didn't feel tired.

As long as she had enough time, she would personally sew for her guests. Sometimes when she was really busy, she would leave it all to her qualified workers.

Zong Jinghao wanted to sit next to her. When he was bending his body and about to sit down, she stopped him. She was very rigorous when it came to her work that a smile was hardly seen on her face. "You can't sit here. Go sleep with the kids."

He silently stared at her and bit back the words on the tip of his tongue. Then he climbed on the bed next to his daughter. I'm the most pitiful husband in the whole world.

They had two kids but he only slept with his wife once. The memories were shallow.

Lin Xinyan raised her head and noticed that the man was very quiet. She could do her work in peace.

As the night got deeper, Lin Xinyan didn't even know when she fell asleep. In her daze, she felt someone carrying her but she was too sleepy to open her eyes. Then her back landed on a soft and big bed. She adjusted into a more comfortable position before falling asleep again.

Everyone was busy during these two days. Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan were busy arranging for the wedding. Lin Xinyan on the other hand stayed in her room to sew the dress.

Other than handling his work, Zong Jinghao would take care of the children.

Two days had passed in a blink of an eye and the wedding day came.

It was freezing; fortunately the ceremony was held indoors. Su Zhan had hired a wedding planner. The whole set looked very dreamy and the theme was dominated by purple. That was a mysterious color so when applied to weddings, it looked divine, sacred and solemn.

In the lounge, Lin Xinyan put on the dress she had sewn on Qin Ya's body. "I don't have a gift for you so consider this dress as my gift."

"You sewed so many pearls on it in such a short period of time. You must have not slept," Qin Ya said as she looked at the veil on top of her head. Her eyes were slightly wet.

Lin Xinyan raised her head and noticed the tears in her eyes. She hurriedly fished out two pieces of tissue to wipe them away. "This is your day. You can't cry. You'll ruin the makeup."

"Thank you," Qin Ya sniffed.

“We’re practically siblings. If you thank me for this, it makes me feel like we’re strangers.” Lin Xinyan allowed the tears to roll down her cheeks. Qin Ya didn’t have any relatives so she was the only one.

“Your makeup is ruined, dummy.” She then asked the makeup artist to fix Qin Ya’s makeup.

Lin Xinyan squatted down behind her to sort out her wedding dress. “I went to the wedding site earlier. It’s very romantic. It’s obvious that Su Zhan has been diligent in this.”

Qin Ya agreed as she silently stared at herself in the mirror. It was too late to regret anything now. She could only hope Su Zhan wouldn’t let her down.

When it was time for Qin Ya to enter, she was all alone on the red carpet considering that she had no relatives. She stepped on the carpet strewn with rose petals and slowly walked to the first arch.

Lin Xinyan knew Qin Ya very well. She knew what type of wedding dress would suit her the most as well as the design that could highlight her strong points. Qin Ya was slim but her breasts were well-developed which looked appealing in a tube top. She looked good in the fishtail design. Only a certain body type could fit this design given that it was picky in terms of waist size. But Lin Xinyan was confident in Qin Ya’s body figure. Sure enough, she looked like a beautiful walking mermaid. Her slender waist was perfectly hugged by the tailored dress, vividly highlighting her figure.

With every step she took, the pure white veil would bloom behind her. The big and small pearls dotted on it were like shining stars. That made her look like a fairy descending from the sky.

The ceremony was simple and smooth. There weren’t that many guests.

Su Zhan, dressed in a black tuxedo, was standing at the end of the red carpet. He was staring at the woman who was slowly approaching him. His eyes were suddenly clouded with determination.

She was someone naïve and special. She was the one who made him open up about this whole marriage issue. He slowly broke into a smile.

Qin Ya finally neared him under the melodious wedding song. He reached out a hand to her. She hesitated a bit but placed hers on it anyway.

At this time, the host started speaking. “Today is a happy day for Mr. Su and Ms. Qin. Please applaud the new couple.”

His grandmother was dressed in a red cheongsam with a mink shawl draped around her shoulders. Tears were streaming down her face as she clapped vigorously, clearly happy for her grandson.

She had been wishing for this day to come her whole life. Now it finally came true.

“Do you, Mr. Su, take this woman, Ms. Qin, to be your lawfully wedded wife, to have and to hold, in sickness and in health, in good times and woe, for richer or poorer, keeping yourself solely unto her for as long as you both shall live? If so, answer ‘I do.’”

Chapter 271

The atmosphere was quiet for a moment.

“I do.”

There seemed to be no suspense at all to that answer. Su Zhan said it out so easily.

It seemed everyone had expected this answer so there was not something they waited for with bated breath.

“Ms. Qin, do you take Mr. Su as your lawful wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and cherish until death do you part?”

All eyes were focused on Qin Ya. It was her answer that everyone was still a little uncertain about.

Lin Xinyan seemed very nervous too. Her hands were clenched involuntarily. Zong Jinghao held her hand in his palm and kneaded it lightly. He did not even look at the two people who were about to get married on the stage. To him, there was no one who could attract his attention like she did.

Every line on Su Zhan’s face was tense. He was afraid she would suddenly change her mind.

Time stood still.

The old lady in the congregation was so anxious that she waved to Qin Ya, hurrying her to agree quickly.

Su Zhan was rather worried. He turned to look her and at exactly the same Qin Ya turned, too. Their eyes met. Su Zhan, who was anxious, gradually calmed down as he looked into her serene eyes.

He held Qin Ya’s hand and vowed a promise that was so much more than a wedding vow, “I will indeed treat you well, forever.”

The corner of her lips turned upwards, her eyes turned into crescents with barely visible sparks of light in them and she said, “I do.”

The host picked up the microphone again and continued, "Marriage is the end of singlehood, the celebration of romance and the beginning of happiness. On this special joyous day, I wish you two newlyweds happy loving moments hand in hand, encouraging moments in facing life's unknowns with each other and sweet, happy moments of growing old together!"

Clap! Clap!

In the congregation, the old lady was overwhelmed with emotion and she clapped her hands. In slow motion, the air was filled with colored ribbons falling from above to the sound of her handclapping.

It was beautiful and romantic like a shower of rainbows.

"The groom may embrace and kiss the bride."

Su Zhan lifted Qin Ya's veil. Before Qin Ya was ready, he bent down over her and kissed her. Qin Ya's eyes widened and she was stunned for a long time.

"So shy." Lin Ruixi covered her eyes, peeking through a gap between her fingers. She kept repeating 'so shy' as she kept watching. Zong Jinghao glanced at her little daughter and deliberately covered the gap between her fingers.

The moment Lin Ruixi noticed her peep hole was covered, she turned and glared at Zong Jinghao, "Papa is bad, you don't let me watch Su Zhan and Qin Ya play kissing."

Zong Jinghao hugged her in his arms, "Don't look at evil, don't listen to evil, understand?"

The little girl did not understand. She blinked her eyes and asked, "What does that mean?"

"It means we mustn't look at things that we are not allowed to and we mustn't listen to things we aren't permitted to." Close by, Lin Xichen replied slowly.

Lin Xichen shook his head helplessly at his younger sister's innocence and ignorance, saying, "Mummy should send you to school. You don't know anything."

This was the point. Lin Xichen and Lin Ruixi were both five years old. Lin Xichen entered the AC Academy based on his own strength while Lin Ruixi did not go to school.

In China, children this age were studying in kindergarten.

Zong Jinghao was considering sending them both to a kindergarten the following year to experience school life. He did not wish to force them to study hard but just to experience this part of growing up.

It was not that Lin Xinyan wished to keep them away from school. She did not worry about Lin Xichen whose intelligence was way above kindergarten level. She searched for a

suitable school back when they were in country A but he did not want to go because he found it too childish for him.

Later, it was discovered that he had a talent for numbers. So, he took the AC test and was accepted into the academy. He was the youngest student in the academy.

As for her daughter, she did not have high expectations. When she was born, she was very tiny. As long as she had a normal stress-free childhood and grew up healthy, it was all that her heart desired.

In fact, she advocated Western education. The children were not taught formal subjects before elementary school, instead they were given lots of play time and encouraged to explore and be curious about learning.

“Xi, let’s go to the bridal chamber and ask the bride for wedding candy.” Shen Peichuan came over wearing his suit. Other than his uniform, he was always casually dressed. He looked pretty good in a suit this very first time.

At the word ‘candy,’ Lin Ruixi started clamoring, “I want to go, Uncle Shen, take me too.”

“Alright.” Shen Peichuan took her from Zong Jinghao’s arms and announced, “I will take them upstairs.”

Zong Jinghao instructed, “Do mind yourself- don’t use improper language in front of the children.”

Shen Peichuan acknowledged that and then brought the two children upstairs.

No matter what, it was Su Zhan’s wedding night. It had always been an age old traditional practice to tease the newlyweds. He would not be forgiven if he did not go and tease them.

Zong Jinghao stood up and said, “Let’s go for a walk.”

Lin Xinyan had not been sleeping well for the past few days and she wanted to go back and rest. “I don’t feel like going,” she replied.

Zong Jinghao placed her jacket around her, saying, “Just accompany me.”

Lin Xinyan stared at Zong Jinghao. How does this man find time for walks?

“What is it do you want?” Lin Xinyan did not think that it was as simple as a walk.

“You will know when the time comes. Just follow me.” Zong Jinghao was holding her hand. Once this man makes a decision, you can’t say no. You’ve got to go along.

Once outside, the wind was rather strong. Zong Jinghao wrapped her in a coat. It was a long road outside the hotel. Traffic was scarce. In fact, it seemed remote.

If it was not for the hotel here, the road probably would not have existed.

Lin Xinyan looked around and found that there were pine trees all around. Even though it was winter, they were still green.

Lin Xinyan could not help asking, "What on earth do you want, bringing me to such a remote place?"

Zong Jinghao deliberately kept quiet to rouse her curiosity.

Such was human nature: when interested, they got more and more curious, wanting to know more. Lin Xinyan was no exception. She wanted to know what tricks Zong Jinghao had up his sleeve.

She pretended to be angry and stopped in her tracks. "If you don't tell me, I won't go."

Zong Jinghao leaned over, his lips pressed against her face, "Are you sure you won't go?"

Perhaps it was because he was too close, Lin Xinyan felt hot. Yet, in her ears she heard the whistling of the cold strong winter wind. She said calmly, "I'm sure."

Zong Jinghao glanced around. The pine trees in this forest were very dense. If anyone chooses this as a hiding place, they should be able to hide well, is that not so?

"I'm leaving." Lin Xinyan pushed him away. Before she could move a step, someone had held her by her waist. She had been traumatized before and was haunted by this sudden action. Her face turned pale. Zong Jinghao sensed her fear and he whispered in her ear. "It's just me."

She only felt a little relieved when she heard the familiar voice. She felt only a warm hand wrapped around her waist, like a flexible and powerful python, firmly entangling her. Their two bodies were immediately pressed closer together.

In this 'cold desolate countryside,' Lin Xinyan gently pushed him away, saying, "It's cold here..."

What she meant to say was, "Let's not do it here."

"You won't feel cold if I hold you in my arms."

With those words, he had her whole person wrapped up inside his coat.

Chapter 272

Lin Xinyan looked up. Zong Jinghao was bending over her and his body was pressing down on top of her. In the next instant, his lips were upon her mouth.

Even on this windy winter's day, Lin Xinyan did not feel cold. Her whole body felt as if roasted by a hot fire. He used a lot of strength and while most of the coat covered her body, only her head was exposed to the cold. Lin Xinyan seemed to understand a little bit of his reason for bring her to this remote place.

“Do you want to attract He Rui...”

His kiss suddenly deepened, preventing her from speaking aloud.

He sucked at her tongue and took it in his mouth. It felt painful as he kissed her so savagely. Lin Xinyan could not help but yelp. It came out as a moan.

Perhaps her voice aroused him for Lin Xinyan obviously felt his body's reaction.

Lin Xinyan tried to push him away but the more she pushed, the tighter Zong Jinghao hugged her.

She was held so tightly that she could hardly breathe.

Deep in the woods, there was a pair of eyes watching them, red and bloodthirsty.

He Ruize's hand grasped onto a tree trunk, as if squeezing Zong Jinghao's neck. He used all his strength and might to break it before letting go.

There was no pain worse than looking at the woman you love lying in the arms of another man, and both of them so in love.

He was angry and resentful.

Was his company for so many years' worth less than the love of a man who hurt her?

If it were not for the voice reasoning in his mind telling him that rushing out now would not win Lin Xinyan back, he would definitely have rushed over and dragged Lin Xinyan out of Zong Jinghao's arms.

Lin Xinyan belonged to him!

Zong Jinghao was tireless, going on and on. Lin Xinyan got angry and bit his exploring tongue. His eyebrows shot up as the smell of blood filled his senses for an instant. He withdrew his mouth from her lips and there followed a thread of saliva mixed with blood.

A gust of wind snapped the thread and Lin Xinyan's mouth felt chilly. Zong Jinghao licked his lips and swallowed the salty taste. Then he reached out to wipe the wetness remaining on the corners of her lips. With a low raspy voice he asked, “Are you so cruel to me?”

Lin Xinyan turned her head, saying nothing.

Zong Jinghao wrapped her in his arms again, saying, "Come on, let's go back."

His overcoat was on her. He only had a thin shirt on. Lin Xinyan took off her clothes and put them on his body, "I have a down jacket. I don't feel cold."

Zong Jinghao hugged her close, sharing one coat between two people.

Back at the hotel, the two went upstairs and they heard noises still coming from Su Zhan's room. The door was not closed and from the crack, they saw Lin Xichen holding a piece of candy tied with a string in his hand. He was swinging it near Su Zhan's mouth.

"Uncle Su, if you can't catch it with your mouth, Aunt Qin must hold me to sleep tonight."

Su Zhan was speechless.

This child from whoever's family, can someone please take him away? Can you leave the newlyweds alone?

Su Zhan tried a few times but failed to catch the candy in his mouth.

"Change it to something else."

Lin Xichen seemed reasonable, nodding his head, "Sure, if you can't catch it, Aunt Qin will hold me and my sister and sleep with us."

Su Zhan could not find his tongue.

You're being a bully. Isn't that what you are doing?

"I said change the game a little, not the punishment," Su Zhan suggested.

Lin Xichen was still being nice. He asked, "How do you want to play?"

Su Zhan smiled and looked at Lin Xichen, "You keep your hand still."

This time, Lin Xichen had no reply. If I don't move, you'll easily catch it. Where's the fun?

Su Zhan glared at Shen Peichuan who was sitting nearby watching them. This was his idea.

Shen Peichuan shrugged and laughed slyly. "Tease the groom, tease the bride, Otherwise, they can't unite. After the teasing, they'll always be loving; closer too, their younger siblings."

Su Zhan replied, "Tsk, what type of logic is that?"

Shen Peichuan laughed aloud.

Lin Xichen got down from bed, saying, "Oh, how stupid."

Su Zhan kept silent.

He was about to yell 'why don't you try it?!' when he saw Lin Xichen taking the candy and eating it himself. There was now an apple tied to the string. He said kindly, "I'm giving you something bigger. It's easier to bite."

Su Zhan went over and stroked his head, "Xi is really a nice person."

Lin Xichen laughed and climbed onto the bed again, standing there. He swung the apple right in front of Su Zhan. "Uncle Su, if you can't bite it this time, I'll punish you to... wash Aunt Qin Ya's feet."

Qin Ya who was playing with Lin Ruixi nearby heard Lin Xichen. She turned red with embarrassment.

Su Zhan cast her a glance and laughed in agreement, "Come on then."

The result was pathetic. The moment he bit, Lin Xichen moved his hand and he missed. The apple bounced against his face a few times. He just couldn't get his teeth into it. The apple skin was smooth and slippery. He could touch it with his mouth but not sink his teeth into it.

"Kid, you tricked me." Su Zhan realized that changing from candy to apple was not out of kindness.

"Go and get a basin of water for foot washing," Lin Xichen ordered like a big lord.

"Washing my own wife's feet is nothing to be ashamed of," Su Zhan consoled himself. Then he went to the bathroom to fetch warm water.

Quite quickly, Su Zhan carried a basin of warm water into the room. He put it down by the bedside and called to Qin Ya, "My little wife, come and let me wash your feet."

Qin Ya pretended she did not hear him. With so many people around, she felt shy.

Lin Xichen pulled her, saying, "Aunt Qin Ya, please come."

Lin Ruixi wanted to join in the fun and so, she helped her brother to pull Qin Ya.

Qin Ya could refuse an adult but not too little children. Obediently she sat on the bed. She was still wearing high heels. Su Zhan held her feet and took them off. Lin Xichen covered his mouth to stifle his giggles.

"Aunt Qin Ya, I am your guardian angel and I will protect you. If Uncle Su bullies you, you can tell me. Then, I will avenge you."

Inexplicably, Lin Xichen's words brought tears into Qin Ya's eyes. No one had ever promised to protect her. Lin Xichen was the first.

As she felt touched, warmth filled her heart.

She sniffed, stroked Lin Xichen's little head and said, "Thank you, Xi."

"Don't mention it, mommy said we are one family." Lin Xichen took some candy and stuffed them into his sister's pocket. "This is Aunt Qin Ya's wedding candy. We must have more."

Having kept the candy properly, he held his sister's hand, "We are leaving." Passing by Shen Peichuan on his way out, he said, "Uncle Shen, you should leave, too."

Shen Peichuan had thought that this kid would continue to torture Su Zhan for some time. He was surprised that the kid would let him off so fast.

He got up from his chair, "Xi, the opportunity to torment him only comes this one time, are you sure you want to let him off just like this?"

"For Aunt Qin Ya's sake, I let him off. In future, if he bullies Aunt Qin Ya, I'll punish him."

Su Zhan placed Qin Ya's foot in the warm water. At the same time, he lifted his head, "Did you bribe the kid? He's so nice to you."

Qin Ya did not reply him.

When Qin Ya was with Lin Xinyan, she got to know the two kids. Their bond strengthened as they spent time together over a long period.

Su Zhan put her other foot into the warm water, promising, "From now on, I'll treat you well."

Qin Ya brushed her face, "You have to keep your word."

Su Zhan washed her feet in earnest. She was fair. Her feet too were fair, and they were small.

Qin Ya found it ticklish and shrank back. Su Zhan held them in the basin, "Soak a little. It feels nice."

When Lin Xichen and his sister came out of the room, they found their parents, Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao, standing at the doorway.

Lin Ruixi rushed over and hugged Lin Xinyan, saying, "Mommy, there's a lot of candy in my pocket. Let me give you one."

She took out one, removed the wrapping and gave it to Lin Xinyan. She bent down to her level and placed the candy into her mouth.

It was really sweet.

Shen Peichuan was the last to come out. He closed the door behind him.

When Su Zhan came back after pouring away the foot washing water, he saw that the door was closed. He went to lock it to be sure.

Turning around, he saw Qin Ya standing right there.

Chapter 273

“What are you doing?”

Qin Ya was still wearing her wedding gown. She looked extraordinarily beautiful today. At this moment, her face was wrinkled up in a frown.

Su Zhan spoke the truth. Besides, she had seen it too. “Just locking the door.”

“Why are you locking the door?” Qin Ya raised her voice a little. She walked over to open it but Su Zhan held her back. “What are you doing? This is our wedding night. Do you want me to spend this night alone? I’m telling you, there’s no way!”

“You... Oh!”

Before Qin Ya could finish speaking, she was carried up by Su Zhan. Qin Ya punched and kicked but Su Zhan didn’t care. He threw her onto the big soft bed and climbed on top of her. As he undressed her, he said, “Tonight, you must be with me, or else I’ll be the laughing stock.”

Qin Ya was not a little girl without experience. Seeing Su Zhan’s gestures, she knew what he wanted to do only too well and that was why she was uneasy.

She moved a little, “Su Zhan, don’t you be too excited.”

She was not conservative. Instead, she was simply not prepared. The truth was that the last time it happened between them, they both had too much to drink and so, neither of them felt any embarrassment.

It was different now. Both of them were very sober.

Though she was fond of him, they had not been intimate.

Su Zhan laughed, “Don’t you worry. I’ll be gentle.”

“Su Zhan, let me prepare myself.” Qin Ya rolled over and tried to crawl away. Su Zhan caught her by the ankle and wrapped her legs around his waist. He positioned his body on top of her, “We are husband and wife, what is there to think about?”

“Su... mmm...”

Qin Ya's words were buried in Su Zhan's kiss.

Outside, Shen Peichuan stroked Lin Xichen's head and said, “Xi, you are too kind today. Su Zhan did not suffer enough. You should torment him more so that he will appreciate what he has.”

Lin Xichen looked up at Shen Peichuan, “Are you jealous?”

Shen Peichuan kept quiet.

Then he raised his eyebrows, “Why should I be jealous?”

“Because you are the only one who has no wife.”

Shen Peichuan was now speechless.

“Naughty boy, you dare make fun of me.” Shen Peichuan made as if to pull his ears but Lin Xichen was too fast for him. He ran off swiftly.

Lin Xinyan was about to take her daughter back to her room when she met the old lady coming upstairs. Seeing Lin Ruixi, her eyes narrowed and she said, “This little girl looks so beautiful, just like her mother.”

Because someone praised her, Lin Ruixi smiled happily and greeted the old lady, “Grandma, how are you?”

Lin Xinyan hurriedly corrected her daughter. She squatted down and said to her, “I can call her grandma, but you have to call her great grandma.”

Lin Ruixi seemed to understand and clarified, “I have to call Mommy's grandmother ‘great grandma,’ right?”

Lin Xinyan nodded, “Yes.”

Lin Ruixi turned her head and looked at the old lady, her words were sweet like honey, “Great grandma, how are you?”

“Ah.” The old lady's heart was melted by the little girl. Holding her hand, she asked, “Ruixi, will you invite me into your room?”

She was getting older. Although she did not need to do anything for the wedding, she still worried about it a lot. Just after dealing with the scene, she was tired and wanted to rest. Nevertheless, in this unfamiliar place, she wanted to find someone to talk to. Everyone was very busy. She saw the cute little girl and wanted to stay with her for a while.

The older a person got, the more afraid of being alone she felt.

“Yes,” Lin Ruixi replied without thinking. She led the old lady into her room, followed by Lin Xinyan. It was not known where Lin Xichen had gone with Shen Peichuan to play. Zong Jinghao wanted to spend more time with Lin Xinyan so he came in, too.

As Lin Xinyan poured some water for the old lady, she asked, “Today was tiring, wasn’t it?”

The old lady smiled happily thinking it was worth being tired as Su Zhan’s wedding was a success. “I’m getting old and useless,” she said.

“Grandma is healthy, not old,” Lin Xinyan replied, placing the cup in front of the old lady.

The old lady held Lin Xinyan’s hand, saying, “I was told that you are close to Qin Ya. Is that so?”

Lin Xinyan nodded her head honestly, “We have known each other for a few years. We are like family now.”

The old lady nodded her head. “Su Zhan is not a bad boy. He has been hurt before. After that, for a long time, he felt unmotivated. Sometimes, there was a woman but he was not serious. This time, he really got married. I’m so happy. I like this Qin Ya. She is so kind. I hope Su Zhan will not stray again but will live a good life with her. After a year or so, give birth to a baby girl like little Ruixi. That is all I want.”

Lin Xinyan sensed that the old lady meant more than the words she said. She just took it at face value that the old lady was emotional. “They will be fine and they will have kids. When that time comes, grandma, you’ll be kept really busy.”

The old lady laughed, “May it be as you say.”

Zong Jinghao sat nearby, checking the financial news on his mobile. He was not interested in the topic so he did not contribute to the conversation.

The old lady asked Lin Ruixi, “How old are you, Ruixi?”

“I’m five. After the new year, I’ll be six,” the little girl replied truthfully.

The old lady laughed, “Time passes so swiftly,” she said.

Previously there was no news at all and now here’s this 5-year-old.

Lin Xinyan cuddled up on a sofa nearby, watching them converse.

Lin Ruixi had a lot to say, asking the old lady a lot of strange and unusual questions like, “Great grandma, what is the meaning of getting married?”

The old lady explained patiently, "Getting married is when a man and a woman form their own family. This is called a marriage."

The little girl's eyes rolled, "Then, great grandma, have you been married before?"

The old lady replied smilingly, "Yes, of course."

"Whom did you marry?" the little girl asked.

"Of course, I was married to Su Zhan's grandfather."

"Can I get married when I grow up?"

The moment the little girl asked this question, Zong Jinghao who was bent over his mobile phone lifted his head and looked at her daughter. His gaze was dark. The thought of his daughter marrying someone someday had never occurred to him because she was so young.

He believed no one was good enough for her. He would always keep her as his daughter.

Lin Xinyan's eyelids felt heavy. Finally, she was asleep, not even knowing that she slept on the sofa. Vaguely, she could hear her daughter's voice asking some strange questions.

She had no idea how long she slept, only that when she awoke, Lin Ruixi and the old lady were not around.

"You're awake?" Zong Jinghao brought a cup of water to her.

The heater was turned on. It was warm but the atmosphere was dry and her throat felt parched. She took the water and drank a few sips. Her throat felt much better. "How long did I sleep?"

He lowered his head, looked at the time and replied, "Two hours."

Lin Xinyan put down her cup, rubbed her eyes and sat up. Thinking about how he took her out, she asked, "You brought me outside to lure He Ruize out of hiding, right? But he's not stupid. He won't jump out just like that."

Zong Jinghao sat down on the sofa and smoothed out her long hair that was messed up sleeping on the sofa. He replied, "I want to infuriate him."

It was not coincidence when Lin Xinyan met He Ruize in the mall. It was only possible for him to catch her alone if he was observing her every movement. He wanted to abduct her again.

Therefore, this showed that he was constantly monitoring Lin Xinyan.

He Ruize would do anything to abduct Lin Xinyan because he liked her.

And so, he had purposely let He Ruize watch Lin Xinyan be intimate with him in order to make him furious.

Then He Ruize would become impatient to snatch Lin Xinyan away.

If Lin Xinyan appeared to be alone at this moment, would he strike?

Chapter 274

Very quickly, Lin Xinyan understood Zong Jinghao's intentions.

"Would the next step be me going out alone to lure him out?"

"No need for that."

He would never let Lin Xinyan take this risk even if he was confident he could get He Ruize with this one shot. No matter how, he could not let Lin Xinyan be the bait.

"I'll find someone to stand in for you."

"You think He Ruize is stupid?" Lin Xinyan interrupted him. "We have known each other too long. He knows me too well. Even if you can find someone who looks like me, he might not be fooled."

She could have no peace of mind if He Ruize was not caught. He was like a time bomb and it was unknown when he would blow up.

For her own safety and that of her two kids, she wanted to resolve this problem as soon as possible.

"Just let me do it." She looked at Zong Jinghao solemnly. She knew what he was worried about. She was willing to trust him, believing that he could protect her.

Seeing him hesitate, Lin Xinyan said deliberately, "Is it because you lack confidence in yourself?"

Zong Jinghao gazed at her for a while. Softly he said, "Don't agitate me. No matter how foolproof our plans, there is always the risk of something unexpected. I cannot put you at risk."

Lin Xinyan cuddled up in his embrace. "I have faith in you. His existence distresses me."

Zong Jinghao leaned backwards. His face was hidden in shadows and his facial expression could not be seen. Lin Xinyan was silent, quietly lying on his chest, letting him digest the implications of this matter.

After some time, he spoke suddenly, "Go back to sleep."

For the past two days, she hardly slept. That was why she could fall asleep on the sofa just now. Besides, she did not sleep for long. Lin Xinyan knew that he was going out to discuss the matter with Shen Peichuan and so she laid down obediently.

Zong Jinghao put a blanket over her, saying, "I'll be back soon."

"Yeah." Lin Xinyan did not feel sleepy at all. Nevertheless, to give Zong Jinghao a peace of mind, she closed her eyes and pretended to sleep.

Zong Jinghao waited for her to fall asleep before getting up and leaving the room. As soon as he left, Lin Xinyan who had fallen asleep opened her eyes again. She was tired but she couldn't sleep after learning about Zong Jinghao's plan.

Wrapped in a blanket, she got up and walked to the window. Through the window, she could feel the biting cold wind outside.

Whoosh, whoosh. The wind swayed the branches of the trees.

Knock knock...

Someone was knocking on the door. Lin Xinyan collected herself and spoke gently, "Come in."

The door was pushed open. Qin Ya stood there, hesitant and unsure for a moment what to say.

I am sure I had something to say to her when I made my way here.

Lin Xinyan came over, "Do come inside. Don't stand there."

Qin Ya felt a bit shy. Do all newly married women feel such awkward emotions?

Lin Xinyan poured some water for her and sat opposite her on the sofa. She did not have any experiences to share.

"My marriage is a mess. I cannot share any experiences with you. I can tell you this- if we have come to this point of walking side by side as partners in life, then it is destined. Treasure each other well."

Qin Ya lowered her head and softly replied, "Mm..."

"I would like to address you as an elder sister like before." Su Zhan and Zong Jinghao were like brothers. He addressed Lin Xinyan as his 'sister-in-law.' Hence his new wife Qin Ya was expected to do the same. Nonetheless, she did not want to.

She wanted to be with Lin Xinyan like how they used to be.

Lin Xinyan laughed, "Of course, you may."

She thought it did not matter how they addressed each other, as long as they were the same persons. Their friendship would not change. What names they used for each other was unimportant.

Just at this moment, the old lady came in bringing with her Lin Xichen and Lin Ruixi. Seeing Qin Ya there, the old lady smiled wider. "Ya is also here."

Qin Ya stood up hurriedly, "Grandma."

The old lady waved her hands, "Sit, sit." In her eyes, Qin Ya was perfect in every way.

Lin Xichen rolled onto the bed and studied his Rubik's Cube. Lin Ruixi threw herself into Lin Xinyan's arms. It was unclear if she was sleepy or tired. She laid lazily in her arms.

The old lady sat down beside Qin Ya, holding her hand and she spoke, "Ya, from now on, we are one family. If Su Zhan bullies you, you must tell me."

Qin Ya pursed her lips and lowered her head a little as she was shy then replied, "He doesn't bully me."

The old lady was glad. Perhaps she was in a good mood and so she looked bright and alert. She patted Qin Ya hand and said emotionally, "I feel like I am dreaming."

She was prepared to be sad. She had thought that Su Zhan was lying to her like before each time he told her he would marry at the end of the year.

She never imagined this time it would turn out to be real.

"I'm getting old. I hope you and Su Zhan will always be happy together. Can you promise me something?" The old lady suddenly became solemn.

"Please tell me," Qin Ya said.

"No matter what happens in future, please do not leave him. Look after him well for me. Can you promise?"

Qin Ya thought the old lady's request was very strange but she could not pinpoint where or how. In order to give grandma her peace of mind, Qin Ya replied solemnly, "I promise you."

The old lady was overjoyed. Hearing this from Qin Ya, her mind was at rest.

In the evening, Lin Xinyan left the hotel alone. The weather since December had not been warm and the north wind was chilly at night.

The wind on one's face was like knives and it felt as painful as cuts.

Lin Xinyan pulled her down jacket tighter around her.

The New Year was round the corner. Zong Jinghao wanted to capture He Ruize as soon as possible and then return to B City. This was the first year Lin Xinyan came back and so, he wanted the family to enjoy a peaceful reunion without any disruption.

This was Lin Xinyan's desire too. If the uncertainty was not dealt with, she simply could not have a peace of mind.

To trap He Ruize, Lin Xinyan pretended to quarrel with Zong Jinghao. She came out at night alone, sitting by the flower pond.

To make it realistic enough to convince He Ruize, Qin Ya came out to persuade her, "Ms. Lin, all couples quarrel but President Zong is a good man. Please forgive him for the sake of your two children. Let's go back inside. It's so cold here."

Lin Xinyan covered her face and refused to talk.

Qin Ya continued, "Both the children are waiting for you. Let's go back."

Lin Xinyan lowered her head, "I want to be left alone. You go back inside. Take care of the two kids for me."

"But I'm worried if you are out here alone." Qin Ya pulled her, "Come inside with me."

"I don't want to see him. You go inside. Leave me alone for a while. I need to think."

After a few fruitless attempts at persuading her, Qin Ya had no choice but to leave her there.

She kept looking back at her, looking really concerned and worried.

Entering the hotel, she did not go back to her room. Instead, she went to meet Su Zhan who was with Zong Jinghao. The two men were in a secret room surveilling everything outside.

Seeing Qin Ya entering the room, Su Zhan got up and came over to her, "You go upstairs. Grandma, Xichen and Ruixi are there."

Qin Ya was worried. "Can this really lure He Ruize to come out of hiding?"

"As long as he is still obsessed with sister-in-law, he is sure to come out. If not this time, then the next. He will come out sooner or later." Su Zhan was sure that He Ruize was suffering from paranoia or else he would not be so persistent.

Qin Ya was worried, "Will he be a threat to the children's safety?"

Su Zhan caressed her face, "Don't worry. Shen Peichuan is upstairs keeping watch."

As for Shen Peichuan, Qin Ya had faith in his ability. Her work here was done and she had better leave instead of being a nuisance.

Qin Ya went upstairs and Su Zhan went back to the room. Zong Jinghao had not left his place by the window. In fact, he did not even change his posture. This went on for three hours. Lin Xinyan sat in the wintry wind for three hours. There was no sign of He Ruize.

"Sis-in-law has been freezing out there for three hours. Should she come back and continue tomorrow?"

With every passing second, the tension on Zong Jinghao's face increased. As Lin Xinyan battled the cold outside, his heart ached more than anyone else. Yet, he was a sensible logical reasoning being.

Even if He Ruize was watching Lin Xinyan from a hidden position, he might not show up. It's because there was no way he could confirm if Lin Xinyan really did quarrel with him.

If she sat there longer, it would confirm Lin Xinyan really felt bad. If he did not go out to comfort her, He Ruize would be convinced that there was a quarrel.

The moment He Ruize was certain that Lin Xinyan had really quarreled with him, He Ruize would certainly come out from hiding.

Another two hours passed. Lin Xinyan's legs were numb and her hands felt frozen.

At exactly the moment when she felt that He Ruize would not show up, a little girl popped up in front of her.

Chapter 275

Lin Xinyan lifted her head and the little girl came into sight. She wore a red cotton jacket and her face was pink with cold.

"Aunt, what are you doing sitting here?"

Lin Xinyan looked at the little girl and then at the surroundings. There were no adults in sight. Her gaze returned to the little girl. "I don't feel happy, so I am here. Why are you here and where are your folks?"

"My mother is there." She pointed to the skewers stall not far away.

Lin Xinyan looked in the direction she was pointing. There was a barbecue stall by the roadside. A woman was there, wearing seasoned-looking cotton-padded clothes and an apron, helping guests with kebabs.

"I'm here to help my mother." The little girl looked well-behaved. Lin Xinyan stroked her hair, saying, "You are a good girl."

Perhaps, being a mother herself, she let her guard down around the little girl.

"Do you want to eat skewered meat? I'll ask my mother to sell you at a lower price."

Lin Xinyan didn't like this type of food. Nonetheless, she took out some cash and gave it to the little girl, "I don't want to eat but I'm giving you some money to buy food you like."

The little girl blinked, seeing so much money. She did not dare to accept it. "Aunt, why are you giving me money?"

She looked at the little girl and through her, she saw herself in the past. When she was in country A with Zhuang Zijin, life was hard. Just like her, she stayed up late at night, braving the cold wind just to make some money to buy food.

So the little girl aroused her compassion.

"When I see you, I remember how it was when I was a little girl like you with my mother."

The little girl blinked and asked, "Aunt, you sold kebabs too when you were little?"

Lin Xinyan shook her head, "No, but I was working for someone, helping to skewer and barbecue meat."

The little girl smiled, showing a row of small white teeth. She took the money from Lin Xinyan and said, "I'll get the kebabs for you."

The little girl ran towards the barbecue stall. As Lin Xinyan watched her departing figure, her gaze turned gentle.

She thought, after going through hard times, things would get better.

"I'll go and get sis-in-law back in here," Su Zhan could not bear it any longer. In this cold wintry night, sitting out there for hours, she could fall sick.

Zong Jinghao did not reply.

"Doesn't your heart ache?" Su Zhan glared at him as if he couldn't believe what he was seeing.

Doesn't he love Lin Xinyan very deeply? How could he be so hard-hearted now?

“Tell me, why did that little girl just show up?”

Never once did Zong Jinghao’s gaze leave the scene.

Su Zhan barely gave it a thought. He said, “It’s just a child. She’s curious seeing sis-in-law sitting there all alone for so long so she ran over to chat with her.”

Zong Jinghao turned around and gave Su Zhan a look, “The child knows her well.”

“What connection is there...” Speaking mid-sentence, he understood what Zong Jinghao meant. This little girl might have something to do with He Ruize.

“Sis-in-law is very kind.” Su Zhan said because he saw Lin Xinyan giving the little girl some money.

Zong Jinghao kept silent. He looked thoughtful. When Lin Xinyan gave the money to the little girl, she looked as if she was remembering something.

He thought, for sure this little girl must have jolted her memory somehow.

After half an hour, the little girl came running back to Lin Xinyan with some skewers in her hands, “Aunt, this is for you.”

Lin Xinyan looked at the steaming meat. She had been sitting in the cold for some hours. Indeed, she wanted to take a bite. So she took them, picked a skewer and ate. It had the fragrance of charcoal, not the oily smell of deep-fried food.

“Thank you,” Lin Xinyan said, smiling, “It’s yummy.”

The little girl held her arm, “You gave me so much money; my mother wants to thank you. She cannot leave the stall. Would you come with me?”

“You tell your mother, don’t worry about it...”

“Then I’ll give the money back to you.” Speaking, the little girl took out from her pocket the money Lin Xinyan had given to her.

Lin Xinyan caught her hand, “I have given it to you. I will not take it back. Your mother can use this money to buy you a new cotton coat. It will be very warm so when you come out with her to the stall next time, you won’t feel cold.”

“No, I cannot simply accept your money. If I accept it, you need to accept my mother’s word of thanks.”

The little girl was persistent. Lin Xinyan could not decline so she agreed. At this time of the night, presumably, He Ruize would not show up.

At this late hour, there were still customers. The little girl's mother was still busy. Seeing the little girl bringing Lin Xinyan, her mother rubbed her hands on her apron and said, "You gave my daughter a lot of money."

Lin Xinyan waved the skewers in her hand and replied, "Money for the barbecued meat."

"But the few skewers of meat do not cost so much. You are so kind. No wonder that man likes you so much. He insisted that my daughter bring you here." The woman wore her hair in a pony tail. She looked like a decent person.

Lin Xinyan was puzzled and so she asked, "What man?"

"It's me." One of the men sitting at the stall and eating some barbecued meat stood up and turned around. Lin Xinyan saw his face clearly.

He Ruize?

Instantly, she retreated guardedly.

"Aunt, this uncle says he likes you very much. I like you too." The little girl spoke innocently.

Lin Xinyan bent down and looked at the little girl's pure innocent face. She clenched her fists. He was making use of even a little child.

"What has become of you?" Lin Xinyan rebuked him.

"This was all your fault." He Ruize thought he was smart, "You quarreled with Zong Jinghao? I have already told you. Someone who hurt you can never love you wholeheartedly. I am the only one who loves you with all my heart and soul."

He patted his chest and grinned as he spoke looking rather ferocious.

Everything became clearer to Lin Xinyan. He Ruize was worried that this could be a setup so he used the little girl to remind her of her past based on his knowledge of her history. He knew that she would certainly lower her guard and follow the little girl to the barbecue stall.

"Look, don't I understand you well? It took me just a little effort to get you here." He Ruize gloated, proud of how well he knew her. He was very pleased with himself. "I am the only one who understands you and truly loves you..."

"Is that so?"

Suddenly, there was a rush of activity in the darkness. Zong Jinghao walked over in a black suit and overcoat together with a group of bodyguards. A bright flickering light lit his face.

His presence was like a huge net that caught the attention of everyone's attention. However, his gaze was only focused on Lin Xinyan to whom he rushed and hugged in his arms.

He glanced at He Ruize's stunned face and he sneered, "You have finally shown up?"

He Ruize looked around and discovered that he had been surrounded. His countenance turned dark and gloomy. "You guys set me up?"

Only then did He Ruize realize he had fallen into a trap.

Su Zhan dug his hands into his pockets and said, "If troubles come upon us, we have to counter it. But, if you create trouble for yourself, you deserve the consequences then. He Ruize, there is no escape for you today."

Suddenly, He Ruize laughed maniacally.

Chapter 276

Su Zhan frowned, "What are you laughing at?"

"Do you really think you have won? You think you have caught me?" He Ruize laughed more and more hysterically.

Su Zhan's brows became knotted more and more tightly. What is the meaning of this?

Zong Jinghao held Lin Xinyan ice-cold hands and embraced her even tighter as his eyes narrowed.

"What other tricks do you have now? Even if you borrow a pair of wings, you cannot fly away." As Su Zhan looked at He Ruize's demented behavior, he turned pale.

"I cannot fly away but can you?" As he spoke, he unzipped himself.

Instantly, Su Zhan knew what he meant. This maniac had explosives strapped to his chest.

The moment he showed the explosives, there was yelling everywhere. The lady who was selling kebabs wrapped her daughter in her arms and hid under the table.

He laughed as he looked at Zong Jinghao, "Which one of you dare come and take me?"

Zong Jinghao pushed Lin Xinyan behind his back quietly to shield her, "What do you want?"

As he spoke, the bodyguard behind He Ruize approached him quietly with the intention to take him down in one move.

He Ruize opened his arms, "Give me Yan and let me take her away. Otherwise, we will all die here together."

Zong Jinghao deliberately engaged him in a conversation so that the bodyguard would have a chance to get at him.

“What if I don’t agree?”

“I’ve already said we will all die together. No one can escape!” He Ruize leaned backward, “Yan, you really want to watch so many people die because of you?”

Lin Xinyan turned away not wanting to look at him but then, her eyes fell upon the mother and daughter hiding under the table. She glanced around as she clenched her fist.

They were both so innocent and were stuck in this dangerous situation because of her.

Lin Xinyan wanted to call out to them to run away as it was useless hiding under that table. However, she was afraid to get He Ruize’s attention.

“Yan, please come with me. I am the one who truly adores you and loves you. Only I will die for you, come with me.” He stretched his hands out to Lin Xinyan.

The bodyguard near He Ruize accidentally knocked a chair and made a noise. As He Ruize turned around and saw the bodyguard sneaking towards him, his face turned grey for an instant. After being discovered by him, the bodyguard chose to pounce fast and tried to catch him. .

He Ruize kicked down a chair into the bodyguard’s path to block him.

“Mother, mother.” The little girl was so frightened that she ran into her mother’s arms. He Ruize turned to the girl. Lin Xinyan saw that and yelled, “Stop him quickly.”

The bodyguard rushed forward but he was not fast enough. He Ruize pushed the table over and caught the girl. The mother would not let go, “Let go of my daughter,” she screamed.

“Give her to me.” He Ruize roared while the woman screamed, “Please let go of my daughter, let go of my daughter!”

The little girl was grabbed so hard that it was painful. She started to cry, “Mother, mother...”

Lin Xinyan wanted to help the mother snatch the child but he Ruize had gone berserk and will definitely hurt her.

As she started to make a move, she was stopped by Zong Jinghao, “Let me do it.”

He Ruize used brutal strength to pull the child from her mother’s arms. He wanted to use her to threaten Lin Xinyan. When he turned around, he saw Zong Jinghao, “You...”

Zong Jinghao caught He Ruize by his wrist with a firm grip. Feeling the pain, he loosened his grip of the little girl and Zong Jinghao snatched her into his arms. Annoyed, He Ruize’s

inherent nature was triggered and he felt for the bomb trying to detonate it. Zong Jinghao gave him a kick which sent him flying.

Clash!

Tables and chairs clashed to the floor.

He Ruize reacted quickly so he got up and tried to run away.

Seeing that, the bodyguards ran after him.

“Woo...” The little girl cried in Zong Jinghao’s arms. He looked down and saw that the little girl was pale with fear. Her cold and reddened little hands gripped his collar tightly for she was afraid of being snatched away.

“Qingqing, Qingqing.” The woman rushed to hug her daughter and Zong Jinghao handed the little girl over to her.

She wrapped her daughter in her arms tightly while she kissed the crying girl as she tried to soothe her, “Don’t be afraid. It’s okay now. It’s okay, I am here.”

“Thank you.” Holding her daughter, the woman bowed at Zong Jinghao. If not for him, the girl might have been blown to death.

She could not have guessed that He Ruize was a lunatic. No normal human would strap explosives to his body like that.

“He came here to eat kebabs and said he had a quarrel with his girlfriend. Then, he asked my daughter to bring this young lady over. Who would know...” The woman looked at Lin Xinyan with eyes reddened and filled with tears, “I got you into danger.”

The woman understood why Lin Xinyan gave money to her daughter and was willing to eat the skewered barbecued food. It was just so that she would not feel embarrassed for taking her money. She was a kind woman but she and her daughter had got her into danger unknowingly.

As far as Lin Xinyan was concerned, the mother and daughter had done nothing wrong. They were just being kind and had been used by He Ruize.

“It’s late. You’d better hurry home...”

“Oh!”

Lin Xinyan was still speaking with the woman when they heard a scream from afar. She turned around at the same time as Zong Jinghao and they saw He Ruize taking an old lady hostage.

“What happened!” Su Zhan hurried over, “How did He Ruize get hold of her?”

The bodyguards explained to him, "We were chasing him and he ran this way. The old lady came out right at that time and they bumped into each other. He does not know who she is but just take her as a hostage."

The old lady was scared senseless. Seeing Su Zhan, she screamed, "Su Zhan."

She had no idea who He Ruize was, nor did anyone tell her about tonight's plans. They just put her in a room with the children. Lin Ruixi kept pestering Shen Peichuan to look for Lin Xinyan so the old lady came to see if she can find the child's mother and also look out for Su Zhan. Su Zhan and Qin Ya were newly-married so he should not be out so late. Shen Peichuan did not notice she had gone out.

When she got downstairs, the old lady saw Su Zhan and Lin Xinyan outside. On the way out to go to them, she was captured and held hostage by He Ruize who rushed to her out of a sudden.

"You know Su Zhan?" He Ruize laughed hideously.

The old lady did not realize the implications of the question so she replied naturally, "He's my grandson, that's all."

"Haha." He Ruize laughed aloud. Looking at Su Zhan and Zong Jinghao alternately, he taunted, "So you guys don't want to let me go?"

"You are a bastard!" Su Zhan was about to rush forward, Zong Jinghao held him back, "Don't act impulsively."

Su Zhan was so furious his chest heaved vigorously, "If you dare to even touch my grandma, I'll cut you into pieces and feed you to the dogs."

"In order to do that, you have to capture me first." Knowing that the hostage in his hands was Su Zhan's grandma, he felt he had the upper hand and they would not dare to do anything impetuous.

"It's possible to save this old lady," his gaze turned to Lin Xinyan, "I want you to come over and take her place."

"Bah, don't even think about it!" Su Zhan found He Ruize totally despicable.

He Ruize pinched the old lady's hand violently forcing the old lady to cry out in pain.

Su Zhan cursed him irritably, "F**** your ancestors!"

"I agree to your terms. I'll go over now but you have to let go of the old lady." Lin Xinyan spoke suddenly. Zong Jinghao was in a difficult position. There was nothing he could say. Their glances carried immense nonverbal hints and messages as Lin Xinyan smiled gently, "I have faith in you."

As in faith in your ability to save me.

With that, Lin Xinyan walked towards He Ruize.

Su Zhan panicked. He called out Lin Xinyan's name. "He's sick. He only came here for you. You will be walking straight into his trap."

Lin Xinyan seemed not to have heard his as her steps were steady without any faltering.

Su Zhan turned around and looked at Zong Jinghao, "You would really let her go?"

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Zong Jinghao did not respond. Su Zhan got panicked for he wanted to save the old lady and didn't want to put Lin Xinyan in danger. This He Ruize was haunting them like a ghost that would not go away just for the purpose of getting Lin Xinyan. If she went, could she even make it back?

Moreover He Ruize's body was strapped with explosives.

If the one held hostage was some random stranger, Lin Xinyan would, perhaps, hesitate. However, this was Su Zhan's grandma, the only relative of her husband's buddy. She could not bear to let this old lady get into any harm because of her.

He Ruize laughed, a gurgling sound came from his chest. He gloated and insulted her, "Yan, I have told you that I am the only one who loves you. Only I will go all out for you. Open your eyes and look around. Does Zong Jinghao even care about your safety?"

"I am coming over. Please let the old lady go." Lin Xinyan showed no emotions and she did not seem to hear anything He Ruize said.

Looking at Lin Xinyan's calm countenance, He Ruize totally lost it. He screamed, "Are you still not seeing it? Does he care that we die together and become a ghost couple?"

"Lunatic!" Su Zhan was so furious that he gritted his teeth. "It is possible that he will really do that. He is strapped with explosives. Obviously he had thought of committing suicide."

Still, Zong Jinghao did not respond. He was very silent like a very patient cheetah, waiting for the opportunity to kill the prey with one strike.

Lin Xinyan continued to negotiate with him, "I am the one you want and this is just between us. We should resolve this. If you hold an old woman as a hostage, you will only make me hate you even more!"

He Ruize turned bloodshot eyes on her, "What did you say?!"

He could not believe his ears nor could he suppress the loss he felt within his soul. "You hate me? Hahaha... You actually hate me?" His smile disappeared suddenly, revealing a contorted face. "I was so stupid and always trying to please you. You are nice to Zong Jinghao only because he slept with you, isn't that right? Do you really think you love him? Unfortunately, you don't. You just do it for the sake of the two children. I am the one you love. If I had ignored your refusal and slept with you then, we would have been together by now. It was all because I have spoiled you with my love."

The word 'lunatic' was insufficient to describe He Ruize at this point. He was deranged and horrifying. Even his logic and way of thinking was unlike normal humans.

Lin Xinyan's hands which were hanging by her sides were clenched tight into fists. "I am already here. Let the old lady go."

He Ruize looked down at the old lady. She was rather old and was shivering all over, unable to speak after going through the fright of her life.

Su Zhan was walking in circles anxiously. "Damn, he's a psychiatrist. When a psychiatrist goes crazy, it's more terrifying than a layman."

"He Ruize, what on earth do you want!" Lin Xinyan was getting worried. She felt that the old lady was on the verge of collapsing.

She was really too old to go through this trauma.

"Give me a car." Nobody wants to die. Neither did he. The explosives on his body were to prevent the others from attacking him. He would only detonate them only when there was no way out for him.

Now, he had hostages that were important to them and so he had the opportunity to escape.

"Give it to him," Su Zhan said. And then he looked at Zong Jinghao who kept quiet as a sign of approval.

Soon a bodyguard drove a car over. He was about to pass him the key and attempt to save the old lady but He Ruize was not stupid. He Ruize warned him sternly, "Don't come any closer."

The bodyguard said, "How do I send the key if I don't go closer?"

"Give it to Yan," he said, grabbing the old lady's throat, he shot a warning look at the bodyguard.

The bodyguard hesitated. It was Lin Xinyan who went and got the key.

“You, get in and drive the car. Don’t try to escape or I’ll kill this old creature,” He Ruize threatened.

Lin Xinyan glanced at him. Then, she turned around,] and got into the car then started it. He Ruize dragged the old lady into the car and sat in the back seat. He looked at Lin Xinyan and told her, “Head south.”

The old lady was in his hands so Lin Xinyan had to do as instructed.

He Ruize felt that Lin Xinyan was driving slowly on purpose. Hence, he slapped the old lady hard that she fainted without yelling or making any sound.

Nevertheless, Lin Xinyan heard the sound of slapping. She turned around and saw He Ruize’s evil expression as well as the bruise on the old lady’s face.

Lin Xinyan was absolutely furious. She did not expect He Ruize to reach such a state of madness to even abuse an elderly lady.

He Ruize looked at Lin Xinyan menacingly, “I have warned you not to try to escape or I’ll kill this old thing. Drive faster now.”

Lin Xinyan bite her lip and pressed hard on the accelerator.

The moment Lin Xinyan stepped on the accelerator, the car shot off like an arrow from a bow, leaving a trail of exhaust fume in the air.

“Turn right,” He Ruize instructed.

Lin Xinyan sensed his intentions to get onto the highway. If they got onto the highway, it would be difficult to control him and the highway was prone to car accidents too.

She spoke calmly to He Ruize, “You just want me. Let the old lady get off the car. She is just a burden to you, hindering your escape. Take me as a hostage. It’s the same anyway.”

He Ruize would not listen and he said coldly, “Just drive.”

“Am I not your target? I’ve already agreed to go with you. Why do you still want to hold the old lady hostage? You can see that she’s unconscious. Aren’t you worried you will face a lawsuit if she dies?”

“Even if I am not responsible for her death, will Zong Jinghao let me off?”

That was true. They would not let him off easily once they capture him.

“Why don’t you say something?” He Ruize sneered.

“You are not letting her off?” Lin Xinyan’s voice became cold too. Since he would not negotiate, she could only fight back. “There is a steep slope in front. Let’s all die together.”

“Are you crazy?” He Ruize’s eyes widened.

“Yes, I am. You drove me crazy.” Lin Xinyan was strangely calm. As she was approaching the slope, she grabbed the steering wheel tight, “Today, let us bring to a conclusion all the grievances between us.”

With that, she turned the steering wheel –

“Wait!”

Lin Xinyan was waiting for his response.

Screech ...

The friction of tires rubbing against the side of the road was making a screeching sound painful for the ears. Long brake marks were left on the ground showing a vehicle had halted suddenly.

He Ruize broke out in a cold sweat, “I’ll just drop her off now.”

Even without the old lady, he still had Lin Xinyan as a bargaining chip.

He pushed the car door open. In order to prevent Lin Xinyan from escaping, he untied his belt and buckled her hands with it, and held the other end in his hands. Then, he pushed the old lady out of the car with his leg. Lin Xinyan was irked by his evil actions. She opened the car door and got down. Then she kicked the door close with her leg. The belt was caught in the door. He Ruize was furious and he roared, “Get in quickly.!”

Lin Xinyan did not respond. Thus, He Ruize opened the car door and jumped down. Grabbing Lin Xinyan by her throat and asked her, “Do you wish to die?”

In the dim light, Lin Xinyan saw someone approaching.

She curled her lips and smiled. Speaking through her gritted teeth, she replied, “If I die, you will not live.”

The strong wind blew her words away.

Still, He Ruize heard what she said.

“Hahaha...,” He burst into a burst of maniacal laughter, “I won’t let you die. I want you to be by my side always. Even if you die, you will have to be a ghost who belongs to me.”

Bang!

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With a muffled bang, He Ruize's eyes widened as he turned around slowly. He could see a tall figure with his coat like he was rooted to the ground. He remained prideful and arrogant standing against the cold blasts and there was a gun in his hand.

He Ruize's eyes opened wider and wider. He looked even more ferocious. The corners of his mouth twitched as he spoke, "You..."

Unable to stand, he collapsed and fell in a kneeling position.

Lin Xinyan watched him fall right before her eyes.

A sigh of relief gushed out of her lungs and her body swayed in the wind. Soon, she came back to her senses and she unbuckled the belt around her hands and went to the old lady lying on the ground immediately and called out, "Grandma."

Holding the old lady in her arms, Lin Xinyan checked for her breath and found that she was still breathing.

"Grandma," Su Zhan rushed over. Lin Xinyan summoned the last bit of her strength, "Send grandma to the hospital quickly."

Su Zhan cast a glance at her and hurriedly carried the old lady into the car. He shouted at the bodyguard, "Hurry up!" as he was worried about his grandmother's condition

Pressing one hand against the ground, Lin Xinyan tried to push herself to her feet. Suddenly someone grabbed her other wrist. A pair of shiny leather shoes came into her view. Her gaze moved upwards and she could see a pair of long slender legs and then, a distinctive angular face.

With a firm and gentle pull, Zong Jinghao lifted Lin Xinyan up. In the next instant, she was held in his warm strong chest.

She lifted her head and the strong wind pulled at her long hair in every direction.

Zong Jinghao brushed aside the hair from her forehead and pushed it behind her ears.

She smiled for she was finally safe. "We are safe now. Thank god you arrived right on time."

Her words did not relieve Zong Jinghao's tensed expression but rather he seemed more stressed. He embraced her hard, squeezing her body against his.

She could sense his somber mood vaguely. She wanted to ask him but she saw two bodyguards carrying He Ruize before throwing him into the car.

Lin Xinyan had never seen Zong Jinghao so violent before so she did not ask him why he had a gun. Instead, she asked him a question in a low voice on something she was more concerned about, "Will he die?"

He Ruize had done wrong, no doubt. He should be punished by the law. It would be a costly mistake if Zong Jinghao were to take the law into his own hands.

If He Ruize died, he too would have broken the law.

"I don't know." He was not sure. When he saw He Ruize grabbing her throat; he lost his usual sense of reason. He had always been a rational person.

Lin Xinyan sighed, wondering how the old lady was doing.

"Let's go back. I feel cold," she said, clinging to him.

Zong Jinghao bundled her into his coat as they walked towards the car. The bodyguard opened the door for them with respect. Then, he got in and sat inside while holding Lin Xinyan in his arms.

The car door closed.

All the way, they were silent as they had much to think about.

Lin Xinyan had not fully recovered from the frightening episode while Zong Jinghao was still asking himself, what if he came one moment late? Would she...

Soon they were back at the hotel. Qin Ya had gone to the hospital, she should be waiting for news at the hospital since she was Su Zhan's wife. The old lady's condition was still not known.

"It was my fault. I was careless." Shen Peichuan said, gloomily.

If he had watched the old lady, this would not have happened.

Indeed, he did not feel they were in danger. How much of a ruckus could He Ruize create? It was truly unexpected that he would strap himself with explosives which led to a series of events later.

"We didn't see that coming," Lin Xinyan tried to comfort him.

"Both kids are in the room, I'll go and take care of He Ruize." Shen Peichuan was about to leave when he seemed to remember something. He looked at Zong Jinghao and asked, "Where's my gun?"

Shen Peichuan always carried one.

Lin Xinyan understood now where Zong Jinghao got the gun from. It was Shen Peichuan's.

As the gun was registered, he would be answerable if he were to lose it.

Zong Jinghao took out the gun and returned it to him. Then he went past him and went into his room.

Zong Jinghao looked troubled so Shen Peichuan wanted to ask what went wrong.

Lin Xinyan held him back, shook her head and said, "He is not in a good mood. Why don't go and do your best to save him."

Shen Peichuan nodded his head.

Lin Xinyan turned around and entered the room. She took off her down jacket and hung it on a hanger. Zong Jinghao's did not take off his coat but he hugged Lin Ruixi straightaway. Lin Xinyan came over and told him, "Take off the coat."

It was warm inside the house He would feel hot if he continued to wear the coat. He put down his daughter, shook his shoulders and the coat slid down. Lin Xinyan took it with both hands. Then she walked over to the hanger and hung it up.

"Papa, where did you go?" Lin Ruixi hugged his neck and ask him sweetly.

Zong Jinghao pinched her tiny nose and replied, "Papa had to go and do some work."

The little girl lay on his shoulders with her small face buried there. Then, she said, "I thought you were going out on a date with Mommy. Can you take me with you next time you go out? It's boring to stay in the room every day. When can we go back?"

Zong Jinghao rubbed her back, replying, "We have to wait a little longer."

Actually, they could return the moment they were done with He Ruize, .

However, the old lady was now in the hospital and her condition was still unknown. So, they could not leave now.

"Papa, can you play with me?" She pouted, "I miss grandma." (She was referring to Lin Xinyan's mother.)

Zong Jinghao kissed her on her forehead and agreed, "Okay. I'll spend more time with you in the future."

The little girl was overjoyed that she giggled as she planted a big wet kiss on his cheek, leaving saliva all over his face.

He finally smiled after seeing how happy she was.

At the hospital.

The old lady had been sent into the examination room while Su Zhan anxiously paced the corridor outside.

Qin Ya felt dizzy watching him walking up and down. She knew he was anxious, but this was not going to do his grandma any good. She walked up to him and held his hand, "Don't worry too much. Grandma is going to be fine."

Su Zhan spoke through his gritted teeth, "That bastard. I'm going to kill him..."

Qin Ya instantly covered his mouth. This was a public place with many people around. If anyone heard his words, they would think that he was a gangster.

"I know you're upset..."

"How could I not be upset?" Su Zhan raised his voice. After that, he realized he was too emotional and he should not be shouting at Qin Ya. "I'm sorry. I'm too anxious."

He turned around and sat down on the bench, covering his face with his hands, "She's all the family that I have. She matters a lot to me."

Qin Ya came over to him and embraced him. "Yes, I know."

He put his arms around her, then buried his face on her tummy. She was standing while he was seated so their positions fitted. In a low tremulous voice, he spoke, "My parents passed away early and she brought me up single-handedly. It's my fault..."

Qin Ya stroked his head, "You are not to blame. Nobody could have predicted that. It came unexpected."

Su Zhan embraced her in silence.

With that, the surrounding quietened down.

After a while, the door of the examination room opened and a nurse walked out with the medical report sheet in her hand. She asked, "Are the patient's family members here?"

Su Zhan stood up from the bench and hurried over. Qin Ya followed him and they held each other's hands tight as they were afraid of any bad news.

"How is my grandma?"

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When he heard the question, Su Zhan's grip on Qin Ya's hand grew even tighter. He was scared about getting bad news.

It was rather painful for Qin Ya, but she didn't make a sound, since it was pretty obvious that Su Zhan was very nervous.

"The patient fainted due to shock, so she's not in mortal danger. Old age might have weakened her. There were some scratches on her that we've already patched up, so there's no need to worry."

Su Zhan was jittery with relief, and he didn't know how to describe how he was feeling at that moment. Holding Qin Ya's face, he clamped his lips down onto hers and smiled like a child. "My grandma is fine."

Qin Ya had never seen him acting like that.

"Don't rejoice just yet. She's getting on in her years, which means that you should make sure that she doesn't get emotional too often," the nurse said, cutting him off coldly.

Su Zhan realized how rude he had been, and he coughed lightly to mask his embarrassment before making a sound of affirmation.

The nurse looked up at him with a disapproving look. "The elderly shouldn't be experiencing anxiety so often. At this age, they can pass on easily if they get a shock, so as the younger ones, you should treat her with care."

Su Zhan nodded profusely. "Yes, I understand."

"Wait here, please. She will be out soon," the nurse said, before turning around and leaving.

Su Zhan managed to calm down and wait by the door. Soon, the door opened, and his grandmother came out on a gurney. She was wide awake, she stretched out her hand upon seeing her grandson. Su Zhan immediately bent down and stroked her forehead. It was then that he noticed a red slap mark on her face.

He hadn't noticed it when he rushed her to the hospital because he was too anxious.

His face darkened immediately. That bastard He Ruize!

He put two and two together, and realized that the nurse might have assumed that he had been abusing his grandmother; hence, giving him the cold treatment.

He kissed the back of his grandmother's hand. "Everything's fine. I'm here for you."

"Who was that guy?" She asked, realizing that her grandson might know the person who assaulted her.

"Just some crazy guy. The police has taken him away, so you don't have to worry about it. Get some rest," Su Zhan replied gently.

Qin Ya helped the medical personnel push Su Zhan's grandmother into a ward. She didn't need to stay, but they had decided to keep her there for one night just for observation.

Su Zhan carried his grandmother onto the bed after they arrived, while Qin Ya helped to push the gurney out of the room. "Thanks for your help," she told the medical personnel.

"It's our job," they replied, smiling.

Qin Ya closed the door and turned around.

"Come here, Ya," the old lady said while gesturing for her to come closer.

She took Qin Ya's hand and placed it into Su Zhan's hand. "The only thing Su Zhan did right in his life was to marry you," she said.

Qin Ya looked down in slight embarrassment.

Su Zhan grasped Qin Ya's hand tightly. "Grandma, have you forgotten about your grandson?"

"You're only good at annoying me," his grandma pretended to be angry.

Su Zhan immediately gave in. "I'll make sure I treat you better from now on."

He had to make sure his grandmother was happy, since the nurse had told him to protect her from all forms of emotional distress.

"I'm hungry," his grandmother said suddenly.

"I'll go and get some food for you," Su Zhan said, standing up. "What do you want to eat?"

His grandmother gave him a look, yet Su Zhan did not catch what she was hinting. "Why are your eyes twitching. Does something hurt?"

The old lady was speechless.

She rolled her mind's eye. Why is this kid so dense? She thought.

Qin Ya understood what she meant. "I'll go. What would you like to eat?" She asked, knowing full well that his grandmother just wanted her to leave the room.

"Some porridge would be good," Su Zhan's grandmother said.

"Anything else?" Qin Ya asked.

"That's all," the old lady said, waving her hand.

“Alright, I’ll go down to the food stalls now. Su Zhan, take care of Grandma.”

Su Zhan finally understood what his grandmother meant when Qin Ya got to the door. He gave his grandmother a look and walked out with Qin Ya. “My grandmother is not feeling well and might want to have a word with me. I hope you don’t mind.”

Qin Ya smiled. She could tell that Su Zhan was really close to his grandmother.

“I won’t. You should go back. Do you want any food? I’ll get some for you too,” Qin Ya said. She figured that Su Zhan would be very hungry after a whole night of scurrying around.

“I want some spring rolls,” Su Zhan told her honestly.

Qin Ya nodded.

“Go back. Grandma might get impatient,” Qin Ya said, waving her hand and leaving the scene.

Su Zhan watched as she left, a small smile crept onto his lips.

She could read the room really well.

Su Zhan turned around and walked into the room, closing the door behind him.

He walked to the side of the bed and sat down. “Why do you need to send her away just to talk to me? You’re lucky she’s the easy going type who won’t get mad because of this.”

The old lady smiled. “Are you defending your wife now?”

“Of course not!” Su Zhan hurriedly said. “I can’t just forget about how you raised me just because I have a wife.”

His grandmother sighed. “I’m getting old.”

“No you’re not,” Su Zhan said, scooting closer to her.

That made his grandmother laugh, but her smile was soon replaced by a serious expression. “I think Qin Ya’s a good girl. She’s understanding and good-looking. You’d better treat her well.”

“I know that. You’ve said it a million times,” Su Zhan reminded her.

His grandmother sighed. “I would never forget how I raised you singlehandedly after your parents were gone...”

Su Zhan’s whole aura changed the moment the topic of his parents was brought up.

“You shouldn’t blame you mom...”

“Why shouldn’t I?!” Su Zhan yelled with his eyes turning red. He would never forgive her for what she had done even after so many years.

Qin Ya realized that she had forgotten to bring her phone and wallet, so she returned to the ward to ask Su Zhan for some money. Because of that, she ran head first into their conversation.

“I would still have a father if not for her, am I not right? She’s just doing it for her own benefit!” Su Zhan said as he got more and more agitated by the second. He told himself that he shouldn’t get so worked up about this, since it was all in the past, but the bout of anger within him refused to subdue.

His grandmother’s eyes were shining with tears, and she began to tremble as she held on to Su Zhan’s hand. “It’s all my fault, I shouldn’t have brought up the past.”

“What has it got to do with you?” Su Zhan asked with a bitter smile. He could only blame fate for giving him a mother who had easy virtue that made him lose his father.

Qin Ya was shocked. What were they talking about?

Su Zhan’s parents?

She figured that it would be pretty rude to keep eavesdropping so she knocked on the door.

Su Zhan took a deep breath to calm himself down, before standing up to open the door.

The door opened and Qin Ya was standing there. “You’re back so fast?” Su Zhan asked.

However, her hands were empty.

He couldn’t help but frown at her.

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Qin Ya shuffled her feet. “Um, I…”

“Did you hear us talking?” Su Zhan asked, his face darkening. He didn’t want anyone else to know about his past.

Qin Ya wanted to argue that she didn’t mean to eavesdrop, but Su Zhan’s face made her cower in fear. “What were y’all talking about? Did Grandma send me away just to talk about me?”

Su Zhan’s expression softened for a second. “Yeah. She told me to be nice to you. Also, where’s the food?”

"I left in a hurry, so I didn't bring any money," Qin Ya said, avoiding his gaze. She began to regret telling that lie.

However, to Su Zhan, it looked like she was just being embarrassed. He smiled and pulled out his wallet from his pocket. "Here."

Qin Ya looked up at him. "Just give me a hundred and not the whole wallet."

Su Zhan stuffed his wallet into her hand. "We're husband and wife, everything of mine is yours too."

Qin Ya looked at him, her fingers curling around the wallet.

Su Zhan laughed. "You're moved by that? I haven't even given you my fortune yet. You're so easy to bribe."

Qin Ya glared at him. "I'm going to buy food now."

"Alright."

Su Zhan watched her leave once more before going back into the room. His phone rang suddenly, and Shen Peichuan's name was displayed on the screen. He answered the call, and before Shen Peichuan could say anything, he asked, "Is that bastard dead yet?"

"I don't think he'll die. He's going through surgery now. How's your grandmother?" Shen Peichuan asked. He probably called to ask about Su Zhan's grandmother's condition anyway.

Su Zhan pulled a chair over and sat down. "She's fine. It's just a few scratches. The doctor says that she can go home tomorrow."

"Alright," Shen Peichuan said, but didn't hang up.

"Just say it. Why are you being so hesitant?"

"Um...well, Xinyan asked me to call you," Shen Peichuan said, figuring that he should come clean with Su Zhan. "She felt guilty about this, so she told me to give you a call to find out how your grandmother's doing."

Su Zhan knew that all this had nothing to do with Lin Xinyan.

His grandmother's appearance was a surprise, and so was the kidnapping. After all, Lin Xinyan almost got into deep trouble herself trying to save his grandmother.

"She's not in the wrong. I know that."

“Alright. I’ll go and visit after I’m done with this...”

“It’s fine. Everyone’s been really busy last night. You should get some sleep before we go home tomorrow. Also, you’ve been away from work for some time, so you should probably go back and clear things up too.”

Shen Peichuan gave a sound of approval and hung up.

Su Zhan put his phone back into his pocket. His grandmother looked over and asked, “Who was it?”

“Shen Peichuan. He called to ask how you’re doing, and I told him that you’re fine,” Su Zhan said, pulling her blankets up to her chin. “Let bygones be bygones. Don’t tell Qin Ya about my parents.”

“She’s not a stranger,” his grandmother said. She didn’t see a need to keep Qin Ya in the dark.

“I don’t want to feel embarrassed,” Su Zhan said, his face darkening.

That happened every time his past was brought up.

His grandmother didn’t see it as anything embarrassing, since it wasn’t his fault anyway. “Hm? Are you planning to hide this from her forever? She’s your wife, and she’s going to spend the rest of her life with you. You have to trust her even if she doesn’t trust you. Do you know what has the biggest cause of breaking a marriage? A lack of trust.”

She may be old, but her mind was sound and her wisdom aplenty.

“Maybe later, when I’m ready,” Su Zhan said, ready to drop the matter. “You must be tired. Get some rest.”

His grandmother wasn’t going to drop it so easily. “You’re married! Why wouldn’t you be ready? Are you still thinking about that Liu Feifei?”

“No. Why are you bringing her up?” Su Zhan said, and he couldn’t help but wonder if something was gravely wrong with his grandmother. First his parents, now his first love – what’s going on with her?

“Grandma, are you feeling alright? If something hurts, let me call the doctor now...”

Piak!

“Are you putting a curse on me or something?” His grandmother said while she gave his body a light slap.

Su Zhan’s voice turned into a whisper. “Then why are you talking about the past all of a sudden?”

"I'm worried about you!" His grandmother stressed.

Su Zhan pulled the blanket further upwards. "I'm an adult, and I know what I'm doing. If you want to make me happy, then take care of yourself."

His grandmother sighed and said, "If you're sure about your love for Qin Ya, then don't ever change your mind, no matter what happens or who you meet in the future."

"I know. Just don't worry," Su Zhan didn't take it to heart.

She's just a chatty old lady.

After a while, Qin Ya returned with the food, which she set on the table. "I'm not familiar with this place, so I took some time to look around."

She returned Su Zhan's wallet to him. "Here, your wallet."

"Just hang on to it," Su Zhan said, stuffing two spring rolls into his mouth and swallowing them after chewing for a couple of seconds. He took a huge gulp of water to wash them down. "Can you stay here with Grandma? I need to run some errands."

"Sure," said Qin Ya.

After Su Zhan took his leave, Qin Ya adjusted the bed so that Su Zhan's grandmother got in a sitting position, before sitting down and picking up the bowl of porridge to feed to her. "Come Grandma, have some porridge."

The old lady smiled and opened her mouth obediently.

She could feed herself, but she just wanted to be pampered by Qin Ya.

Qin Ya made sure that the porridge had cooled down before she started feeding Su Zhan's grandma.

Slowly, the bowl of millet porridge was emptied, and Qin Ya took a piece of tissue paper to wipe the old lady's mouth. Su Zhan's grandmother lay still and enjoyed being fussed over by her grandson's wife.

"Why did Su Zhan go out?" Su Zhan's grandmother asked.

"I'm not sure," Qin Ya said as she cleared the table.

"You're not going to ask him?" The old lady asked tentatively.

Qin Ya didn't catch what she really meant by that question. She threw the plastic bowl into the dustbin and said, "He said that he had some errands to run, no? He knows what he's doing, so you don't have to worry."

Qin Ya had thought that she was just being worried about Su Zhan, and she walked over to lower the bed again. "I'll be right here if you need me. Get some rest, Grandma."

Su Zhan's grandmother was indeed exhausted, but she was more satisfied with Qin Ya's attitude.

Qin Ya clearly trusted Su Zhan when she didn't bother to ask him about his whereabouts.

On the other hand, Su Zhan obviously had his reservations about Qin Ya.

Su Zhan's grandmother sighed.

Meanwhile, Su Zhan called Shen Peichuan again after exiting the room.

Shen Peichuan picked up in a flash.

"Where are you?"

"The hospital." Shen Peichuan was puzzled. Didn't he say that he was waiting for He Ruize to get out of surgery?

"I'm asking you which hospital. I'm going there to see you," Su Zhan said. Now that he had his hands free, he was going to find He Ruize and seek revenge for what he had done.