

### Chapter 371

“Ms. Chen, you must be joking. How can an outsider understand the relationship that does not concern them? Furthermore, you’re not a telepath who can understand the thoughts of others’ minds. Also, Ms. Chen, you’re the focus of this meal.” Lin Xinyan smiled as she easily changed the topic back.

With a smile that did not reach her eyes, Chen Shihan replied, “How am I the focus? Aren’t you the focus?”

Lin Xinyan slowly swallowed the food in her mouth before answering, “Jinghao and I are husband and wife. This man is our uncle, and we’re a family. Only Ms. Chen is a guest here. Aren’t I right?”

Chen Shihan dropped her smile.

Pretending not to notice it, Lin Xinyan continued, “The guest is the most important person in a house. So, Ms. Chen, you’re the focus of today.”

Lin Xinyan was no ruthless woman, but she would not take provoking words silently.

She had known this years ago—the weaker you were, the more others would push their luck with you.

The moment Chen Shihan entered the house, she had been sowing discord between Zong Jinghao and her.

She did not know when the hotel meeting that Chen Shihan mentioned had happened.

At the same time, she was anxious and uncertain.

However, she knew that if she let those emotions show, others would suspect her relationship with Zong Jinghao.

She was more than willing to ask Zong Jinghao about it privately.

She would never question him and show her suspicion while others were around.

Chen Shihan's expression darkened before her face paled. It was an ugly look on her.

In the end, she jumped to her feet. "What a silver tongue you have!"

Lin Xinyan's smile remained bright on her face. "Thank you for the praise, Ms. Chen. I was just stating a fact. Why are you angry?"

"Uncle Wen, I'm done." At that, Chen Shihan grabbed her purse and rushed out of the room.

She felt that Lin Xinyan had embarrassed her.

If she stayed, she would only become a laughingstock for the others.

She had never been in less control than now.

Wen Qing's expression darkened. "She's my guest. Why were you sarcastic with her?"

Lin Xinyan opened her mouth to say something, but Zong Jinghao grabbed her hand. "Wait for me in the car."

He wanted to have some words with Wen Qing.

Lin Xinyan hesitated. It was not that she was reluctant to leave; she was worried about Zong Jinghao.

She did not know why he wanted to speak with Wen Qing. That lack of knowledge made her hesitate.

She feared they would end up arguing.

She wanted Wen Qing and Zong Jinghao to maintain their current relationship.

"I went over the line just now and made Ms. Chen unhappy..."

"Leave first," Zong Jinghao interrupted.

He knew who was in the wrong.

There was no need for her to apologize to anyone.

She did not do anything wrong, so she did not need to voice her apologies.

Lin Xinyan pursed her lips. She could only do so much; she could not control how this matter would develop.

Standing up, she walked out of the room.

Soon, silence filled the room.

After Zong Jinghao wiped his hand, he threw the serviette onto the table and leaned back on his chair.

He had only had his suspicions about Wen Qing's attitude earlier, but after the meal, he was sure that his guess was right.

"You have something against her?" Zong Jinghao inquired in a low voice.

He was respectful toward Wen Qing.

He hoped that the people he cared about would be able to live harmoniously.

However, it seemed like something unexpected had happened.

Wen Qing didn't seem like he hated Lin Xinyan previously...

His body relaxed further.

Instead of answering him, Wen Qing uttered, "Drink with me."

He called for the server to pour the alcohol into their glasses.

Not planning to embarrass him, Zong Jinghao drank a glass.

After drinking his wine, Wen Qing placed the glass back onto the table. He wanted to be honest with Zong Jinghao.

However, he dared not after noticing Zong Jinghao's attitude toward Lin Xinyan.

"Shihan's father and I are colleagues and best friends. When I encountered her at the hotel, I called her to come with me. That's why I didn't tell you about it. You seem unhappy. Is it because of this?" Wen Qing intentionally shifted the topic away from Lin Xinyan.

Zong Jinghao was no fool. He knew what Wen Qing was trying to do.

He did not care what Wen Qing's thoughts were – he had to tell the other man his stance.

After pouring a glass of wine for himself, he raised it and downed it.

When he placed the glass back down, the glass clinked when it came into contact with the table. "My marriage with her... was short. We were quick to divorce. She's not the best woman I've seen, but she's my favorite."

He looked up at Wen Qing. "After finding out that she had given birth to two of my children, I was shocked," Zong Jinghao muttered, leaving out some of the details.

"She's my wife. I think a man who can't protect his own woman is nothing but trash. Don't you think so too?"

Wen Qing knew Zong Jinghao; he knew Zong Jinghao was telling him where his stance was in the matter.

If anything happened between Lin Xinyan and him, Zong Jinghao would choose to stand on Lin Xinyan's side.

"Jinghao, I'm your uncle. These years..."

"I know," Zong Jinghao cut him off. He knew Wen Qing would definitely try to guilt-trip him.

Therefore, he interrupted the man and repeated his words, "I know. I've never forgotten about it, and I've never been suspicious about it. Protecting the one you're concerned about is a lesson you've taught me. I won't disappoint you."

In the past, he never suspected him, but now...

Wen Qing's lips parted, but no words came to him. It was true that he was the one to say that to Zong Jinghao.

"You have to believe that everything I've done is for your sake. Your mother is Wen Xian, and I am Wen Qing. We're from the same mother. You're her only child. How can I possibly hurt you?" Feeling heartbroken, Wen Qing slammed his palm onto the table. "If not for Cheng Yuxiu back then, your mother might not have died."

His hatred for Cheng Yuxiu never faded away, even after all these years.

Instead, it buried itself deeper into his heart.

Zong Jinghao narrowed his eyes, catching the focal point of Wen Qing's words.

Cheng Yuxiu.

Cheng Yuxiu is involved in my changed impression of Lin Xinyan?

Zong Jinghao had found out about Lin Xinyan and Cheng Yuxiu's relationship. That was why Chen Shihan was present for today's meal.

This was Wen Qing's plan.

Is he trying to make me split with Lin Xinyan and get together with Chen Shihan?

Zong Jinghao closed his eyes, finding it ridiculous.

“What’s gone by has gone by. I hope you’ll take care of yourself. It’s late now, so I’ll be heading off.”

Zong Jinghao stood up and left the room.

“Jinghao.”

When Zong Jinghao reached the doorway, Wen Qing stopped him. “Are you angry?”

Zong Jinghao paused, but he did not turn to look at Wen Qing. “Yes. I’m angry. I’m angry that you’re targeting her with an outsider. I have two children. I won’t be able to give them an explanation if their mother gets hurt. You’re a father, too. I’m sure you know how I feel.”

With that said, he left without sparing the other man another glance.

Wen Qing could not find the words to respond to him.

Although he grumbled about his disobedient son, he could tolerate no one bullying his son.

He closed his eyes, realizing the difficulty in trying to separate Zong Jinghao and Lin Xinyan.

Why didn’t Li Jing deal with Lin Xinyan today?

Zong Jinghao wouldn’t have realized anything amiss and tell me these words.

After paying the bill, Wen Qing walked out of the restaurant. A jeep drove over, and the guard opened the door for Wen Qing. “Are we heading back?”

Wen Qing hummed tiredly in response and entered the car.

Twenty minutes later, the car stopped in front of a house. The guard came down and opened the door for Wen Qing. “You can get off work now.”

“What time do I come for you tomorrow morning?” the guard asked.

“As usual.” At that, Wen Qing entered his house, where Li Jing was waiting for him.

She wanted to discuss Lin Xinyan’s matter with Wen Qing.

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After Wen Qing entered the house, Li Jing brought him a pair of indoor slippers.

Without moving an inch, Wen Qing stood there and asked, "What's wrong with you today?"

"Come in first." Li Jing left the slippers next to him, thinking it was not something she could explain in just one or two sentences.

Wen Qing scoffed at her, waiting to hear her explanation.

It's not a difficult task to ask Lin Xinyan out for a meal, is it? She can't even do this much?

He put on the slippers, walked inside, and sat on the sofa. "So tell me, what's going on?"

Li Jing sat next to him. She had been contemplating how to tell Wen Qing about that episode since her return from the clothing store.

However, when it was finally time for her to talk about it, she could not bring herself to start the conversation.

"Hey, say something!" Wen Qing requested impatiently.

"She's a nice girl, so I didn't have the heart to..." Li Jing uttered after a long pause.

Wen Qing lowered his voice. "So you didn't ask her out?" Veins on his temple could be seen as he tried to suppress his anger.

Li Jing looked at him. "No, I didn't. You know Zong Jinghao's temperament very well. If he finds out what you did, it will badly affect your relationship with him. Do you really want that to happen?"

Li Jing knew that Wen Qing cared a lot about what Zong Jinghao thought of him. She was so sure that eighty percent of it was because of Wen Xian.

"I think we can be honest with Zong Jinghao. Tell him about this matter and leave it to him to talk to Lin Xinyan. Let's not meddle..."

Wen Qing grew rather impatient and interrupted Li Jing, "Do you know Lin Xinyan actually knows how to make Tea Silk?"

Does she really think I'm not aware of all this? Does she think I didn't think that far?

Li Jing was stunned. Lin Xinyan knows how to make Tea Silk? Isn't that an ancestral technique that's only passed down within the Cheng family? Where did she learn that?

"Who told you that?" Li Jing asked in disbelief.

Wen Qing heaved a long sigh. "The man whom I sent to Baicheng for an investigation. Don't you think I know the pros and cons of all this? For someone as smart as Jinghao, I'm sure he already knows that Lin Xinyan knows how to make Tea Silk. Moreover, I don't think Lin Xinyan could learn the technique while keeping him in the dark. Don't you think so?"

With widened eyes, Li Jing asked, "So, you're saying that he knows?"

Wen Qing was sure of it.

He never loathed Lin Xinyan because she had given him two adorable children – he truly liked her.

Even though he was upset, he would never blame or hate Lin Xinyan.

After knowing that incident, he made up his mind to separate Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao.

He could not tolerate and accept the fact that Lin Xinyan was getting close to Cheng Yuxiu.

"Then... What should we do now?" Initially, Li Jing thought it would be best if they were frank with Zong Jinghao and let him persuade Lin Xinyan to stay away from Cheng Yuxiu. However, things seemed a little more complicated now.

Zong Jinghao knew all about Lin Xinyan's relationship with Cheng Yuxiu, but he did not pursue the matter.

Wen Qing sneered, "Is he still the Zong Jinghao I know? He even moved back to the Zong's family residence because of that woman."

Wen Qing was so angry that his chest began heaving rapidly.

Li Jing held his hand and tried to pacify him, "Don't get mad. It's not worth it."

He looked at Li Jing. "If I don't stop this madness, he'll forget who his biological mother is. I'll never allow Cheng Yuxiu to take away Wen Xian's son!"

He was infuriated.

Cheng Yuxiu has already snatched Zong Qifeng away from Wen Xian. She can dream if she wants to own Wen Xian's son too. I'll see to it that Wen Xian's son will never accept Cheng Yuxiu!

That was his bottom line.

Li Jing knew they had reached a point of no return. Sigh. This matter has weighed heavily on Wen Qing's mind all these years. He can't get over it.

She stopped persuading him as the only thing she could do now was to support her own husband.

"I'm sorry I took things into my own hands this time and affected your plan..."

"It's all right." Wen Qing narrowed his eyes. I need to strategize my next move. From Zong Jinghao's reaction today, he has obviously started to suspect something, so I can't risk it anymore as he'll be more prepared. I need to hit the bull's eye. The good news is that I still have time to plan.

Meanwhile, Zong Jinghao left the restaurant and got into his car, where Lin Xinyan was waiting for him in the passenger seat.

"You had alcohol?" She could smell it on him as soon as he got into the car.

"Just a couple of drinks." Zong Jinghao pulled his collar and unbuttoned two buttons.

Without asking anything, Lin Xinyan got out of the car and moved over to his side. "Get down. I'll drive."

Zong Jinghao smirked. "You're worried about me?"

Lin Xinyan took the car keys and said with a straight face, "Don't drink and drive, haven't you heard?"

Seeing her serious face, Zong Jinghao smiled while rebutting, "I'm not drunk."

"No way." Lin Xinyan was resolute.

Zong Jinghao obliged cooperatively and shifted to the passenger seat. Somewhat tipsy, he leaned against her and spoke into her ears, "You're always right, wifey."

Lin Xinyan moved her body away from him as she gazed at him while starting the engine. "Such a sweet talker... Have you done something wrong?"

Do I need to read between the lines? Why does it sound like she's referring to something else?

"Come on, tell me when you met Ms. Chen at the hotel. What did you guys do?"



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Zong Jinghao was not in a hurry to respond to Lin Xinyan's questioning and continued to lean on the car seat, looking drunk. He squinted his eyes and let out a "Huh?" as if he did not hear her the first time.

Pursing her lips, Lin Xinyan asked again, "He wanted to matchmake you and that woman?"

This time, Lin Xinyan did not address Wen Qing as uncle because what he did today had crossed her bottom line.

Zong Jinghao squirmed in his seat. "Perhaps so."

Lin Xinyan went silent.

She then pulled the car over, turned her head, and stared at him. "Don't you have anything else to tell me?"

Zong Jinghao slowly looked up and was greeted by a pair of angry eyes. He smiled and asked deliberately, "What do you want me to say?"

Lin Xinyan felt a little distressed. I don't ask much in this relationship. I only hope we can both be frank and truthful with each other.

She was willing to put her trust in him.

However, given that we're both in a relationship, shouldn't he at least explain his actions?

She wanted to keep the relationship going, but...

Lin Xinyan looked away and switched off the car engine. "You can drive yourself home."

She felt a need to cool down alone as she was afraid that she would lose control over her emotions if they stayed in the same space any longer.

She got out of the car, closed the door behind her, and strode across the sidewalk.

She tilted her head upwards, hoping that the zephyr could clear her cluttered mind.

Zong Jinghao chased after her and caught her by the arm. "Where are you going?"

Lin Xinyan tried to get rid of him, but his grip on her was too tight.

She uttered, "I want to be alone. Please..."

"Are you jealous?"

"No," Lin Xinyan denied firmly.

"Why are you angry then?"

"I'm not angry."

"Yes, you are."

Lin Xinyan looked at him, who was dressed in a black suit that further emphasized his muscular physique. At that moment, no trace of emotion could be seen on his face.

Does he really not know why I reacted this way? Does he not care?

"Yes, I'm angry," Lin Xinyan admitted while pointing at his chest. "Do you know that I treasure our relationship very much, not only because of our two children but..."

She exerted more strength on the finger she had pointed at his heart. "Because there's a spot reserved for you in here. I believe in you and our relationship. Do you know that your actions made me feel insecure and uncomfortable? I'm afraid that this is all my own imagination, that it's just one-sided feelings. I've seen Zhuang Zijin's failed marriage, so I've never really had high hopes in any relationship, but with you, it's different. I actually wanted to commit myself and preserve our relationship. Zong Jinghao, let's just end it here. Don't pretend to be nice to me and then break my heart as that's not the ending I expect."

She used all her might to escape his grip. She wanted to leave that place soonest possible because she knew she would be more out of control if she continued to face him.

She despised being a grieving woman, but at that moment, she felt as if she was already one.

Zong Jinghao stepped forward and hugged her, but Lin Xinyan punched and kicked him uncontrollably. "Let me go! Let me go!"

Zong Jinghao held onto her hands and clasped them on his chest. "Easy... Easy..."

He had never explained himself to anyone in his life. He was not used to this as he had never bothered to do so for anyone. He always thought he should let his communication be simply 'yes' or 'no', without the need to justify further.

"Is my verbal explanation the only way to prove that I didn't do anything that let you down?"

His dark eyes were like a bottomless lake.

Lin Xinyan was stunned and opened her eyes wide to stare at him. What does he mean?

She shuddered.

"In the same way, does it mean I've cheated on you if I choose not to explain myself?"

Zong Jinghao cupped the back of her head with his palm. "I'm really happy to hear you say such things."

Lin Xinyan's eyes started to get watery, and tears soon appeared at the edge of her eyes.

"I've not done anything wrong to you. There's only one woman I love, one that has no powerful family background, no exceptional qualification. She's also not the most talented woman I've met. Yet, there's something about her that captured my heart. I wonder too, sometimes, why I like this woman so much."

Lin Xinyan was left speechless.

"Am I really a good-for-nothing in your eyes?"

"Who said so?"

A ray of light flashed through Lin Xinyan's eyes. "Then, what's good about me?"

Zong Jinghao's gaze shifted from her neck to her chest before he fixed them on her lower abdomen...

Lin Xinyan flushed while trying to break free from his grip. "Hurry up and let me go. I want to go home."

Zong Jinghao's hand, which was on her head, slowly slid down to rub her back before it landed on her waist. With just one pull towards him, Lin Xinyan's body glued onto his, closing any gap between them.

His cheeks pressed against hers, whereas his lips inadvertently pecked her on the earlobes. "Why did you blush when I said you're good at giving birth?"

“I didn’t,” Lin Xinyan denied. The way he looked at me just now...

“I must have been blind then.”

“Yes, you’re so blind.”

Zong Jinghao was rendered speechless.

“I’m not pretty, and neither am I rich nor talented. Only a blind person like you would hug me like this.”

Zong Jinghao was again rendered speechless.

So, that’s what she had in mind.

“You’re not pretty, rich, nor talented, but I like you.”

Lin Xinyan brushed him off. “Who would believe that?”

Subsequently, Zong Jinghao kissed her. When she struggled to reject him, he bit her lips instead.

Hiss...

Lin Xinyan felt the pain and became weaker in her struggle. As an opportunist, Zong Jinghao kissed her deeper until their tongues intertwined. He also pulled her hand and slid it underneath his shirt, then pressed it on his heart and mumbled, “I give you my heart.”

Lin Xinyan was inexplicably sad as she uttered plainly, “All I ever wanted was for us to trust each other.”

“I know.”

Kissing the corner of her eye, Zong Jinghao released her. “Perhaps he has discovered your relationship with Cheng Yuxiu.”

Lin Xinyan was dazed. It took her a couple of minutes to regain her senses as she thought about what he had just said. She nodded in agreement. “I think so too.”

Otherwise, Wen Qing would not have changed his attitude so quickly.

This was also what Zong Jinghao was worried about. Alas, it happened.

He needed to know how much Wen Qing had found out.

Putting the car keys in her hand, he said to her, “Go home first.”

“What about you?” she asked. Within seconds, she seemingly understood what he was going to do next.

He needed to know how much Wen Qing knew about this and how did he discover so.

Upon receiving the car keys, Lin Xinyan headed to the car while Zong Jinghao stood by the roadside and called Shen Peichuan.

Before she left, she turned around and reminded him, “Come back quick.”

Zong Jinghao acknowledged her request.

The woman then got into the car, started the engine, and slowly drove off to the main road.

Lin Xinyan watched him through the car window.

“Come pick me up from Yin Tai Road.” Zong Jinghao was on the phone when their eyes met.

Soon, their gazes averted, and Lin Xinyan could only see him through the rearview mirror until his figure almost disappeared from her sight. Then she fixed her gaze back on the road and drove off attentively.

When the car reached the corner of the villa, a black shadow appeared out of the blue, causing Lin Xinyan to bring the car to a sudden stop.

Screech!

The screeching sound of the tires hurt the ears.

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After the car stopped, Lin Xinyan saw clearly what the dark shadow was.

She jumped onto the car engine and wailed loudly, making Lin Xinyan confused.

“You! Get out of the car!” Like a beast, a ferocious woman, who was grimaced in anger, yelled at Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan stared at her face and tried to recall the woman’s identity. Gosh, isn’t this the domineering woman at the kindergarten the other day? Why did she stop my car?

Soon after, Lin Xinyan thought of something and quickly took out her phone to check the latest news. A piece of breaking news caught her eye. The deputy mayor of B city was under investigation due to the video uploaded by Lin Xichen.

She browsed the pages and read that a series of crimes had surfaced from the investigation, from bribery to embezzling money to all sorts of scandals...

Knock! Knock!

“Open the door, b\*tch!” The woman came to her side of the car and knocked hard on the window, attempting to break her way in.

Lin Xinyan tried to hold herself together and thought the best way to deal with a crazy woman would be to dial 110. She made the emergency call calmly.

When the woman saw from Lin Xinyan’s phone screen that she was calling the police, she said harshly, “I won’t let this go so easily!”

As soon as she finished speaking, the woman ran away.

Without any hesitation, Lin Xinyan ended the emergency call and drove off.

When she got home, Cheng Yuxiu was teaching Lin Ruixi writing in the living room. The little one had never been to the kindergarten, but she was already talented and could write well after being taught only once.

Cheng Yuxiu was proud of her granddaughter, and she waved at Lin Xinyan upon seeing her entering the house. “Come over here.”

Lin Xinyan put the car keys aside and walked in their direction.

“Come and see how well your daughter writes!” Cheng Yuxiu exclaimed.

Lin Xinyan bent over to read the characters written on the exercise book – Metal, Wood, Water, Fire, Earth. Each letter was written beautifully. The little girl looked up at Lin Xinyan, blinking her bright eyes, seemingly waiting for praises.

Lin Xinyan ruffled her hair and landed a kiss on her daughter’s forehead. “My daughter is the best, the smartest girl I’ve ever known.”

After being praised by Lin Xinyan, she was motivated extrinsically to write even better.

Thereafter, Lin Xinyan pulled the corner of Cheng Yuxiu’s shirt and asked softly, “Mommy, can you come with me for a while?”

Cheng Yuxiu nodded and said gently to her granddaughter, "You carry on with your practice, ok? I'm going to get you a glass of juice."

The little girl was so focused on her writing that she did not look up as she responded, "Ok!"

Cheng Yuxiu then followed Lin Xinyan to her room.

Shutting the door behind her, Lin Xinyan said openly, "Bring along a few people with you if you ever head out these few days."

That woman might appear again. Who knows if she will channel her hatred to the children? It's better to be safe than sorry and take necessary precautions.

She felt very disturbed.

Cheng Yuxiu did not know what had happened, so she asked, "Did something happen? Was it anything serious?"

Lin Xinyan thought for a second. "You didn't see the news?"

Cheng Yuxiu shook her head. Ever since the two children moved in with her, her life had revolved around them. From sending them to and from kindergarten to researching new recipes at home, to cooking for the little ones.

Even on weekends, Cheng Yuxiu would bring the children to the zoo or the marine theme park. Her schedules were always full, and she hardly had time to follow any viral news.

After hearing Lin Xinyan's words, she felt that the matter would most probably be related to the current news. She unlocked her phone and looked for the popular searches. Within seconds, she saw the news regarding the deputy mayor.

Cheng Yuxiu looked up...

Lin Xinyan nodded in affirmation. "Yes, it was Lin Xichen who uploaded the video of the deputy mayor."

Cheng Yuxiu opened her eyes wide in shock. "It's the one from the time when..."

The kindergarten teacher had once called to inform that the kids argued with their classmate and needed to meet with the parent.

However, she was not sure about the details.

Lin Xinyan explained, "The little girl who quarreled with Ruixi the other time might be the illegitimate child of the deputy mayor."

Cheng Yuxiu soon understood the context. If that girl was the deputy mayor's illegitimate child, then the mother of the child must be... a mistress...

The video Lin Xichen uploaded has led to the deputy mayor being investigated and now the mistress has gotten mad because multiple offenses committed by him have been brought to the limelight?

“Don’t you worry.” Cheng Yuxiu knew what to do and would take precautions accordingly.

Lin Xinyan advised, “If it’s too troublesome, stay home these few days and avoid going to the kindergarten.”

It’s best if the kids stay home until the matter has been concluded and those who deserve to be jailed are arrested.

Cheng Yuxiu agreed, “I can homeschool them.” She thought about Lin Xichen and continued, “To be honest with you, Xichen has never liked attending kindergarten. Though he’s just a kid, he claims that his classmates are all very childish. Fortunately, they will be going to elementary school soon.”

Lin Xinyan knew that Lin Xichen had a high level of maturity compared to his peers.

Speaking of Lin Xichen, Cheng Yuxiu reminded her, “Go and have a look at him. He’s been locking himself up in the room after coming back from school lately.”

Lin Xinyan nodded and walked out of her room.

She knocked on the door when she got to Lin Xichen’s room.

There was no response, The door was not locked, so she pushed it open gently. A light yellow bedside lamp was lit. Lin Xichen was lying on the bed, intensely studying some numbers on his tablet screen. He did not notice Lin Xinyan walking towards him, let alone the knocking on the door just now.

Lin Xinyan could not understand any of the data shown.

She called out to him softly, “Xichen...”

Right then, Lin Xichen realized someone was in his room. Upon seeing Lin Xinyan, he shouted, “Mommy!”

Lin Xinyan replied with a smile, “You didn’t know I came in? What are you looking at so attentively?”

The young boy smiled. “The teacher at AC sent me a mathematic question. I find it very interesting.”

He was so excited to show it to Lin Xinyan. “Mommy, look, can you see the patterns from this set of numbers?”



Lin Xinyan shook her head – she was never good at mathematics.

“You see...” Lin Xichen pointed at a slanted line. “These are all composite numbers. The ones on the horizontal line are odd numbers. They all have a specific pattern, so once we sort the patterns out, we can easily figure out the answer.”

Lin Xichen sounded very confident and proud when talking about his forte.

Lin Xinyan hugged her son. “You don’t like going to kindergarten, do you?”

Lin Xichen admitted honestly, “It’s too childish. The teachers are always coaxing me as if I’m a baby.”

Lin Xinyan hugged him tighter while kissing his cheeks. “Then... which school do you want to go to?”

With his eyes looking downwards and his eyelashes flickering, Lin Xichen whispered, “I still want to attend AC.”

Lin Xinyan would also like her son to attend AC, but due to his age, he could only attend some courses there.

“Xichen, it’s no doubt that you’re very talented, but you’re still very young. If you skip the path you should walk now, you might regret it in a few years. Every stage in life has its own joy and fun. They all build precious memories that make your life whole. If there’s a missing piece because you skipped some steps, that particular part will remain blank forever. I’ll always support your decision, but I also want you to consider spending a few years in elementary and secondary school. Follow the regular learning pathway, and if your results are good, you can always be promoted to higher grades. By then, you’ll be big enough to study full-time at AC. Isn’t that a better idea?”

Lin Xichen thought about it carefully; it seemed like a sensible decision.

“All right, mommy. I’ll listen to your advice.” Lin Xichen snuggled in his mother’s embrace. “Mommy.”

“Yes?” Lin Xinyan lowered her head to look at him.

He smiled and said, “Did you know that my teacher came to B city?”

Lin Xinyan was a tad bit surprised. “You mean the teacher from AC?”

Lin Xichen nodded. “Yes, he also carries another identity.”

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Lin Xinyan asked subconsciously, "What identity?"

"It's a secret," Lin Xichen teased.

Lin Xinyan did not take it to heart and thought that there was nothing strange for Lin Xichen to have secrets with his teacher because they had developed a good friendship. Even though his teacher could be a little weird at times, he had always been very caring towards Lin Xichen.

"Mommy, can you sleep with me tonight?" Lin Xichen hugged her by the neck and asked sweetly.

Lin Xinyan acceded to his request.

"Will he get jealous?" Lin Xichen asked inquisitively.

Lin Xinyan frowned. "Who?"

"Daddy." The way Lin Xichen addressed Zong Jinghao was not as smooth as how Lin Ruixi did it.

Zong Jinghao had not been around when Lin Xichen was a child. Thus, the latter found it uncomfortable to address the former intimately.

Lin Xinyan cupped his son's face and pinched his cheeks. "You're my son. Who dares to comment if I want to hug my son to sleep?"

"Hehe..." Lin Xichen smiled sheepishly in Lin Xinyan's embrace.

At dinner, when Lin Ruixi heard that her mother was going to accompany her brother to bed, she insisted that she join them too.

She held on to Lin Xinyan's thighs and acted like a baby. "Mommy, I don't care. I want to sleep with you too. Don't be biased and hug brother only."

Lin Xinyan bent down to carry her daughter. "All right, all right. Mommy will sleep with both of you tonight."

The little girl was over the moon but still complained a little, "Mommy hasn't been hugging me to bed and telling me bedtime stories. Daddy has claimed you for himself."

Coincidentally, Cheng Yuxiu walked out from the kitchen with a plate of cut fruits and overheard Lin Ruixi's grumbles. "Didn't I tell you bedtime stories too?"

The little girl justified, "It's different. There are no two storytellers that are the same."

Lin Ruixi knew that Cheng Yuxiu treated her well, and she was willing to follow her. However, when she was a child, Lin Xinyan told her stories every day. So, deep down, she felt closer to Lin Xinyan.

"How is it different?" Cheng Yuxiu teased her.

However, she knew in her heart that a mother's love could never be replaced by anyone or anything.

The little girl pursed her lips and thought about it for a while. "Mommy gave birth to me, not you."

Right then, Zong Jinghao walked into the living room and heard what her daughter had just said. It brought a smile to his face.

"Daddy." The little girl was kicking her feet, signally Lin Xinyan to put her down on the floor. As soon as she got down, she ran towards Zong Jinghao happily.

Zong Jinghao had a suit jacket slung on his arm. Lin Xinyan came over to receive his jacket then hung it up in the wardrobe.

He bent down to carry her little girl. He wanted to touch her face, but he left his hand mid-air when he was reminded to wash up – he had just returned from outside.

"Daddy, Mommy said she's going to hug brother and I to bed tonight," the little girl bragged.

Zong Jinghao raised a brow and shot a glance at Lin Xinyan, but she ignored his gaze and continued eating some fruits.

After placing her daughter on the sofa, Zong Jinghao went to wash his hands.

When he came out, Cheng Yuxiu asked lovingly, "Have you had dinner?"

He did not look at her, simply humming in response.

Cheng Yuxiu was already very satisfied with their interaction now, as he would at least respond to her question instead of giving her the cold shoulder as he did in the past.

She undid her apron and went into the study room to give them some space.

Zong Jinghao sat on the sofa and placed Lin Ruixi on his lap, entwining her hair with his fingers. "Who did you say gave birth to you?"

The little girl answered without hesitation, “Mommy did.”

“Then... Do you know that Mommy can’t bear a child all by herself?”

Lin Ruixi blinked and tilted her head to one side, thinking hard.

“I was born by Mommy,” she emphasized, “By Mommy alone.”

“If you don’t believe me, go ask your Mommy. Without me, could she have given birth to you?” His smile was carefree and mischievous.

Lin Xinyan, who was eating fruits, almost choked to death upon hearing his words.

Naively, the little girl asked Lin Xinyan, “Mommy, you gave birth to me by yourself, right? It has nothing to do with Daddy?”

Lin Xinyan shot Zong Jinghao a death stare. This man...

She picked her daughter up. “Mommy will bathe you now.”

Zong Jinghao stood up and followed after them.

Lin Xinyan turned to look at him. “I’m going to bathe her. Why are you coming too?”

“I’ll wait at the door. When you’re done with her, you can bathe me too.”

Lin Xinyan did not utter a word.

Don’t you feel embarrassed?

She almost lashed out at him.

Zong Jinghao leaned towards her and landed a peck on her cheek before he turned to go upstairs.

Again, Lin Xinyan was rendered speechless.

Lin Ruixi blinked, looking rather upset and puzzled. Daddy kissed Mommy, but why didn’t Mommy return him a kiss too?

Lin Xichen went back to his room after dinner. He had already taken his bath and changed into his grey silk pajamas. Sitting on his bed with his legs crossed, he bowed his head and started studying the numbers on his tablet again.

He looked up when he heard some noises – it was Lin Xinyan walking into the room while carrying his sister. The young boy heaved a long sigh. Surely, she insisted to bug us because she knew Mommy was going to sleep with me tonight.

“Are you upset at me?” Lin Ruixi raised her head and asked.

Lin Xichen gave her a big smile. “Why would I be? How could I not welcome my own sister?”

The little girl smiled and hugged Lin Xinyan. “Mommy, let’s go and have a nice bath.”

Lin Xichen shook his head. When will this girl grow up?

Lin Xinyan caught him in the act and pointed at him. “She’s your sister, also a child like you.”

Lin Ruixi isn’t childish. Lin Xichen is simply mature for his age.

Lin Xinyan took her daughter to the bathroom and then prepared a tub of hot water. After ensuring that the water temperature was just right, she turned around to undress her daughter, only to find her sitting on a small stool all ready.

She looked like a porcelain doll – fair and tender. Lin Xinyan carried her to the tub. She swam happily while proclaiming, “Mommy, I can swim in here.”

She pulled her daughter back. “Don’t move; I’m going to wash your hair.”

The little girl suggested, “Mommy, why don’t you join me in the tub?”

“I’ll go after you’re done,” said Lin Xinyan.

Children liked to play in the water. Moreover, it was comfortable to take a hot bath. Lin Ruixi was surely enjoying herself very much, as seen from the splish-splash everywhere and how wet Lin Xinyan got after bathing her.

Subsequently, she covered her daughter with a big towel and brought her to the dry area to change into her pajamas. The bathroom had a spacious dry and wet area, so it made the whole process very convenient.

She had tailored-made pajamas for both of her children using very comfortable materials. Each of them had a different color. Lin Ruixi’s was yellow in color, which complemented her skin color and made her look exceptionally adorable.

She blow-dried her daughter’s hair and helped her put her slippers on before she let the girl out to play.

Since she was wet from head and toe, Lin Xinyan decided to take a bath herself.

After removing her clothes and getting into the tub, she remembered that she did not have any sets of pajamas in the bathroom downstairs.

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Lin Xinyan stroked her own forehead. She couldn't help feeling as if she were always forgetting things. Lucky for her, there was a towel in the bathroom, and she thought of getting her son to grab her clothes from upstairs once she finished showering.

Finally, she soaked herself peacefully in the bathtub.

After a while, she got up and rinsed herself under the rain shower before she wrapped herself in a towel. Without opening the door, she called out to her son, "Xichen, can you grab my pajamas from upstairs?"

Lin Xichen looked at the bathroom's frosted glass door and couldn't see his mother's silhouette at all. "Where are your pajamas?" he asked.

"It's in the drawer under the bathroom mirror," she answered. She deliberately kept her pajamas in that drawer so she could get dressed as soon as she stepped out of the shower. That way, she wouldn't have to wrap herself in a towel before changing.

"Hold on, I'll get it for you now," said Lin Xichen. He put down his tablet, then got off the bed and rushed upstairs in his bedroom slippers. He moved so swiftly that he didn't realize someone was standing behind the door when he opened the door. Upon colliding head to head, he rubbed his forehead and looked up. It was Zong Jinghao, and they were both wearing the same gray silk pajamas.

Fluttering his eyelids, Lin Xichen looked at himself, then raised his head to look at him.

Zong Jinghao bent down and uncovered Li Xichen's hand from his forehead, then asked, "Does it hurt?"

Li Xichen's forehead was neither red nor swollen, so he shook his head and replied, "No, it doesn't."

After a short pause, he asked, "Was your pajamas sewn by my mommy too?"

I thought Mommy only made pajamas for Ruixi and I.

Zong Jinghao didn't know whether his pajamas were hand-sewn by Lin Xinyan. She passed the pajamas to him earlier, and all this time he had thought that she had bought them from a store.

Realizing that the material and style of his pajamas were the same as Lin Xichen's, he asked, "Was yours sewn by your mommy?"

Lin Xichen nodded. "Most of the clothes my sister and I wear were made by my mommy."

Lin Xinyan was a fashion designer, and she had a strong understanding of different types of fabrics. There were several sewing machines in her boutique, so it was easy for her to sew new pieces of clothing.

Lin Xichen glared at Zong Jinghao sternly and warned, "You make sure to treat my mommy well."

Mommy has always treated him well.

He is physically small in size, but he can be rather imposing.

Zong Jinghao then stood up and looked at him from above, saying, "What are you doing up here?"

Treat Lin Xinyan well? Of course, I owe that to my girl. In fact, it's my duty to look after her. If I don't pamper her, who will?

This kid doesn't need to remind nor warn me.

Lin Xichen looked up and said, "I'm here to get my mommy's pajamas. She wants to sleep with me tonight."

Zong Jinghao wasn't surprised to hear this, but he felt that Lin Xichen's reply had a high and mighty undertone.

It seems like he's implying that I have dominated his mother for a long time, and now she finally wants to spend time with him away from me.

Zong Jinghao patted Lin Xichen on the shoulder and smiled without saying a word. He then went into the room and grabbed the boy's pajamas, but Lin Xichen reached out and said, "Give it to me."

Once Zong Jinghao handed the pajamas to him, Lin Xichen held them close to his chest and headed downstairs.

Zong Jinghao followed him from behind with slow and steady steps.

When Lin Xichen reached the bathroom, he knocked on the door and said, "Mommy, here are your pajamas."

Inside the bathroom, Lin Xinyan was busy cleaning up, and she had just put her dirty clothes in the laundry basket.

When she heard her son calling, she told him to hang her pajamas on the door handle outside so she could get them.

Lin Xichen agreed obediently and hung her pajamas on the door handle. Then, he climbed back into bed and continued doing math questions on his tablet.

Meanwhile, Lin Ruixi was rolling around on the bed with her new soft toy.

After Lin Xinyan drained the water in the bathtub and finished cleaning up, she walked towards the door to grab her pajamas from the door handle. Just as she opened the door slightly to reach for her pajamas, she suddenly felt someone grabbing her wrist. In shock, she wanted to call out to the person, but when she saw his silhouette through the gap, she noticed a familiar, well-chiseled face.

Scrunching her eyebrows, she whispered, "What are you doing?"

Zong Jinghao gazed at her from head to toe. Her shoulder-length hair was half-dried, and she was wrapped in a single white towel. Her elegant neckline and fair calves were exposed before his eyes from above and beneath the towel.

His chest suddenly filled with a fiery passion.

Intimidated by his reaction, Lin Xinyan broke loose from his grasp and said, "Stop it. Both the kids are here."

To which Zong Jinghao stated with a deep voice, "Let me in then."

Caught off guard, Lin Xinyan replied softly, "I want to change."

"I know."

When she didn't respond, he smiled and pinched her cheeks, saying, "It's fine if you don't let me in. I will sleep downstairs tonight."

Lin Xinyan was speechless.

Do I even have a choice?

He's doing this on purpose.

She glared at him resentfully and said, "You already had this all planned out. Do you still need my consent?"

After that, she shut the bathroom door on him.

Zong Jinghao's mood brightened up upon knowing that he had achieved his goal. He walked back into the room and saw Lin Xichen staring at him fiercely in fear that he had come to steal Lin Xinyan away.



On the other hand, Lin Ruixi reacted on the opposite end of the spectrum. When she saw Zong Jinghao, she jumped on the bed happily and called him "Daddy". She then threw herself into his arms and had him wrap his arms around her like an octopus. With one hand around her waist and the other on her buttocks, he said, "Good girl."

However, Lin Ruixi whined, "You kissed Mommy just now, but you didn't kiss me."

She then leaned in and put her cheek next to his lips. "Kiss me too."

Zong Jinghao gave her a peck on her cheek and pinched her nose before saying, "You're so young, but you already know how to manipulate me?"

She giggled in his arms and replied, "I learned many new characters lately. Are you going to reward me?"

"What would you like?" Zong Jinghao said as he hugged her on the bed. Meanwhile, Lin Xichen moved aside and stared at the two of them. This is my bed, and they are occupying my space.

Lin Ruixi pondered over it for a while then answered, "I want Secret Base."

Lin Xichen immediately shifted his gaze towards his sister in surprise.

She usually likes soft toys and Barbie dolls.

Zong Jinghao was equally startled when he heard her answer. "Since when did you start liking such things?" he asked while hugging her.

"This item appeared the most in Xichen's browsing history, and he saved it under favorites. I'm guessing he really likes it, so I want to give it as a gift to him. However, I don't have any money," Ruixi said innocently while nestled in Zong Jinghao's arms. "Daddy, can you buy it so I can give it to Xichen?"

Lin Xichen really liked Secret Base, but he felt that he would owe Zong Jinghao a favor if he accepted it as a gift from him.

"I don't want it," the boy muttered as he resisted the temptation.

Laying on the bed sideways with his face on the quilt, Zong Jinghao stroked his daughter's hair and said, "Your brother doesn't want it. Why don't you choose something you like?"

Lin Ruixi already had everything she wanted, so she said, "Get me another duck soft toy then."

Lin Xichen cringed when he heard this.

It's such a good opportunity to ask for something valuable, but she asks for a duck soft toy?

She already has one!

“Okay,” Zong Jinghao promised.

Lin Ruixi happily kissed her father, leaving a trace of saliva on his cheek. Feeling a wet and sticky sensation on his cheek, Zong Jinghao reached out to wipe away the saliva on the corners of her lips.

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Lin Ruixi grinned widely, exposing a row of dazzling white teeth. It was as though she enjoyed having her saliva wiped away by Zong Jinghao.

When Lin Xinyan finally walked out of the bathroom in her pajamas, she saw Zong Jinghao occupying most of the bed. Meanwhile, Lin Xichen was cast aside in the corner of the bed like a pathetic little bug while he watched Zong Jinghao and Lin Ruixi behaving affectionately.

She walked over to hug her son, then she took his tablet and put it on the table. “It’s time to sleep,” she said.

Lin Xichen sighed lightly. I thought I could sleep with Mommy tonight. Who knew Ruixi and daddy would be here as well? How are we all going to fit on one bed?

Is it so hard for me to spend one night alone with Mommy?

“Ruixi and I will sleep in the middle,” Lin Xichen suggested.

He planned to let his sister sleep with him in the middle so Zong Jinghao and Lin Xinyan would be separated.

Lin Ruixi didn’t have the same intentions. She didn’t mind any kind of sleeping arrangements as long as her parents were sleeping on the same bed.

Zong Jinghao glanced at his son but did not reveal his thoughts. He then lay down on the bed with Lin Ruixi.

Since both the kids were sleeping in the middle, Zong Jinghao and Lin Xinyan were separated on opposite ends of the bed.

Whenever Ruixi can't sleep, she would usually pat my chest. In the past, she had the habit of touching Xinyan when she slept. However, since she started spending time with her grandmother, she got rid of this habit.

She probably won't hold either of us to sleep anymore, but she might still do it out of muscle memory.

When Lin Ruixi's tender hands suddenly rubbed against Zong Jinghao's body, he panicked and grabbed her hands. He then said gently, "It's alright, I'm here."

The little girl fluttered her eyes and said, "Your muscles are so hard, daddy."

Mommy and grandmother's muscles are always soft, but Daddy's muscles are not soft at all.

Zong Jinghao was rendered speechless by his daughter's remarks.

"Go to sleep. Don't say such silly things," Lin Xichen chided as he patted Lin Ruixi's back.

"I was talking to Daddy, not you," Lin Ruixi retorted.

"Alright, just be quiet and go to sleep," Lin Xinyan instructed sternly.

The two kids obeyed their mother's instructions and immediately kept quiet.

Nevertheless, it took them about half an hour before they finally fell asleep.

Lin Xinyan, on the other hand, stayed awake due to matters of the heart.

She didn't know whether Zong Jinghao knew about Lin Xichen's disappointment, and since he came back late, she hadn't found the right time to tell him.

When she noticed her children fast asleep after a while, she called out softly, "Are you still awake?"

It so happened that Zong Jinghao wasn't asleep yet, so he acknowledged her.

Pushing her blanket aside, she got off the bed and whispered, "I have something to tell you. Let's talk outside."

Zong Jinghao gently moved Lin Ruixi's head from his arm to the pillow, then got off the bed and followed Lin Xinyan out.

In the living room, Lin Xinyan poured herself a glass of water and asked, "Do you want some water too?"

"No thanks," Zong Jinghao replied while leaning against the couch in his pajamas. He then looked at her. "What is it you wanted to tell me?"

"I bumped into someone on the way back today," Lin Xinyan began as she took a seat next to him.

Zong Jinghao narrowed his eyes as if he already knew who had come looking for her earlier today.

Noticing his expression, Lin Xinyan said, "You know who it was?"

Of course I know. It involves my son.

He hummed softly and answered, "Don't worry."

Many people have been sent to hunt down this woman. Without any means to get out of B City, she will be caught sooner or later.

"Did she hurt you?" questioned Zong Jinghao as he stroked Lin Xinyan's long hair.

After taking a sip of water, she put the glass on the table and said, "No, but I'm scared she might hurt the kids. I've told my mother not to take them to kindergarten for the next few days. If you know of any bodyguards, please send two over." She was absolutely terrified that woman might do something extreme.

Zong Jinghao lowered his eyes. "I will see to that."

Lin Xinyan leaned in and rested her head on his shoulders. "Did Wen Qing find out about us?"

"There's no evidence showing that he knows yet," Zong Jinghao replied. Despite what they speculated, Wen Qing only did such things because he knew about their relationship.

However, they did not have any evidence to prove how Wen Qing had found out, and whether it was man-made or otherwise...

Lin Xinyan sighed, "I don't want to embarrass you, but I also promised her that I wouldn't tell you the reason. If my relations with her are what caused Wen Qing to separate us, then I am indeed shocked and at a loss for words. If possible, I would like to meet him to explain. Otherwise, I will stay away from her..."

A private meeting might not be a bad idea, she thought to herself.

Nevertheless, she was aware that she was careless at times. Zong Jinghao had reminded her of this many times.

She also knew that Wen Qing was emotionally involved with Cheng Yuxiu because when Wen Xian broke the law back then, Bai Hongfei and Cheng Yuxiu were detained for a long time.

Now that Wen Xian was dead, Wen Qing abhorred Cheng Yuxiu.

From Wen Qing's point of view, Zong Jinghao is his sister's only child, so why would he allow me to mingle with Cheng Yuxiu?

He should expect Zong Jinghao and I to be aligned in our thoughts and not have anything to do with Cheng Yuxiu.

But how does he know that Cheng Yuxiu and I share good relations?

Lin Xinyan suddenly thought about her recent meeting with Cheng Yuxiu, then sat upright and said, "Could it be that he saw Cheng Yuxiu and I together when we last met up?"

She and Zong Jinghao lived in a villa, and they didn't mind having Cheng Yuxiu over in their house.

So it wasn't difficult for Wen Qing to investigate the extent of Lin Xinyan and Cheng Yuxiu's relationship.

"Let me handle this. You can do whatever you like," Zong Jinghao reassured her as he hugged her in his arms.

With her face on his chest, Lin Xinyan answered, "Okay."

After Lin Xinyan settled matters in her boutique, she went to visit Qin Ya.

The doctor had texted her every day to update her on Qin Ya's condition. Qin Ya's injuries had almost healed, and she had undergone two minor surgeries on her face. If she wanted to fully restore her appearance, she would have to undergo many more surgeries.

"How's Su Zhan been lately?" Qin Ya asked.

Ever since Qin Ya was sent to the hospital, Su Zhan had not appeared at all.

Su Zhan was shuttled between work and his personal life, in addition to taking care of his grandmother at home.

In the past, he spent most of his time frolicking outside. But now, he completely stopped going to his usual entertainment spots.

Qin Ya's accident had impacted him greatly.

Lin Xinyan felt that this was a positive development, so she said, "He's grown up."

Qin Ya had suffered a great deal because of him, and if he did not change his ways, he would be beyond help.

Zong Jinghao pinched Lin Xinyan's cheeks lightly. "Don't worry."

“It hurts,” grumbled Lin Xinyan as she pushed his hand away.

“Where does it hurt? Over here?” he said cheekily before biting her neck lightly.

She shoved him aside. “Stop it. We’re in the living room.”

### **Chapter 378**

What if someone sees us? Aunt Yu, Cheng Yuxiu, and Zong Qifeng are all in the same building. If they were to wake up...

“So, does this mean it’ll be fine if we do it in my room?” Zong Jinghao snickered.

Lin Xinyan looked at the trees that were slightly shaking outside and finally let out a moan, telling the man that she was okay with the idea. It was a very faint moan, but he heard it clearly.

Zong Jinghao grabbed Lin Xinyan from the couch by her butt as she hung her arms over his shoulder and kissed him.

The lights were off in the living room, faintly lit by the faint moonlight through the window. Zong Jinghao responded to her kiss as he carried her to the second floor.

When they got into the room, Lin Xinyan finally muttered, “The kids are still down there...”

“We’ll go back once we’re done.”

“But...”

Zong Jinghao immediately stopped the woman from talking by pressing his finger against her lips. He stared at her as he gently flicked his finger on her lip while the other hand slowly moved into her shirt and stopped on her left chest. “You can only think of me in here.”

He pressed his body against her as his hands roamed around her body. He kissed her hair and ears as he began to undo her shirt.

Lin Xinyan was shivering. She was never the one who was in the lead, even when she was the one who seduced him first. Just like all the other times, the man was the one who led her throughout the whole sexual experience.

Lin Xinyan was completely exhausted after that; she did not know if Zong Jinghao had taken her back to the kids' room, nor the time she fell asleep. It wasn't until late midnight when she was woken up by the sound of the door opening. She got up, wanting to get a glass of water. When she reached the kitchen, she saw a person sitting in the corner of the room with a single dim light turned on next to him.

Lin Xinyan rubbed her eyes to take a good look at the person whose face was barely visible under the faint light.

"Can't sleep?" she finally asked after making sure that the person was Zong Jinghao.

The man quickly put his phone down and approached her. "You awake?"

"I'm thirsty." Lin Xinyan frowned.

The man looked at her and went to get her a glass of water. He kept his movements as quiet as possible and watched as she gulped the water down her throat.

"Do you want more?"

Lin Xinyan shook her head and checked the time, only to realize that it was already half-past five.

"Did you get any sleep?" she asked.

"For a while." Zong Jinghao fell asleep with her in his arms once they were finished with their business, but the notifications from his phone woke him up not long after. Most of them were messages from Guan Jing about Wen Qing.

Zong Jinghao could now confirm that Wen Qing knew about the relationship between Lin Xinyan and Cheng Yuxiu. The reason Wen Qing kept looking for a woman for him was most likely because of the outcome.

With Lin Xinyan now awake, Zong Jinghao put the glass of water down and pulled her into his arms. As they cuddled, he realized that her shirt was completely opened and began to help her button it up.

The woman looked at him quietly as his long and tidy fingers moved along her body.

Perhaps because she was still half-asleep, she finally asked the question that had been in her head. "Ms. Chen is gorgeous, don't you think?"

Zong Jinghao froze as he raised his head to look at her as she continued. "You told me once that you're just like any other man, that you yearn for a woman's body. Would you... with another woman..."

She was afraid. The thought of Zong Jinghao sleeping with another woman made it hard for her to breathe.

The man gently caressed her hair, pretending not to hear her. "What other woman?"

"You know what I mean." Lin Xinyan glared at him.

"I don't."

She bit her lip and asked, "Will you cheat on me?"

Zong Jinghao pretended to think about the question and did not answer her.

The woman frowned and was about to argue with him when he kissed her. "If you don't want that to happen, you'll have to satisfy me."

She stared at him for a few seconds before lunging and biting his shoulder without any warning. "I'm going to bite you until you die if you ever betray me!"

"I won't die from this." Zong Jinghao sat there and let her bite him for a few more seconds before pushing her down on the bed. "Even if I die, I would rather die on top of you!"

"Zong Jinghao!"

...

When Lin Xinyan woke up once again, it was already ten in the morning. The space next to her was empty and cold, meaning that the man had already left for quite a long time.

She couldn't help but curse him quietly as she wondered how she was going to explain the situation to the children when they found out that their mother wasn't with them the whole night.

The woman forced herself out of bed, realizing that her body was sticky from all the sweating. She dragged her worn-out body to the bathroom, and when she looked in the mirror, all she saw were the marks Zong Jinghao had left on her. Some were accidents, but some were intentional. It was painful at first, but she didn't feel anything now.

Subconsciously, she reached for her belly. They never used any contraptions whenever they had sex, but she never got pregnant. There was once a time when she didn't give much thought to her infertility, yet, she was now a little disappointed.

Zong Jinghao wasn't there when Lin Ruixi and Lin Xichen were born, so she was hoping to see the man's reaction when he found out she was pregnant.

The woman let out a sigh and went into the shower. After cleaning herself up, she headed downstairs. The kids took a leave of absence from the kindergarten, most likely because of what she told Cheng Yuxiu the day before.



Lin Xichen wasn't solving math problems in his room. He was playing with a Star Wars Lego set in the living room instead.

Zong Jinghao had asked Guan Jing to get the children a set the night before, and like the efficient man he was, he delivered the toy over right away.

Lin Xichen was completely immersed in building his Lego toy and completely forgot that his mother wasn't in his room when he woke up that morning.

As for her daughter, it was much easier. All the mother had to do was hug the little girl and kissed her cheek; she forgot about it right away.

Lin Xinyan let out a sigh of relief as she really had no idea how to explain to the children.

"You must be hungry." Aunt Yu smiled as she pushed a tray of food over. "Have something to eat."

Lin Xinyan was completely famished and quickly sat down by the dining table. As she ate, she took her phone out and called Guan Jing.

At that time, Guan Jing was standing in a room Zong Jinghao was hosting a meeting in when his phone rang. The ear-piercing ringtone interrupted the meeting, and Zong Jinghao turned to glare at Guan Jing coldly.

### **Chapter 379**

Guan Jing shivered as he cursed the one who called him. He quickly pulled his phone out, only to feel a sense of relief when he saw the caller ID.

All one hundred managers had their attention on Guan Jing as the company had stated that all phones must be silenced during a meeting.

Guan Jing quickly answered the call, and Lin Xinyan's voice could be heard from the phone. "Did you check what I asked you to last time?"

Guan Jing froze; he could not recall such a request.

Lin Xinyan put her chopsticks down. "Did you forget? I asked you to help check which management agency Li Zhan belongs to. Is it done?"

Because of Lin Xinyan's reminder, Guan Jing finally remembered it. Since it wasn't a good idea to speak in front of every manager in the company, he decided to take the call outside. Guan Jing showed his phone to Zong Jinghao, and the latter immediately frowned at the caller ID -Chairman's Wife.

The chairman simply grunted and signaled Guan Jing to leave.

"Are you busy?" Lin Xinyan asked impatiently.

"No, no." Guan Jing closed the door behind him and found a quiet spot. "I didn't get the chance to tell you this since you hung up too fast last time. Li Zhan did not sign with any management agency, but he does have a manager."

Lin Xinyan frowned. "Then, can you locate him?"

"He just got back a few days ago. He now lives at 108 Tongling West Road," Guan Jing replied.

"I see. Thanks."

"Wait!" Guan Jing quickly stopped Lin Xinyan from hanging up. "Do you know Li Zhan?"

"Nope."

"Then, why are you looking for him?"

"It's work-related. Why?"

"D-don't you know who he is?"

"Oh? Do enlighten me." Lin Xinyan's interest was piqued.

Guan Jing was about to answer but he quickly swallowed his words back down. He believed it wasn't something he should disclose.

"You'll know when you meet with him," Guan Jing finally answered and hung up.

Since Lin Xinyan didn't know anything about it, it only meant that Zong Jinghao hadn't told her the detail.

Lin Xinyan stared at the phone, completely dumbfounded.

What the heck? You piqued my interest, and now you're leaving me hanging here? Is this a game to you?

She put her phone down and finished her lunch before driving to 108 Tongling West Road. Since she wasn't familiar with the district, she had to rely on the GPS. The closer she got to her destination, the more remote the surroundings got. She couldn't help but suspect if a famed celebrity really lived at such a location.

The buildings along the road were all really old. Only a few people could be seen wandering around the stores – most of them were elderly.

From what Lin Xinyan had learned about Li Zhan online, not only was the latter popular, but he was also quite young. She couldn't help but find it weird that such a person lived at such a place.

Lin Xinyan began to wonder if the information Guan Jing gave her was fake. Just as she was about to turn around, she realized she'd already reached her destination. A few people wearing caps could be seen waiting outside the building with cameras hanging around their necks. It was clear that these people were paparazzi.

She quickly parked her car near the building. It'll be impossible to meet him like this.

Lin Xinyan finally understood why Li Zhan preferred to live in such a remote place. He only had one reason, and that was to avoid the paparazzi.

She looked outside her car window at the fifteen-stories tall building. There were clothes, including underwear, hanging outside the window to dry. It definitely did not look like a place a celebrity would live at.

Scratching her chin, Lin Xinyan began to wonder how she could meet with Li Zhan. Even if she were to knock on his door, he would simply think she was with the paparazzi; he would not open the door for her.

“What should I do...”

As Lin Xinyan racked her brain, the building's door suddenly opened, and out came a man dressed in plain clothing. He was wearing a cap, and his face was covered by a black face mask.

Before she could react to what was going on, the doorway was flooded with young ladies. They were all chanting Li Zhan's name while holding up signs that reflected their love for the celebrity.

It was Lin Xinyan's first time witnessing a celebrity being surrounded by his crazy fans. She always thought that these were all an act for the television until she saw it with her own eyes. The crowd was even wilder than she thought.

Next to the face-covered Li Zhan was an overweight man in glasses with his hair tied into a bun. The man was trying to shield the celebrity from his fans, but they looked like they were about to be overwhelmed anytime soon.

Lin Xinyan was a little stunned as she never thought she would actually witness such a scene. She was even expecting to see Li Zhan's face and see if he was as good-looking as others said he was.

The only thing she found weird was why Li Zhan was only being escorted by one person. As she was lost in thought, the door to her backseat opened, and in came a man.

"Drive!" the man ordered.

Lin Xinyan turned around and saw a tall man in sunglasses and a black face mask. Wait... Doesn't he look like Li Zhan?

She quickly turned back and realized that the fans were still going crazy over the man that had walked out from the front door of the building.

"Who are you?" Lin Xinyan was completely dumbfounded by the situation.

Li Zhan pushed his sunglasses down a little to take a better look at Lin Xinyan. "It's you?"

"Wait, Li Zhan?" Lin Xinyan finally saw his eyes.

"Get me out of here." Li Zhan put his sunglasses back on.

Without any hesitation, Lin Xinyan started her engine and drove out to the main road. She beamed in excitement when she realized that she didn't have to do anything to get what she came for.

"Where are you heading to?" Lin Xinyan asked.

"The city center."

Li Zhan was going to attend a fan meeting event. The venue was already prepared; all that was left was for him was to arrive. He thought the car he had gotten into was one sent to pick him up. It wasn't until he saw Lin Xinyan's face that he realized he had gotten into the wrong car. Since what was done was done, he had to ask her for help. He could not get rid of his fans like he had again.

The celebrity finally removed his face mask and sunglasses. His black hair was stylishly cut to match his attractive eyes and chiseled jaw; his face was the epitome of perfection.

Even though he was wearing a plain sky-blue checkered shirt, the plain and simple style made him look even sexier.

“Long time no see.”

### **Chapter 380**

Long time no see? Lin Xinyan raised a brow. “Are you talking to me?”

“Is there anyone else in the car other than us?” Li Zhan grinned.

Lin Xinyan racked her brains but couldn’t find any instance that she’d met with Li Zhan before.

“Have we met?”

“You really can’t recognize me?” Li Zhan asked.

Lin Xinyan turned back to study the handsome face. Other than him being really good-looking, she could not remember meeting him. If she really had met him in the past, it would be impossible for her to forget a face that was hand-carved by God.

The car soon parked outside the biggest mall in the city center. Banners with Li Zhan’s name on them could be seen everywhere.

“This should be the right place.”

Li Zhan nodded and put on his sunglasses and face mask. “Can you come in with me?”

Lin Xinyan thought about it and nodded. Since she was looking for Li Zhan to endorse her product, this would be a great chance to get close to him.

Li Zhan smiled. “Let me make a phone call.”

Since many fans were waiting outside the mall, his path would be blocked by them if he were to go down now.

Lin Xinyan understood his situation and did not argue with him.

The celebrity quickly dialed a number and told the people on the other side that he'd arrived.

"Where are you?"

"Main door."

"What's the model of the car you're in? The person I sent to pick you told me they couldn't find you."

Li Zhan raised his head and asked Lin Xinyan, "What's your license plate number?"

"A88066."

Li Zhan repeated the plate number before he hung up.

"They'll send someone to get us," Li Zhan sighed as it was something that happened often to him.

Lin Xinyan smiled to express her understanding. They waited for a few minutes before someone knocked on the window. Since the back door was also being crowded by fans, they had no choice but to go in through the front.

The bodyguards quickly forced the fans back and formed a path for Li Zhan to walk into the mall.

"Li Zhan!" the fans screamed at the top of their lungs as soon as they saw their idol. Lin Xinyan walked next to Li Zhan and could feel the obsession the crowd had for the celebrity. She couldn't help but shiver – she could not understand why they would go crazy for him.

She even believed that these fans would run over her to get to him if the bodyguards weren't there to stop them.

Li Zhan held a fan meeting at the mall because he had signed a contract with the owner to help boost their sales. Li Zhan was one of the most popular celebrities out there, so the owner believed that the crowd that came because of Li Zhan would also spend inside the mall after the event.

All of the usual decoration in the main hall was replaced by a stage for Li Zhan. Escorted by the screams of his fan, the celebrity entered the mall and took his face mask and sunglasses off as soon as he went up the stage, which only garnered more cheers and shrieks.

Lin Xinyan stood among the crowd as she watched Li Zhan host the event. She admitted that he had the looks and build to receive such attention. It felt as if Li Zhan were shining on the stage, a glow that only the main character of a story would have.

“Thank you for all your love!” Li Zhan smiled and bowed. “Thank you for attending my fan meeting event! To show my gratitude, I have a surprise!”

“Yay!” the crowd cheered, and one of the fans quickly asked. “What’s the surprise? Is it a kiss?”

“She’s right! We want your kisses!”

The crowd immediately flew into chaos. Even though Lin Xinyan was standing below the stage with the fans, she felt like an outsider. She crossed her arms as she looked around in amusement.

Li Zhan finally spilled the beans and told everyone his surprise. “I’ll pick a fan to stay by my side for twenty-four hours!”

His surprise instantly made the fans go even wilder. It was something much more lucrative than receiving a kiss from him.

“Alright. Calm down now.” Li Zhan quickly stopped the crowd from going out of control.

“Thank you, Mr. Li, for announcing the surprise,” the host took over the mic. “We’ll be pointing the lucky winner with our spotlight over there. Everyone, please remain quiet and be patient.”

Everyone who wanted to be the lucky one quickly stopped moving. Many people closed their eyes and prayed to their God for a chance to spend a full day with their idol – maybe even become his wife someday in the future.

The spotlight slowly lit up as Li Zhan whispered to the host.

“Which one?” the host asked in a low voice.

Li Zhan quickly turned to look at Lin Xinyan. “Her.”

“Consider it done.” The host nodded.

The hall was quiet as the light flashed through the crowd; it was so quiet that even their racing hearts could be heard.

The host had already notified the person in charge of the lighting to shine the light on the lucky one.

“Let’s began the countdown! Ten, nine, eight, seven...”

The fans tensed up as the number decreased.

“Three! Two! One!”

The light stopped on Lin Xinyan once the countdown ended. Her eyes widened in disbelief, wondering why the light would stop at her.

“Let us welcome the lucky winner onto the stage!” the host yelled.

Lin Xinyan wanted to argue that she wasn’t a fan of Li Zhan and that it would be a waste if she was the lucky winner. Yet, she also knew she might embarrass Li Zhan if she did so.

Upon seeing Lin Xinyan hesitating, the host spoke again, “Miss? Are you okay?”

Li Zhan glared at Lin Xinyan with a bitter taste in his mouth. He was used to being surrounded by his fans; it unconsciously became something he was proud of. Lin Xinyan’s troubled expression wasn’t a sight he was fond of seeing.

Lin Xinyan could not reject the offer. If she did, she would lose all chance to ask Li Zhan to endorse her products.

Lin Xinyan frowned and proceeded onto the stage as the crowd let out sighs of disappointment while glaring at the lucky woman enviously.

When Lin Xinyan was on stage, the host asked, “Miss, can you tell us what of Mr. Li’s character captivated you the most?”

Li Zhan immediately froze at the question; he was curious about her answer as well.

### **Chapter 381**

Lin Xinyan had seen the work Li Zhan was famous for, and she could recite a few movies he’d been in even though she had never watched any of them before.

There was no way she could answer that question.

“Looks like you’re too tense to answer the question,” the host joked.



“Yes. I am indeed tense.” Lin Xinyan forced a smile. “I can’t believe I’m standing next to my idol.”

Li Zhan tilted his head up slightly as he was satisfied with the answer.

“So, which character do you prefer the most?”

“All of them,” Lin Xinyan replied and won the applause from the crowd.

“I see. Please, show us your right hand,” the host smiled.

Lin Xinyan looked at the host puzzlingly as she wondered if there was another gift. “I don’t need another gift,” Lin Xinyan quickly declined. “I’m happy enough to be able to stand this close to him. Please, give the gift to another fan.”

“This is something only you can get.”

Realizing that she had no choice but to accept it, she reached her right hand out. Before she could see what the host was holding, a cuff was locked on her wrist.

“To prove that the surprise gift is real, we’ll be locking Mr. Li up with the lucky winner together for twenty-four hours. She’ll get the key once the time has passed,” the host announced.

“Wow!” the crowd gasped.

Li Zhan also reached his hand out, but his expression told everyone that the handcuff was a surprise to him as well.

It was too late for him to back out even if he wanted to.

“Let the twenty-four-hour countdown begin!”

From that second onward, the game would last for twenty-four hours until the handcuff was taken off.

Lin Xinyan thought they were only doing it as a form of advertising. She thought would be let free after the event had ended. As the event went on, the fans got even crazier. Some even asked Li Zhan to kiss the lucky winner.

Even Li Zhan thought they would unlock the cuff after that. When the event ended, he turned to ask the host, “Can we take this off now?”

Surprisingly, the host shook his head. “No. You two will have to wait a whole day.”

“Why didn’t you notify me about this beforehand?” Li Zhan got angry, not because he was cuffed up with Lin Xinyan, but because he hadn’t been told of it.

“It’s on the contract. Did you not read through it?”

Li Zhan immediately went silent. The host was right, he had not paid extra attention to the contract as it wasn’t a formal event.

In the end, the actor had no choice but to go with it. Lucky for him, he was acquainted with the woman who was cuffed to him.

As for Lin Xinyan, her head was in a complete mess. All she could think of was how she should explain the situation to Zong Jinghao, a man who had strong possessiveness.

“This is unacceptable! Please, unlock the cuff now.” Lin Xinyan could not accept it. How am I supposed to use the loo? Or the shower? Heck, people will think I’m a criminal or something!

She couldn’t not accept such an ordeal.

“I’m sorry, but there’s nothing I can do. See you guys in twenty-four hours.” The host left after that. Lin Xinyan, Li Zhan, and his manager, Fatty Long, were then the only three who remained at the event.

On a side note, Li Zhan addressed his manager in such a way because he was overweight.

“We’ve messed up. Who knew they would do such a thing...” Fatty Long sighed.

Lin Xinyan was completely speechless at her situation.

“Well, what done is done. Lucky for us, it’s only a day. All you two have to do is watch a movie, drink some tea, and it’ll be over in a jiffy,” Fatty Long comforted. “Be happy. This is something every fan wants to experience.”

Lin Xinyan smiled wryly. Yes, I’m very lucky to be cuffed with someone without knowing why for a whole day! Very lucky indeed!

Li Zhan was a little disappointed at Lin Xinyan's rejection. "Come on; this is not the place to talk."

In order to avoid the paparazzi, Fatty Long had arranged for them to be picked up by a car in the underground parking lot.

Once they were in the car, Li Zhan stared at Lin Xinyan and asked, "You really don't recognize me?"

Lin Xinyan shook her head.

"Fatty Long, give me that thing." Li Zhan reached his hand out.

The manager quickly parked the car by the roadside and went to get a case out from the boot.

Li Zhan used his free hand to open the case and used the comb inside it to straighten his hair down before putting on black round glasses.

"How about now?"

Lin Xinyan's eyes widened; Li Zhan resembled Lin Xichen's teacher at AC.

"A-aren't you my son's teacher?" No matter how hard Lin Xinyan tried, she could not picture the teacher and the actor as the same person.

"How else would I recognize you?"

Lin Xinyan was completely astounded. They are two different people living in two different worlds, yet, they are the same person?

"You two might seem to have different personalities, but I can guarantee that you two only have a slight difference in appearances," Li Zhan spoke in his usual teacher manner, which finally convinced Li Xinyan.

It was the same tone and voice she was used to hearing from her son's teacher.

"Didn't Xichen tell you about me?" Li Zhan asked. The reason for his question was that he'd told the little boy his secret before returning. When he asked Lin Xichen to keep it a secret, he was only trying to test how tight lipped the little boy was.

"No..." Lin Xinyan recalled the conversation when her son was about to say something but stopped midway.

Li Zhan was happy with Lin Xichen's performance.

Lin Xinyan finally understood why her son had matured so quickly, and why he would do something out of the blue suddenly. It was all thanks to having him as a teacher.

“So, what’s your hobby? Working as a teacher or a celebrity?” Lin Xinyan really wanted to know which job Li Zhan would choose. Both were completely different.

After a moment of thought, Li Zhan finally answered, “I became a celebrity to annoy my father and a teacher because I like it.”

Lin Xinyan was dumbfounded by his answer. He became a celebrity just to annoy his father? What kind of reason is that?

Yet, she had to acknowledge his talent for achieving such popularity. Being handsome alone would never be enough for a person to achieve success in an industry that was full of good-looking people.

Li Zhan lay back on the seat and sighed. “I’m successful because my brother is rich.”

## **Chapter 382**

Everything could be settled with money. If he wanted to be an actor, all he had to do was invest in a movie, and he would land the main actor spot. It was that simple.

Lin Xinyan couldn’t help but change her opinion towards Li Zhan.

She began to wonder how rebellious a child had to be to seek out the path of an actor to annoy his father.

The thought of it made her shiver. She knew she could not let her son follow such a teacher as he might turn up like the man in front of her in the future.

Even though that was what Lin Xinyan thought, she didn’t show it on her face.

Back at the company, after hanging up Lin Xinyan’s call, Guan Jing was called into Zong Jinghao’s office.

After working for the chairman for such a long time, Guan Jing knew what the man was going to ask.

“Sir, your wife called me because she asked me to look up Li Zhan’s address for her,” Guan Jing reported before Zong Jinghao could even ask.

The man sitting on the chair frowned immediately. Why is she looking for Li Zhan?

“I told her Li Zhan’s address not long ago. She should be with him by now,” Guan Jing continued, unable to tell if his boss was happy or not. “Did you not tell her who Li Zhan is?”

That wasn’t what Zong Jinghao was worried about the most – it was the reason why Lin Xinyan would seek Li Zhan out that worried him.

“I see.” Zong Jinghao waved his hand, and Guan Jing bowed before leaving the office.

Once he was alone, the chairman took his phone out and called a number.

Since Li Zhan was still cuffed up with Lin Xinyan, he could not reach his phone in his jacket pocket when it rang.

“Can you help me take it out?” Li Zhan asked.

Lin Xinyan glanced at him before helping him. “I also have a request to ask.”

She was going to take the chance to pop the question as she hadn’t found the right timing before that.

Li Zhan took a peek at his screen and frowned. It was as if he was afraid of the caller but respected him at the same time.

“Let me answer this call first,” Li Zhan replied.

Lin Xinyan nodded.

He answered the call and spoke first. “To what do I deserve the honor for you to call me?”

Usually, it was the other way around. The caller rarely called him, so such an occasion made Li Zhan shiver.

Did I mess something up?

“Where are you?”

Li Zhan looked out the window but couldn’t recognize where he was. So, he turned to Fatty Long instead. “Where are we?”

“I’m bringing you to your new place. You can’t stay at Tongling...”

“I asked where we are!”

Before Li Zhan could find out, Zong Jinghao spoke on the other side of the phone. “Come to the company.”

The chairman hung up the call after that.

Li Zhan blinked as he could clearly hear the upset in Zong Jinghao’s tone. His orders were absolute, and Li Zhan had no idea but to abide by them.

The actor leaned forward and told Fatty Long, “Change of course. We’re going to my brother’s company.”

Being Li Zhan’s manager for quite some time, Fatty Long naturally knew who his brother was and made a U-turn.

“So, what’s your request? If it’s about Xichen, then you don’t have to worry about a thing,” Li Zhan said.

“No.” Lin Xinyan quickly shook her head. There was no way she was going to let her son be taught by him any longer. She’d been wondering why the little boy was so mature for his age, and she finally found the answer. “You should know my job, right?”

Li Zhan immediately realized what the request was and laughed. “Wait, when did your shop need a male model?”

“My boutique is indeed focused on female clothing, but I’m thinking of putting my foot in the male clothing market as well. I know it’ll be expensive to hire you to help endorse my products, so can I ask for a discount?”

Li Zhan scratched his nose. Lin Xichen had always been his favorite student, and he knew Lin Xinyan well enough to know that she was a decent person. There was also the fact that she was raising two children on her own. Amongst all the women he knew, Lin Xinyan was one of the few that left a good impression on him. Not only was she gorgeous; she was also independent and strong.

“Hold up!” Fatty Long cut in. “What’s your relationship with Li Zhan? Do you know how much he costs right now?”

Seeing that Li Zhan wasn’t replying, the manager thought he found the situation awkward and decided to step in.

Lin Xinyan knew it would be expensive for a famed actor to endorse her products, and she wasn't going to take advantage of their relationship. Instead, she was trying to bargain a better price, just like people would do when they were doing business.

"What would the cost be if he were to endorse my products?" she asked with a smile.

Fatty Long turned to look at Li Zhan, asking for his boss' confirmation.

Li Zhan sighed and stared at his manager. "Do you need money now? Don't tell me I don't pay you enough."

Lin Xinyan was completely stunned as Li Zhan had a completely different attitude compared to when he was out in public.

Even Fatty Long was confused as he thought his employer had kept his mouth shut because he found the situation awkward.

"Of course not. The decision is yours," Fatty Long sighed.

Even though he was Li Zhan's manager, he still had to ask his employer's permission before accepting any job or event offer. No amount of price could ever move the actor's decision if he didn't like what he was hearing.

Since Lin Xinyan had no idea what was going on, she didn't want to pressure Li Zhan since they were acquainted. "It's fine. If you aren't free, then..."

Before she could finish her sentence, Li Zhan cut in. "Can you find someone else who's better looking than me?"

Lin Xinyan couldn't help but laugh. She admitted that Li Zhan was extraordinarily handsome, but he was too immature. Compared to his fans, he wasn't someone she found attractive.

"Then, about your price..." Lin Xinyan paused when she realized the car was driving into Wanyue Group's underground garage.

Since she'd been too focused on her conversation with Li Zhan, she had not realized that the car was driving in this direction. The woman lowered her head to look at her cuff and frowned. "What are we doing here?"

Li Zhan never wanted to bring Lin Xinyan here, but he wasn't given a choice since it was Zong Jinghao's order.

"I don't need money. If you want me to endorse your products, then come with me to meet someone."

Lin Xinyan recalled Li Zhan telling Fatty Long that he wanted to meet his brother, and now that they were at Wanyue Group, she quickly came to a conclusion that his brother was working here.

She never suspected that Zong Jinghao was Li Zhan's brother as she had always thought that the former was an only child.

She didn't even think that Li Zhan belonged to the Wen family since his last name was Li.

Little did she know that Li Zhan was just a stage name. His real name was Wen Xiaoji.

Lin Xinyan sat in the car worriedly. Ever since Zong Jinghao announced their relationship to everyone, his employee would recognize her face. If she were to appear at the company with another man cuffed together, she couldn't begin to picture what the others would think of her.

What would Zong Jinghao think?

### **Chapter 383**

Lin Xinyan rejected his proposal immediately. "Even if you aren't going to charge me, I'm still not going in with you."

"Do you think you have a choice?" Li Zhan raised their hands to show the cuff.

"I can't go with you no matter what." Lin Xinyan stood her ground.

Li Zhan was confused by her action as he wasn't asking her to do anything indecent.

"Is there someone you know who works here?" Li Zhan questioned. "Someone you don't want to meet?"

Since she barely knew Li Zhan, Lin Xinyan did not want to disclose the information about her private life.

She averted her gaze and lied, "I don't want to go out into public with the cuff still on. People might think I broke the law or something."



Li Zhan looked at the cuff and frowned; it was his first time in such a situation. Even though he agreed that it was embarrassing and awkward to appear in front of others in such a state, what was done could not be undone.

“The person I have to meet is a very important person to me. I really have to go...” Li Zhan groaned and suddenly thought of an idea. “If all you want is for other people to not recognize you, I’ll borrow you something.

He took off his glasses and grabbed a face mask from Fatty Long. “Here, put these on.”

Lin Xinyan stared at the items speechlessly.

“You have to understand. I have to meet this person no matter what.” Li Zhan stood his ground. If Lin Xinyan still insisted on not going, he would drag her with him.

Without many choices left, Lin Xinyan nodded. After putting on the mask and glasses, she checked herself in the mirror, letting out a sigh of relief when she saw that most of her face was covered.

“Are you serious about endorsing my products for free?”

She wasn’t being a cheapskate, but the endorsement fee wasn’t a small number. She wanted to save as much money as possible. Of course, she wasn’t going to let Li Zhan do it for free. She still planned to pay him an adequate amount when it was all over.

“As long as you come with me, I’ll do it for free! Do you trust me?”

Lin Xinyan nodded. “I’m not going to let you work for free. I’ve checked; the price starts from a million. I’ll pay you that much. Just think of it as you giving me a huge discount.”

“You sure are good with numbers,” Li Zhan laughed.

“It’s to make sure I don’t lose anything.”

Lin Xinyan wasn’t the type of person who would use her friendship as leverage in business negotiations, nor was she the type who would take advantage of others. She believed in setting things straight right from the beginning to avoid any complications in the future.

“Deal. Come on.” Li Zhan pushed the door open, and they got off the car.

Before they went up the elevator, Li Zhan took Fatty Long’s jacket to cover the cuff. As they went up in the elevator, Lin Xinyan noticed which floor they were heading to and frowned.

“Who are we meeting again?”

“My brother.”

“Is he a manager here?”

“Have you ever heard of Zong Jinghao?”

Lin Xinyan’s heart skipped a beat at the mention of that name as she stared at Li Zhan.

“He... He’s your brother?”

“You know him?”

Lin Xinyan didn’t know how to react to the situation.

“You should have seen him once or twice in financial magazines,” Li Zhan clarified. “He’s in his thirties and carries a cold expression every time. Tell me, why does a man like him still stay single until now? Shouldn’t he get a wife or something? Heck, even if he doesn’t get married, he could still have a few lovers with the money he has. It’s like he’s a monk or something.”

The actor only knew of Zong Jinghao’s relationship with He Ruilin and was very surprised when they called off their engagement. He always thought his brother loved his ex until their breakup. Zong Jinghao had been single ever since – at least that was what Li Zhan believed.

Li Zhan was a busy person. Most of the time, he would be traveling to foreign countries for TV shows and advertisements. When he wasn’t acting, he would go back to school, put on his glasses, and work as a lecturer.

He wasn’t exactly on good terms with Wen Qing, and he would only call Li Jing from time to time to update her on his status. He rarely asked about Zong Jinghao as he always thought of the man as a boring person who simply made a lot of money.

“That’s how you think of him?” Lin Xinyan asked.

Li Zhan mulled over the question in his head for a few seconds and nodded. “He’s a boring person. What’s the fun in making so much money when you aren’t going to splurge a little? Aren’t all rich men supposed to be the same? They earn money and have fun with girls.”

## **Chapter 384**

“Is it compulsory for the wealthy to have multiple women?” Lin Xinyan lowered her voice.

“Not really. You see, he has desires and physiological needs no matter what. Back then, he had a fiancée. He called off the engagement, but he didn’t have any other women.” Li Zhan leaned closer and whispered, “According to an article I’ve read before, if a man didn’t vent his frustrations for a long time, his thoughts will become distorted. Soon, he will become ill-tempered, and I figure that may be the case. When we meet him later, don’t be afraid. I’m with you.”

Ding! The door of the lift opened.

Lin Xinyan wanted to know who Li Zhan was, but she lost the chance to ask. The door of the lift opened, and they arrived on the floor of the higher-ups'. Moreover, Zong Jinghao's office was located there too.

She could feel the overwhelming tension of the workplace as it was so intense.

Lin Xinyan hesitated in her tracks. Never would she have thought that Li Zhan would bring her to meet Zong Jinghao.

She did not dare picture the expression of Zong Jinghao when he saw her.

Li Zhan mistook her hesitation as fear. He comforted her by saying, "You have me, so don't be afraid. Let's go."

Before Lin Xinyan could express her thoughts, Li Zhan dragged her off the elevator.

A worker saw Li Zhan taking the hand of a woman who was covered from head to toe. He took another glance at them as he was felt something was off.

Everyone knew Li Zhan's status in the company. However, no one dared to gossip as Zong Jinghao had given his orders.

"What are you looking at?" Li Zhan shot a glance at the worker who was staring at Lin Xinyan.

That man laughed politely and asked, "Is this your girlfriend?"

Li Zhan was taken aback by that man's assumption, but he smiled and replied, "Yes, she is."

The corners of Lin Xinyan's eyes twitched when she heard the bold answer of Li Zhan.

The worker did not respond, but he looked at Lin Xinyan again out of curiosity.

Lin Xinyan was wearing Li Zhan's black-framed glasses and a face mask. As most of her features were covered, no one could recognize her. However, it was hard to say for those familiar with her.

The door of the lift closed. This shielded Lin Xinyan from the worker's stares.

Li Zhan dragged Lin Xinyan all the way to Zong Jinghao's office. The woman did not have the time to compose her thoughts when Li Zhan knocked on the door.

A deep voice was heard coming from the inside, saying, "Come in."

Li Zhan was ready to go into the room. However, Lin Xinyan held onto the door frame tightly with her other hand, reluctant to go in.

Li Zhan creased his eyebrows. We have arrived. She has to go in no matter what.

Using the handcuff to his advantage, Li Zhan forcefully yanked her into the room.

Zong Jinghao was standing in front of the tall French windows. He was a tall man with broad shoulders and a small waist. His sleeves were folded, revealing his muscular forearms.

"What's the matter?" Li Zhan was the first to speak.

Zong Jinghao slowly turned to face them.

The sunlight reflected into the room through the French window blinded Lin Xinyan's vision. She wasn't able to see Zong Jinghao's expression, but deep down, she was nervous.

She couldn't help but clench her fists, unable to phrase the bizarre events that had happened in her life.

Jinghao narrowed his eyes slightly as he strode over to her.

He stopped his tracks in front of Lin Xinyan.

Li Zhan grinned. "Meet my girlfriend."

It has to be done. It's the only reasonable explanation as to why I brought a woman here. Not to mention, we are even 'holding each other's hands'.

"Really?" Zong Jinghao took a glance at their "intertwined hands".

"Of course. If not, why would I bring her with me? You called me here. What's the matter?" Li Zhan asked as he continued smiling.

Jinghao did not give Li Zhan an answer. In fact, Jinghao was very interested in his “girlfriend”.

Lin Xinyan felt threatened. She felt like saying something, but she did not know how to start the conversation or what to say.

Her mind was in a mess.

“She had an allergy, so...” Li Zhan explained. He thought Jinghao was curious as to why Lin Xinyan was covered from head to toe.

Zong Jinghao didn’t bother listening to Li Zhan. He reached out to take off the glasses worn by Lin Xinyan.

Li Zhan immediately pulled her backward and said, “She had a serious allergy. Her face is pretty bad right now, so you shouldn’t see it. I don’t remember you being such a busybody. What’s wrong with you today?”

Zong Jinghao did not avert his gaze from Lin Xinyan. “Take it off yourself, or do you want me to do it?”

He did not get to see Lin Xinyan’s face before, but her figure and the feeling she gave off made him suspect that this woman was indeed Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan felt her heart tighten as she took off the glasses and face mask. Before Zong Jinghao asked her anything, she explained, “I met up with Li Zhan for him to endorse my products. I didn’t intend to go to his fan meeting, but I ended up participating in a show with him. So...”

Lin Xinyan looked like a child who had made some mistakes.

Zong Jinghao closed his eyes and felt his head throb painfully.

My goodness!

Isn’t she a grown-up already? Can’t she act like one?

“Wait a minute. You guys know each other?” Li Zhan asked in a daze.

It does seem like they know each other.

“You met with him just for the endorsement?” asked Zong Jinghao.

Lin Xinyan nodded truthfully.

“Do you know who he is?”

Lin Xinyan shook her head in response.

It seems that she doesn't know Li Zhan is Wen Qing's son. Zong Jinghao heard from Guan Jing that Lin Xinyan was inquiring about Li Zhan's residence. He had thought it was all because of Wen Qing.

“Holy crap! You guys really know each other.” Li Zhan looked like he had discovered something incredible. “How do you guys know each other?”

He was completely baffled.

Although Li Zhan hadn't worked as the teacher of Lin Xichen for a long time, he knew the boy lived in Country A.

Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao know each other.

What's the relationship between them?

More and more questions flooded Li Zhan's brain.

“What kind of relationship do you two have? How do you know each other?”

Zong Jinghao ignored him while staring at their “intertwined” hands.

“Our hands were cuffed together,” explained Lin Xinyan hurriedly. As proof, she removed the clothes covering their hands. She didn't want to hold hands with Li Zhan. It was all because of the handcuff.

Zong Jinghao frowned.

“Answer me, please,” Driven by his curiosity, Li Zhan was going crazy.

Zong Jinghao shot him an icy glare. Terrified, Li Zhan immediately shut his mouth.

Although he was curious, he didn't dare ask any further.

Zong Jinghao walked to his work desk and gave Shen Peichuan a phone call. Handcuffs? Shen Peichuan's familiar with them. It wouldn't pose a problem for him to remove it.

Shen Peichuan was shocked. “Handcuffs? Who got cuffed?”

“I'll be waiting for you at the company.” Zong Jinghao did not bother explaining the situation. All he wanted was for Shen Peichuan to remove the handcuffs.

Shen Peichuan fell silent as he was clueless about anything that had happened.

Zong Jinghao hung up on the call and turned back to look at them. His headache had become worse.

“Jinghao...”

“Shut up! Is it fun for you? You’re a grown-up, no?” Zong Jinghao lectured Li Zhan.

“I’ve been too rash this time. It seems like I’ve fallen for their schemes. I didn’t expect them to plan these bizarre games.” Li Zhan scratched his head, feeling remorseful.

### **Chapter 385**

Li Zhan isn’t afraid of anything in this world except Zong Jinghao.

When he was young, Zong Jinghao always stood up for him whenever he faced troubles. He did not understand their bond in the past as he only liked to follow him around.

As time passed, Li Zhan developed a respect for Zong Jinghao.

If not for Zong Jinghao’s support, Li Zhan wouldn’t be able to do whatever he wanted and the life he had then.

“I’m really sorry.” He was quick to apologize, but deep down, he was still curious about Lin Xinyan’s relationship with Zong Jinghao.

“Jinghao, what kind of relationship do you have with Lin Xinyan? You guys look close.” Li Zhan grinned.

Even though Zong Jinghao was displeased with Li Zhan, hitting him right after accepting his apology wouldn’t be good too.

So, Zong Jinghao avoided his question and instead asked, “How do you know her?”

Li Zhan’s and Lin Xinyan’s relationship doesn’t seem like it’s the first time they’ve met.

In fact, they seem close.

“You should already know as you were the one who got me the job as a teacher in AC. I am her son’s teacher. That’s how we know each other.” Li Zhan didn’t think twice and answered.

Lin Xinyan was standing at the side, her eyes averting their gazes. She had some ideas of Li Zhan’s identity after all this while.

Jinghao does not have a little brother.

Then, it must be the Wen family. Li Zhan’s age matches with Wen Qing’s son, so he must be his son.

As for why he was called Li Zhan, it must be his stage name. After all, idols get their names from fortune-tellers to aid them in their careers.

Li Zhan walked up to Zong Jinghao and whispered, “She looks so young, yet she’s already given birth to two kids. Jinghao, tell me the truth. How do you know her? You didn’t have an unhealthy relationship with her, right?”

Li Zhan liked Lin Xichen and admired Lin Xinyan. However, his bond with Zong Jinghao surpassed those of relatives. What they have was bromance so, he would choose to side with Zong Jinghao no matter what.

For him, Lin Xinyan gave birth before, so she did not deserve Zong Jinghao.

Zong Jinghao looked at him indifferently.

He, too, was surprised with the relationship they had.

What a coincidence!

Li Zhan panicked. “Jinghao, say something!”

Thud!

There was a knock on the door. The noise interrupted Li Zhan and lifted the tension in the atmosphere.

Zong Jinghao looked at the time and realized that Shen Peichuan would be arriving anytime soon. “Come in.”

The door of the office was pushed open. Shen Peichuan was holding a bunch of keys in his hand as he stepped in and immediately asked, “Who got cuffed...”



Before he could finish his sentence, he saw Li Zhan and Lin Xinyan.

He walked towards the three of them and scanned Li Zhan and Lin Xinyan. Now, what do we have here?

“Sister-in-law, what are you guys doing?” asked Shen Peichuan nonchalantly.

Before Lin Xinyan could express her thoughts, Li Zhan said, “Who are you calling sister-in-law?” His eyes widened as he frowned.

“Is there another woman in here?” Shen Peichuan looked at him as though he was looking at a fool.

Li Zhan knew Zong Jinghao had two well-acquainted buddies. They were Su Zhan and Shen Peichuan.

Zong Jinghao was the oldest among them.

Shen Peichuan was the second-oldest, while Su Zhan was the youngest.

He calls her sister-in-law?

Li Zhan could not figure it out, yet he was scared of the truth. Could it be that Zong Jinghao and Lin Xinyan are dating?

Does he know everything about her?

I hope he isn't being tricked by her young appearance.

“Shen Peichuan, unlock my handcuffs, quickly.” Li Zhan refused to call anyone “bro” except Zong Jinghao.

Shen Peichuan did not unshackle Li Zhan on purpose and said, “Show me some respect, and I'll do it.”

He knew Li Zhan's personality and temper, so he teased him deliberately.

Li Zhan's face drooped. “I have important matters to attend to. Unshackle me now.” He had a stern expression on his good-looking face.

He wanted to speak to Zong Jinghao alone, but he was cuffed together with Lin Xinyan. He couldn't freely say what he wanted as it was all about the latter.

Shen Peichuan took a glance at his anxious demeanor and decided to stop making fun of him. He walked towards Li Zhan and analyzed the model of the handcuff. Then, he used the compatible key to free the duo from the shackles.

Once Li Zhan got a taste of freedom, he drove Shen Peichuan out of the room and closed the door.

Shen Peichuan stood at the entrance dumbfounded. "What the hell's going on?"

Lin Xinyan was calm. Now that they're alone, Li Zhan will tell Zong Jinghao everything about me.

"Li Zhan and I know each other, but it appears that he had no idea about my relationship with Jinghao. After knowing my connection with him and with the way you addressed me, he must be shocked."

Shen Peichuan understood everything then. "Let's sit on the sofa," he suggested to Lin Xinyan.

To which Lin Xinyan nodded in agreement.

Li Zhan had locked the door in the office.

Zong Jinghao did not stop him as he was waiting to hear what Li Zhan wanted to say.

Currently, Li Zhan's head was a mess.

He regained his composure and asked, "Why did Shen Peichuan call Lin Xinyan sister-in-law? What's the meaning of this?"

"You should call her sister-in-law too," Zong Jinghao replied nonchalantly as he leaned on the desk with one of his hands in his pocket while another unbuttoned his shirt.

The corner of Li Zhan's lips twitched. The underlying message is, he's dating Lin Xinyan.

"You, you guys..." Li Zhan gasped for air and asked, "Do you know her well?"

"It's true. She looks young and beautiful. To be honest, I don't hate her. I do admire her. However, she's not the one for you..."

"Why?" Zong Jinghao interrupted him and gave him a faint side-eye.

"She has two kids. They... They are six years old this year, six years old!" Li Zhan gesture the number six with his fingers, emphasizing their age.

"Furthermore, her son told me that they don't have a father. She's a single mother."

"So?" Zong Jinghao replied, unfazed by his words.

Li Zhan facepalmed. What happened to my wise bro?

Why won't he get it?

"Her kids don't have a father. It's so obvious that she's either someone indecent or a divorcee. It could also be that her ex-boyfriend left her pregnant, to begin with. To sum it up, she had a lover and gave birth to kids. How can such a woman be worthy of you? How can a person like her become my sister-in-law?"

For Li Zhan, the woman worthy of Zong Jinghao should at least have a pure body. It didn't matter if she didn't have the talent nor status to stand by his side.

What does Lin Xinyan have to offer?

Nothing.

"She's definitely not the one for you," Li Zhan insisted.

It would've been better if Lin Xinyan did not have kids and ex-lovers. Moreover, even if she isn't from a wealthy family, I wouldn't interfere.

Zong Jinghao lowered his gaze. His emotions were hidden away by thick lashes as he asked indifferently, "What if I like her the way she is?"

Li Zhan widened his eyes. Is he crazy? Or are all the women in this world dead?

"You're dating a woman who's given birth before, uncle..." Li Zhan didn't finish his sentence as he knew no one would be able to hinder Zong Jinghao's decision, not even Zong Qifeng.

"Are you going to be her kids' stepdad? Jinghao, this isn't like you. Do you love her that much, to the extent of accepting her kids?"

"What if I tell you that they are my kids?" Zong Jinghao lifted his head.

### **Chapter 386**

Li Zhan was stunned.

Lin Xinyan's children are his?

How can that be?

He must be kidding.

“It’s not funny at all.” Li Zhan straightened his face. “Don’t joke about this, Jinghao.”

It was unbelievable.

Zong Jinghao’s expression was more solemn than Li Zhan’s. “Do I look like I’m joking?”

Li Zhan grimaced. “Xichen is your son?”

He was baffled. How can this be possible?

If Lin Xichen is Zong Jinghao’s son, then the man Lin Xinyan had a relationship with is...

He looked at Zong Jinghao, and his pupils dwindled.

That means the man Lin Xinyan was talking about is him.

With a gulp, he sank into his thoughts again. Lin Xichen is already six years old. That would mean he had a relationship with Lin Xinyan since around seven years ago. But wasn’t Bai Zhuwei the one who was with him then?

How did he and Lin Xinyan have a relationship?

All of a sudden, his eyes widened in surprise as he began to realize something. Back then, it was because of Lin Xinyan that he abandoned He Ruilin.

This was why even though they were engaged, it was called off.

There might still be other entanglements unknown to him, but he was quite sure that that was generally the case.

Lin Xinyan had given birth to his children. If he were to marry another woman, the children of him and Lin Xinyan would become illegitimate.

After understanding the truth, it wasn’t very unacceptable to Li Zhan anymore since the man who had a relationship with Lin Xinyan was Zong Jinghao.

But there was still something else he couldn’t figure out.

Lin Xichen had told him that he did not have a father; he did not know who his father was.

He had been living abroad all those years.

Does Zong Jinghao know about that?

“Jinghao, do you know that Lin Xinyan brought the two children abroad?” Li Zhan asked meticulously.

The only person helping Lin Xinyan to take care of the children was Zhuang Zijin. Lin Xinyan needed to work, and they didn't hire any maids. Their life there was bearable, but it wasn't easy.

If Zong Jinghao knew about it but didn't lend a hand, is he even human?

After all, the children were his.

If he didn't know about it, then it was all the weirder.

Could Lin Xinyan have given birth in secret?

It was not a good topic for Zong Jinghao.

He didn't know about the birth of his two children. What was even more regrettable was that he didn't have the opportunity to participate in their lives before the age of five.

In response, Zong Jinghao stood up straight and replied, “It's about time you go back and see your father.”

With that, he walked towards the door and opened it.

Lin Xinyan was sitting on the sofa talking to Shen Peichuan.

The former wasn't looking very well.

It was because they were talking about Zhuang Zijin.

She had not visited Zhuang Zijin since that day.

She was afraid.

She blamed herself for not finding out that Zhuang Zijin had remarried Lin Guoan just to avenge herself earlier.

“When?”

Shen Peichuan was telling her that Zhuang Zijin's wasn't feeling well. He had advised her to go to the hospital but she refused.

"I'm sorry, I've overlooked. I heard from the officer on duty that it's been a while."

"It's not your fault." Lin Xinyan knew Shen Peichuan had to work and was not able to watch over Zhuang Zijin from time to time. Besides, with him managing things internally, it was already much easier for Zhuang Zijin.

At least no one dared to give her a hard time.

"If you have time, do visit her and try to convince her to go to the hospital. The officer on duty said she was coughing very badly – over ten to twenty times per night. Even her inmates were complaining that it was disturbing. I have just arranged to switch her to a single-occupancy cell."

There was actually no cell with single-occupancy within. The original cell Shen Peichuan had arranged for Zhuang Zijin had only three occupants, which was already one of the cells with the least number of people. He had planned to arrange for a single-occupancy cell for her from the beginning, but they were short of cells, so he had no choice.

Lin Xinyan lowered her head as a thin layer of mist clouded over her eyes. "Can you make an arrangement for me? I want to see her today."

She was worried about Zhuang Zijin's health.

It's only for a few years. When she comes out, she still has years of freedom, and I still have a lot of time to take care of her.

Shen Peichuan assured her to leave it to him.

When he saw Zong Jinghao walking over, Shen Peichuan changed the subject to the trouble caused by Lin Xichen.

There had been a hue and cry due to this matter.

"The secret lover of the deputy mayor has been caught," he said.

Zong Jinghao sat down next to Lin Xinyan. "Where was she caught?"

"In a private property. It was bought for her, but it's now been seized. All the relevant parties and staff were arrested," replied Shen Peichuan.

Zong Jinghao nodded and turned to Lin Xinyan. He could obviously sense that she was upset.

He asked lightly, "What's the matter?"

Li Zhan, who just walked out, quickly came over and interrupted, "Jinghao, can I stay with you? I miss Xichen."

He had said something bad about Zong Jinghao in front of Lin Xinyan because he did not know about the relationship between Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao.

He thought that was why Lin Xinyan was upset.

He was afraid that Lin Xinyan would tell Zong Jinghao.

Hence, he came over to join in their conversation.

Zong Jinghao squinted his eyes at the man. He could tell what was in his mind.

Li Zhan conceded quickly and said, "I didn't mean it." He then sighed and added, "I didn't know about your relationship with her, so I said something about you. But it's not something bad. I said that you're loyal, you're young and handsome, and that you're even-tempered, right, Xinyan?"

Li Zhan was fearful. He even looked at Lin Xinyan with a begging gaze.

Lin Xinyan's mind was occupied entirely by the matter concerning Zhuang Zijin, so she didn't really hear Li Zhan's words, simply replying with a brief "yeah."

Li Zhan breathed a sigh of relief. Luckily.

He patted his own chest.

Shen Peichuan interrupted from the side, "Your reaction makes it seem like you've done something bad."

"What nonsense." Li Zhan sat down next to Shen Peichuan and put his arm around his shoulder. "Do you have any extra room at your place?"

Shen Peichuan looked at him with caution. "What are you plotting?"

Li Zhan answered pitifully, "I'm left without a place to stay again."

When his private residence was discovered by fans, there would definitely be someone "lurking" in front of his door. He wouldn't dare stay there anymore in fear of the invasion of his privacy.

“No.” It was an outright rejection from Shen Peichuan, who treasured tranquility. As a public figure, Li Zhan had too many fans. He was afraid that he would be affected.

He wanted a quiet and safe life.

One that would not be disturbed and troubled.

Shen Peichuan stood up to leave. “Xinyan, I’ll give you a call when it’s arranged.”

Lin Xinyan nodded.

Shen Peichuan was worried that he would be tangled up in Li Zhan’s search for a room, so he quickly left.

Zong Jinghao could roughly tell the reason behind Lin Xinyan’s disturbed emotion, so he reached out to take her hand and said, “I’ll go with you.”

Lin Xinyan turned around to look at him. At that moment, she really needed someone to be with her, so she agreed.

Li Zhan, who witnessed what happened between the two people, blinked his eyes in disbelief. For a moment, he thought he was hallucinating.

He had never seen Zong Jinghao be so gentle to any woman before. Even when it was He Ruilin, the man had never shown such delicate care and gentleness.

“Err... Well, I shall leave.” Li Zhan stood up.

Zong Jinghao glanced over at him.

Li Zhan flinched at his stare, maybe because he had done something wrong and was guilty.

He was scared even though it was just a glance from Zong Jinghao.

### **Chapter 387**

“It’s time to go home.”

Li Zhan thought Zong Jinghao would scold him, but he only asked him to head home.

He was instantly relieved.

“Sure, sure.” Li Zhan smiled from the bottom of his heart.



He had not gone back home for a long time. Indeed, it was time for him to go back and take a look.

After all, Wen Qing was his father; he should also go back to see how Li Jing was doing.

Li Zhan turned to Lin Xinyan, looking like he had something to say. He wanted to explain what he said in the elevator, but Zong Jinghao was there, so it was not convenient for him to explain in detail. Forget it. I'll save it for another time.

Fortunately, he had agreed to the product endorsement requested by Lin Xinyan without asking for a price. Otherwise, it would be more awkward.

He sighed silently. This world is too small.

Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao?

Li Zhan smiled and walked into the elevator, where he happened to bump again into the man he had met when he arrived.

He saw Li Zhan alone, so he asked, "Where's your girlfriend?"

Li Zhan glared at him and replied, "Which eye of yours saw that I have a girlfriend?"

"I saw with both my eyes. You were holding hands and looking very sweet together," the man replied without thinking.

Li Zhan's expression turned fierce. "Bullshit again, and I'll gouge your eyes out."

The man was baffled. He thought Li Zhan was just kidding, but his ruthlessness at that moment didn't seem fake. How can this man change so quickly?

Li Zhan was afraid he would spread the rumors around and cause a misunderstanding.

After all, Lin Xinyan is...

He had spoken recklessly just now because he didn't know about it. Since he had already found out the truth, how could he still crack such a joke?

Fatty Long saw that Li Zhan was alone when he returned, so he blinked and asked, "How come you're alone?"

What happened to the handcuffs? How were they opened?

Without explaining, Li Zhan opened the car door and got in. "Head home."

Fatty Long knew that the relationship between Li Zhan and Wen Qing was sour. He wasn't sure what the man meant by "head home", so he asked carefully, "Back to the Wen family?"

Li Zhan looked up with a grimace on his good-looking face. "How many homes do I have?"

Fatty Long knew him very well, so he wasn't bothered by his attitude. He started the engine and drove off.

Go back to the Wen family. Well, then off we go.

That will save me some extra works, too, in addition to freeing me from worrying about the paparazzi.

The neighborhood the Wen family was staying in could not be entered by outsiders – the security was perfect.

On the other hand, Zong Jinghao and Lin Xinyan had returned to the office. The secretary came in with two glasses of water. Lin Xinyan took one of them and took a sip. "Li Zhan is Wen Qing's son?"

Even though it was a question, her tone was certain.

Zong Jinghao replied with a light "mhmm".

Lin Xinyan lowered her eyes. What a coincidence.

"Unexpectedly, Xichen's teacher is related to you." Lin Xinyan sighed with mixed emotions. What a small world.

Anywhere you go, there will always be people from the same circle.

Zong Jinghao held on to her. "What did he say to you?"

It was obvious Li Zhan had a guilty conscience. He must have said something before he found out about Lin Xinyan's identity.

Lin Xinyan turned around to look at him. Zong Jinghao was standing too close to her. Her eyelashes brushed across his face when she turned, tickling him gently. He drew himself nearer and spoke into her ears, tickling them softly, "What did he say about me?"

Lin Xinyan thought for a while and replied on purpose, "He said you're a playboy."

"Nonsense."

Lin Xinyan smiled. Her mood was previously affected by the news about Zhuang Zijin. "Did he say anything wrong?"

He held her waist and drew her closer. Lin Xinyan lost control of her body and bumped into his arms, hurting her chest. She pushed him away, but he was too rigid. His body was tough and stiff like an unmovable mountain.

His eyes were burning with ardent longing. "I only want to sleep with you.

Lin Xinyan was speechless.

Her face turned red-hot. This man...

Zong Jinghao laughed lightly and lowered his head to peck on her lips lightly. "You know what? Your blushing face is so tempting. I'm aroused just by looking at it."

She was left speechless once more.

"If you don't believe me, try it." He took her hand and put it on his groin.

Lin Xinyan was completely befuddled. This man is shameless regardless of the occasion.

And what did Li Zhan say? He does not like women?

Complete bullshit.

He's almost turning into a pervert.

Lin Xinyan pushed him again. "You need to save face."

Zong Jinghao gave her an even lighter smile, answering in a hoarse voice, "I have given you even my life. What do I need face for?"

Lin Xinyan's heart was racing, and her cheeks were flushed.

Zong Jinghao kissed her neck. "Should we try doing it once in the office?"

Boom! The burning heat spread from her face to her neck. Puffing mildly, she replied, "I'm going to get mad if you don't stop it."

Her heart was throbbing fast upon being wooed by him. However, the remaining rationality within her made it unacceptable to her to couple in daylight and even in his office.

"My mom is sick. I'm visiting her later." She deliberately changed the subject, cutting off the ambiguous atmosphere in the office.

If they carried on, something would definitely happen in this office.

Sure enough, Lin Xinyan's words had caused the previous heat to die down.

Zong Jinghao stroked her hair gently. "So this is why you were upset just now?"

Lin Xinyan nodded.

Zong Jinghao hugged her tight and comforted her, "Don't worry, I'm here. I can find her the best doctor."

Lin Xinyan lay in his arms.

She could feel her nose prickle. Growing up, no matter how much suffering she had gone through, no one had ever said "I'm here." to her.

Yes. He's here. She had plunged too deeply in his affection.

She doted on him so much.

Buzz buzz—

The phone in Lin Xinyan's pocket was vibrating.

She took it out and saw Shen Peichuan's number on the caller screen.

The two looked at each other and knew that this call signified that the arrangement to visit Zhuang Zijin had been done.

Lin Xinyan answered the phone, and it was as expected. "It's been arranged. You may come now."

Lin Xinyan agreed.

After hanging up the call, Zong Jinghao spoke before she could say anything, "I'll go with you."

Lin Xinyan nodded.

Zong Jinghao smoothed out her collar, which had been crumpled by him earlier when he held her. After that, Zong Jinghao walked out of the office with his arm around her.

This was the first time she had appeared in the company since Zong Jinghao announced her identity.

When they didn't know about her, the staff were very curious.

And now, they were all the more interested. What kind of a woman would Zong Jinghao so dearly treasure?

A woman who was able to deal with Zong Jinghao must be really something.

When everyone saw Zong Jinghao coming out with her in his arms, they were all respectful and even more inquisitive at the same time.

“Mrs. Zong.” After knowing her identity, it was impossible to address her like how they used to.

To show their respect, they must greet her accordingly.

Lin Xinyan smiled in reply, not being overly modest or pretentious, but decent and elegant.

Someone was bold enough to ask, “President Zong, are there no wedding candies for us?”

Zong Jinghao smiled. “I’ll make up for that next time.”

He walked into the elevator with Lin Xinyan in his arms.

Coming out of the elevator, they got in the car. Zong Jinghao was driving while Lin Xinyan sat in the passenger seat. The latter leaned back, touching the necklace which had been passed to her by Zong Jinghao from Zhuang Zijin.

Zong Jinghao had one hand on the steering wheel, and he reached out to hold hers with the other.

Lin Xinyan turned around

### **Chapter 388**

She felt warm and fuzzy, delighted that someone was there to give her strength when she needed it most. She let out a small smile.

Twenty minutes later, someone arrived at B City’s penitentiary, a looming fortress built in the middle of nowhere. Its steel gates were tough, imposing, and impenetrable.

The last time Lin Xinyan was here to see Zhuang Zijin, her sentence wasn’t out yet.

As he stood before the gates, Lin Xinyan could feel his heart tremble. Her mother was right behind these gates, locked up for her crimes, doomed to have a stain on their life after she was released, like all the ex-cons. From then on, society would look at her like she was trash.

Zong Jinghao stood beside her, holding her freezing hand. “Let’s go in.”

Lin Xinyan nodded in assent.

Shen Peichuan was waiting for them at the guard's pitstop. When they came, he went to welcome them and led them inside. Thanks to Shen Peichuan, nobody stopped them when they entered.

Zhuang Zijin was placed in a solitary meeting cell with nobody standing guard outside. It was the perfect place to meet Lin Xinyan alone. Well, as perfect as a jail cell could be.

They went past the corridor, where layer after layer of steel doors awaited them, but finally, they reached their destination.

"She's in there," Shen Peichuan said.

Lin Xinyan took a deep breath, preparing herself mentally one last time before the meeting. She looked back at Zong Jinghao. "I'm fine. Let me meet her alone."

Zong Jinghao pursed his lips. He didn't like the idea, but still, he let her go. "I'll be waiting outside then."

"Thanks." She went to the door and took another deep breath. She then opened the door.

The room was stark. There was one fluorescent light on the ceiling and a rectangular table in the middle in the full white room. Aside from Lin Xinyan, there was only one other person there—Zhuang Zijin. She was sitting behind the table. When Lin Xinyan entered, the woman looked up.

The sight of her mother made Lin Xinyan's heart skip. Contrary to the old her, she was gaunt. Her face had darkened and she had visibly aged. Lin Xinyan used to think she looked young for her age, but not after she saw her this time.

"You're here." Zhuang Zijin smiled.

Lin Xinyan sat on the chair across from her and stared at her mother's face. "I missed you."

Zhuang Zijin's started crying, but she quickly wiped her tears away. She missed her children too. Ever since they were born, she was always there for them. Never once did she get separated from them for this long.

"I heard you're sick." Lin Xinyan thought she would be crying inconsolably when they met, but her resilience proved to be stronger than she thought.

Zhuang Zijin wiped her tears away. "I'm fine. I think I know my condition the best."

"But you don't look fine. Let's take you to the hospital for a checkup."

“I am fine, girl. I just—” Zhuang Zijin covered her mouth and started coughing.

“You’re going to the hospital today,” Lin Xinyan stated adamantly.

Every time she coughed, Zhuang Zijin could feel her chest bursting in pain. She calmed herself down after another bout of coughing before asking, “I want to see Ruixi and Xichen before that.”

She knew her body better than anyone. Even though she never went for a checkup, Zhuang Zijin could feel herself slowly wasting away. She knew her days were numbered, but she wasn’t afraid. She did have one regret though – not being able to see her grandkids grow up.

Lin Xinyan agreed to her request. “I’ll ask Shen Peichuan to do it. You’ll see them today.” She then left the room and saw Shen Peichuan talking to Zong Jinghao.

It was about the case of the deputy mayor’s crime – everyone involved had been arrested. “Don’t worry. Nobody can pull anything now,” Shen Peichuan reassured.

Zong Jinghao was worried that someone might get back at them. Even though all traces of Lin Xichen had been erased, she did see Lin Xinyan before her arrest.

That woman didn’t know that Lin Xichen was the one who had uploaded the video, but she knew her confrontation with Lin Xinyan started the whole ordeal, so she would try to get back at Lin Xinyan.

However, Lin Xinyan had reacted calmly and tried to call the police, so she had no choice but to hide. She had never expected the police to locate her hiding place that quickly.

“Those guys are doubling down on crime and corruption, so he’s unlucky to be arrested this time. They aren’t going to let him off easily.” The light overhead shone on Zong Jinghao, creating a long, slender shadow behind him.

They didn’t notice Lin Xinyan come out until she called out to Shen Peichuan.

They looked back at her, and she closed the door before coming up to them. “I need your help.” She looked at Shen Peichuan expectantly.

“Anything you need,” Shen Peichuan replied readily.

“I want to take her with me on a little excursion.” Lin Xinyan couldn’t bring the kids here, but she needed her mother to get a checkup.

The woman looked gaunt and pasty, almost deathly even. Lin Xinyan was worried for her health.

Shen Peichuan had asked her to come for this visit to persuade Zhuang Zijin to go for a checkup, so he had prepared for this. “You can take her for the checkup right away,” he said.

“Thank you,” she thanked him genuinely.

“Don’t mention it.” He smiled. Zong Jinghao was his buddy, so helping him this much wasn’t a problem.

Lin Xinyan took Zhuang Zijin back home with her that very same day, and she called Cheng Yuxiu to ask if the kids were at home.

She was worried Cheng Yuxiu might take the kids on some fun trip since that would mean Zhuang Zijin wouldn’t see them when they got home.

“They are. Do you want to see them?” she asked.

“Yeah, and my mother too. I am bringing her back.”

Cheng Yuxiu could understand why. “I see. I’ll make the arrangements then.”

“Thank you.” Lin Xinyan hung up after that.

A short while later, they returned to the Zong residence. Zhuang Zijin knew this was Zong Jinghao’s villa, though it was her first time coming here.

The fact she was a convict made her feel inferior, but Lin Xinyan went to hold her arm reassuringly. “This is where your kids live. Feel at home.”

As Zhuang Zijin looked at her daughter and Zong Jinghao, she teared up. “Thank you.”

Thank you for giving my daughter a home.

Zong Jinghao still looked stoic as ever, and he pushed a strand of hair out of Lin Xinyan’s face. “I should be the one thanking you for entrusting your daughter to me.”

Lin Xinyan smiled. She loved it when he was gentle.

Zhuang Zijin was happy to see her daughter smiling in bliss. Her last, lingering concern was finally gone. Lin Xinyan and her husband seemed loving, and that was all she wanted – for her daughter to find a good husband, and for her kids to grow up safely.

The villa’s door groaned open, and out came Cheng Yuxiu. “Come in, you guys. We’ll be alone. Most of the guys aren’t here.”

Zong Qifeng and the servants had gone out thanks to Cheng Yuxiu, so only the kids were in the villa. Zhuang Zijin was thankful for that. She didn’t want too many people to be around, for being a convict was shameful.

“Thank you.”



“Don’t mention it. We’re family.” Cheng Yuxiu gazed at Zhuang Zijin. “If anyone should be saying thank you, it’s me. You raised a good daughter.”

### **Chapter 389**

Lin Xinyan was married to Zong Jinghao, and she bore children for him. Zhuang Zijin was younger than Cheng Yuxiu, but she looked older in comparison. As fate would decree, Zhuang Zijin didn’t marry a good husband when she was young, and her life had been miserable. After coming back, she chose to embark on a path of darkness.

Cheng Yuxiu’s early life wasn’t easy, but after marrying Zong Qifeng, she at least had some security in life. Compared to Zhuang Zijin, she had it easier.

Her son eventually became successful and had his own family, so there were no regrets left for her. “Come in. They must have been waiting,” Cheng Yuxiu invited her in. She must be dying to see the kids.

Lin Xinyan chimed in, “Let’s go in, mom.”

Zhuang Zijin nodded. Instead of going with them, Cheng Yuxiu went out alone. She knew it must be hard for Zhuang Zijin to meet the children since she was a convict.

And for the first time, Zong Jinghao looked directly at Cheng Yuxiu. So she’s actually decent, huh? I guess the only thing she did wrong was marry my father at the wrong time. Then he looked away.

The first thing that greeted them after coming in was the living room, where the children were in. Cheng Yuxiu must have told them their grandmother would be coming today, so they had been waiting right there. Once Zhuang Zijin made her appearance, they darted toward her.

“I’ve missed you, grandma.” Her grandchildren hugged her legs and rubbed their faces against them.

Zhuang Zijin immediately teared up. She stared down at the children and patted their heads. “I’ve missed you too.”

Thanks to the Zongs’ meticulous care, the children seemed to have grown taller. Lin Xichen was growing to be a spitting image of his father. He’s a handsome little boy. On the other hand, Lin Ruixi looked like her mother.

Zhuang Zijin wanted to pick them up, but they had grown to be a bit too heavy for her.

Lin Xichen held her hand. "Come in, grandma."

"Grandma, what took you so long?" Lin Ruixi grumbled. "Did you forget about us?"

Zhuang Zijin caressed Lin Ruixi's face. "I didn't, my dear girl. I've watched over you for as long as I could. You were only this big when you were born." Zhuang Zijin gesticulated. "Just like a kitten, you see. Now you're all grown up, and I can't even hold you anymore."

Lin Ruixi giggled and lingered around her grandmother. "Grandma keeps feeding me my favorite food, so I've been growing quickly." She pinched her face.

Lin Ruixi's face was perfectly smooth and chubby, her eyes big and bright. Oh, she looks so cute. They've been taken good care of.

She gazed at the children. "I'm happy knowing you kids are living well."

Lin Ruixi leaned against her arms. "We have a big house here, grandma. Why don't you stay with us too?"

Zhuang Zijin's heart skipped a beat. If she hadn't been overwhelmed by her hate, she would have been living with her grandchildren by now, watching over them as they grew up.

She didn't regret her actions even when Lin Xinyan cried in front of her, but everything came undone after seeing her grandchildren.

She hugged Lin Ruixi tightly. If she could, she wanted to stay with them, but alas.

"Here, grandma." Lin Xichen peeled a banana and handed it to Zhuang Zijin. He knew his grandmother loved bananas.

She took it from him and hugged him tightly. She wanted to cry, but she held her tears back, not wishing her grandchildren to see her break down.

Ever since they came in, Lin Xinyan never moved from the doorstep. Even though the sight before her was supposed to be heartwarming, it felt heavy and brooding.

Zong Jinghao hugged her. "It'll get better." He caressed her arm, consoling her.

Zhuang Zijin had been sentenced for accidental injury, and since it was the talk of the town back then, Zhuang Zijin had to be imprisoned, but it wouldn't be for too long. She would be on parole and get released in a year or two.

Lin Xinyan knew that, but she still prayed for her health. She still wanted to spend many years with her mother.

She leaned against him tightly, hugging him. "I love you so much." That was the first time she expressed her love in such a straightforward manner.

Zong Jinghao leaned down and kissed her forehead while she closed her eyes to feel his touch.

Zhuang Zijin saw what they were doing through the floor tiles' reflection, and she smiled, feeling happy for her daughter.

Zong Jinghao was a mature, responsible, and successful man. He was also nice to Lin Xinyan; she didn't have to worry about her happiness.

Zhuang Zijin spent a couple of hours with her grandchildren before Lin Xinyan came up to call her. If they didn't hurry, the hospital would close for the day. "This is it for today."

Lin Xichen looked at his mother. "Is grandma leaving again?"

Before Lin Xinyan could answer, Zhuang Zijin said, "I'm going to a place that's far, far away, and I don't think I can come back anytime soon. This is goodbye then, children."

"Can't you stay, grandma?" Lin Ruixi tugged on the hem of her shirt.

Zhuang Zijin looked down and cupped the young girl's face before she kissed her forehead. "I'll miss you, cupcake, but I have to go, just like how you have to go to school."

Her grandmother's message flew over Lin Ruixi's head, but she didn't want Zhuang Zijin to go. She was worried this might be the last time they met. The girl felt a special bond with her grandmother, for the woman had taken care of her when she was a baby.

"Be good, children. Don't make your mother angry." Zhuang Zijin gazed at her grandchildren.

Lin Xichen nodded. "We'll take care of mommy, grandma. When I grow up, I'll take care of you too."

Zhuang Zijin smiled. Still as precocious as ever. Then she stood up. No matter how reluctant she was, leaving was necessary. If she stayed here for even a moment longer, it'd be that much harder to say goodbye. "Goodbye, children."

Lin Ruixi stood before the sofa and saw her grandmother off. "Don't forget to come back, grandma."

"Of course." Zhuang Zijin smiled.

Since there wasn't anyone else at home, Lin Xinyan asked Zong Jinghao to stay back and look after the kids. "I can do this."

Zong Jinghao handed her the car keys. "Call me if you need anything."

"Sure." She took the keys and went out with Zhuang Zijin.

After getting into the car, Zhuang Zijin stated, "I don't want to go to the hospital."

Lin Xinyan stopped halfway through buckling herself up. "No," she refused. "You have to go. Don't you see how sick you look? What if you're down with something? It's better if you get a checkup and get yourself treated."

Zhuang Zijin held her daughter's shoulders. "I'm glad you care about me this much, Xinyan."

Lin Xinyan looked away to hide her tears from her mother, and she revved the car up. "If you really think so, then get yourself checked. I want you to stay with me for a long, long time." She drove away, and Zhuang Zijin didn't say anything further.

After stopping at the hospital, somebody walked toward Lin Xinyan's car.

### **Chapter 390**

"Mrs. Zong." Guan Jing opened the car door for Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan was startled by the man's appearance. "What are you doing here?"

"Mr. Zong ordered me to come," Guan Jing answered.

Zong Jinghao had instructed Guan Jing to come to the hospital and set up an appointment with a medical specialist for Zhuang Zijin. Hence, there was no need for her to queue.

"Come with me. I've already made an appointment for you," Guan Jing said and led the way.

Lin Xinyan held on to Zhuang Zijin and followed him into the hospital. Instead of queueing downstairs, they headed up to the outpatient hall. At that moment, several people were seated at the lounge. Guan Jing went straight into the doctor's room and had a few words with the doctor before letting Zhuang Zijin into the room.

Zhuang Zijin did not have much time to spare when she was out of prison, which was why her medical checkup had to be done quickly.

Guan Jing had spoken to the Dean of the hospital and made necessary arrangements earlier on. Therefore, Zhuang Zijin was attended to immediately after a word with the doctor.

Zhuang Zijin was very cooperative. However, she requested to be alone with the doctor in the consultation room.

She wouldn't even allow Lin Xinyan to be in there with her.

"Mom, why can't I be in there with you?" Lin Xinyan was puzzled and asked, "Are you hiding something from me?"

"What's there for me to hide from you?" Zhuang Zijin looked at her daughter nonchalantly. "Don't you know that others do not know of my identity? I only ask to have a one-on-one consultation with the doctor about my condition. Haven't I come to the hospital with you? What more can I hide?"

"That's not what I meant," Lin Xinyan tried to explain.

"Well then, you can wait outside," Zhuang Zijin said plainly, showing no signs of anger. But, she had a rather uncomfortable look on her face.

Lin Xinyan did not argue with her any further and walked out of the room.

As of now, Zhuang Zijin was laden with guilt. Lin Xinyan had thought she was only willing to come out because she was under an emotional burden.

When the door shut, Zhuang Zijin sat on a chair and faced the doctor. "I'm sorry for taking up your time."

The doctor replied, "That's what I'm here for."

"I know my body well." Zhuang Zijin was willing to come to the hospital because she wanted Lin Xinyan to be at ease. "I have an older brother who died of lung cancer."

The doctor made a note of Zhuang Zijin's family medical history. "What about your parents?"

"My dad too."

Which was why she guessed that she could be having cancer when she started feeling unwell.

The doctor looked at her and asked, "In other words, you suspect that you might have it too?"

Zhuang Zijin nodded her head.

"The woman who was with me just now is my daughter. I don't want her to know about this. So, in the event the result comes out positive, could you give her a copy of a falsified negative test result?"

The doctor did not dare call the shots, having no other choice but to agree. "I can do that."

"Then I will write you a medical report." The doctor started making notes on various report forms.

"How soon will the result be out?" Zhuang Zijin asked.

The doctor thought over her question. There were going to be numerous checks involved due to her suspicion of having cancer. Some of the reports could take a while to be out, but considering what they had discussed earlier, they could speed up the test results for her. "At least a week."

"No matter what the result is, please give my daughter a copy of a result stating that I am in good health," Zhuang Zijin reminded the doctor again.

The doctor nodded and handed her the report forms. "You can go for the checkup now."

Zhuang Zijin took the forms from the doctor and nodded. "Thank you."

She opened the door and stepped out. Lin Xinyan was waiting for her right outside the room.

Upon seeing Zhuang Zijin exiting the room, she walked over quickly.

Zhuang Zijin smiled lightly and said, "The doctor said there's nothing serious and has asked to proceed for a checkup. Let's go, come with me for the checkup."

Lin Xinyan nodded.

Guan Jing followed behind them. Since she had the appointment, she was given priority for the checkup. Firstly, she went to get her blood drawn and then an X-ray.

The checkup itself took two hours to complete.

All they had to do now was to wait for the result.

"You can go back first. I will collect the report forms," Guan Jing said.

Lin Xinyan thought about the suggestion for a while. It made no difference if Guan Jing or herself were to collect the result.

“Alright, let’s go back then.”

Lin Xinyan left with Zhuang Zijin.

Guan Jing waited for a medical report that was to be released on the same day. Just as he was about to collect the report, he bumped into the doctor who had consulted Zhuang Zijin.

Not intending to hide the truth, the doctor decided to have a talk with him.

“I’d like to talk to you about the patient just now.”

Guan Jing froze in his tracks and asked, “What about her?”

“The patient suspects she has cancer. Both her father and her brother had a history of this disease. Moreover, her brother died of it. So, it’s likely she has inherited the cancer gene,” the doctor said.

“So it’s hereditary?” Guan Jing asked solemnly.

The doctor replied gravely, “If she’s tested positive, then the hereditary rate is high.”

Guan Jing nodded.

He now understood why Zhuang Zijin had dismissed Lin Xinyan in the doctor’s room.

“One more thing, she asked to hide this from her daughter...”

“I understand. I will handle it,” Guan Jing stated.

“Good.” The doctor turned to leave. “I have patients waiting for me, so I’ll take my leave now.”

“Thank you,” Guan Jing said.

The doctor inserted both hands into the white coat’s large pockets and walked towards the consultation room.

Guan Jing walked to the stairwell, knowing that there were no people there and it was quiet. He began to make a phone call to Zong Jinghao.

He had to inform Zong Jinghao about this, regardless of the outcome.

Zong Jinghao leaned back on the sofa, and Lin Ruixi sat facing him on his chest. Her small hands hooked around his neck as she talked to him.

“Daddy, can grandma stay here the next time she comes over?”

The little girl cocked her head to the side, looking serious.

Zong Jinghao pinched her small nose. “Anything you say.”

“Then grandma will stay with me. This way, I can be with everyone, and I will be the happiest kid in the world.”

Just then, Zong Jinghao’s phone rang.

One hand around his daughter, he took out his phone with the other hand. Guan Jing’s name was displayed on the screen. He answered the call and held the phone to his ear.

“Mrs. Zong has left with Zhuang Zijin,” Guan Jing reported.

Zong Jinghao responded in acknowledgment.

“Zhuang Zijin...” Guan Jing did not know how to break the news. “She has a family history of inherited cancer genes. If she’s tested positive for cancer, it would mean that the hereditary rate is high. That would mean, Mrs. Zong...”

If it was hereditary, then Lin Xinyan... and her children...

Zong Jinghao gripped the phone tightly. This was an unexpected piece of news.

“I understand.” His voice was deep and rueful.

This was not the worst of it. If Zhuang Zijin’s tested to be cancer-free, it may not be hereditary at all.

They could only wait for the test results to be out.

Zong Jinghao hung up and set the phone aside. He hooked his index finger under his daughter’s chin, carefully studying her face. She had a pair of bright eyes, clear and gleaming like stars. Her skin was white like porcelain dolls.

He kissed his daughter’s forehead and held her in his arms.

She’s my angel. God won’t be so cruel as to take away their health.

“Daddy...”