

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 891

The weather was perfect today. She strolled down the path on the street for a very long time. It was not until her legs could no longer take her weight did she call for a taxi back to the hotel.

The taxi stopped at the entrance of the hotel, and she paid the driver before getting off.

Ling Wei smiled as she greeted Zong Yanxi the moment she walked into the hotel lobby.
"Ms. Lin."

Zong Yanxi was astonished by her appearance at this place.

"Are you here to talk to me about work?" She asked.

Ling Wei smiled. "No. I just wanted to invite Ms. Lin to witness something exciting."

Zong Yanxi's heart skipped a beat. This woman was not a kind one, not to mention how fake she was. She used to play the role of a pure and innocent little girl in front of me.

But in the end, she was utterly vicious when she wanted to take my life!

She was definitely someone that needs to be guarded against!

"We're barely acquainted." Zong Yanxi rejected her offer.

Who knew if Ling Wei has something up her sleeve?

"Oh, it's always good to make new friends. We'll be seeing a lot of each other in the office from now on. We'll be like family! You've just arrived at B City, so I'm sure that there's a lot of things you're not yet familiar with. Especially places where you can go to relax. I'm inviting

you so that I can help you relax and unwind.” Ling Wei’s heels clicked as she stalked closer to Zong Yanxi. She stopped at a distance less than a meter away from her and leaned in close. “You seem to be avoiding me, Ms. Lin?”

“I have no grudges against you. Why would I avoid you?” Zong Yanxi smiled faintly as she spoke. “With how passionate you are with your invitation, I should be the one asking what you’re up to.”

“I think there’s been a misunderstanding between us, Ms. Lin.” Ling Wei explained. “I am sincere in my invitation. From the way you are rejecting me, though, it seems like you don’t trust me.”

Zong Yanxi scoffed. “I don’t even trust myself.”

How was she supposed to trust anyone?

Much less someone who had once brought harm upon her?

It was then when a thought suddenly popped into her mind. Could it be that she still was bribing people to hurt me?

Though, she didn’t have a reason to, did she?

Not to mention that I am currently representing Rui Mei to seal a collaboration with the Hengkang Group.

“I’ve still got work to do.” Zong Yanxi stalked toward the elevator after excusing herself.

“Ms. Lin.”

Ling Wei turned around and looked at her. “I’m here to tell you to watch your actions.”

“What are you trying to say?” Zong Yanxi was genuinely confused.

“Do you really think that I didn’t see you purposely approaching Jiang Mohan during the charity banquet the other night?” Ling Wei’s expression was hard and cold. “Anyone who dares covet him will be faced with a horrible plight.”

A revelation hit Zong Yanxi. Ling Wei was referring to that incident that had occurred at the entrance of the banquet. So she saw me deliberately sprain my ankle to fall into Jiang Mohan's arms.

"I wasn't planning on trying anything until you said that. But now that I think about it, President Jiang is indeed a fine man. He's handsome and prestigious. I think I'm fairly fond of him. Thanks for the reminder!" She smiled. "President Jiang isn't married to you, anyway, so that makes me fair in the game, right?"

Ling Wei looked about ready to blow up and bellowed at her. "How dare you!"

"He's unmarried. I'm single. Why am I not allowed to chase him? Why won't I dare?" She purposely dug out her phone. "Why don't we give President Jiang a call and ask him if it's alright for me to pursue him?"

"You..." Ling Wei pointed at her. She had lost her arrogant aura and was now looking like a bird whose feathers got ruffled. Lin Ruixi's attitude had far surpassed her expectations.

"I'm not sure if President Jiang knows of your actions." She deliberately dialed a number in the pretense of making a call, but Ling Wei rushed over and slapped her phone out of her hand. Her phone slammed onto the floor with a loud bang, and the screen cracked from the impact.

Zong Yanxi stood rooted to the ground as she stared at her phone with a cracked screen. Her eyebrows twitched. "I've recently bought this mobile phone. It's fairly new."

"How much?" Ling Wei grabbed her wallet out from her bag. "I'll compensate you."

"I don't want your compensation. I want you to pick my phone up and hand it back to me." Zong Yanxi's expression darkened.

"Hmph." Ling Wei mocked with disdain. "I'm not picking that up for you!"

And with that, she turned around and promptly left.

Zong Yanxi bent down to pick up her phone and stared at the screen that was now cracked. She kept a poker face and stalked over to the reception counter instead of heading up to her room. "Are there surveillance monitors in the lobby?"

"Yes." The receptionist replied.

She dug out a wad of cash from her wallet and placed it on the marble counter. "Send me a copy of the footage of the conversation that I just had with that woman."

"Well..."

"I'm a guest at your hotel. Something bad just happened to me while I was inside your hotel. All I want is some evidence. What's wrong with that?" Zong Yanxi questioned solemnly.

The standard protocol in their hotel involved never leaking any information of their Group to the public. The receptionist picked up the phone. "I'll ask my manager."

Zong Yanxi waited patiently.

It didn't take long before the hotel manager rushed out. "What's wrong?"

The receptionist had witnessed the whole scene between Zong Yanxi and Ling Wei. Thus, she began explaining the situation. "There was a woman who got into a conflict with our guest. The woman broke the mobile phone of this lady over here, and thus she is requesting for a copy of our footage."

The manager gave it some thought. "I'm sorry, miss. Our hotel has rules and conducts to follow. However, seeing as it was the other party who had caused damage to your mobile phone, it only makes sense for me to provide you with the evidence. Please hold on. I'll get someone to send you a copy of the footage."

"Thank you very much," Zong Yanxi politely replied.

The manager flashed her a professional smile. "It is within our duty to maximize the benefit for our guests."

The manager picked up the landline at the reception area and dialed out. While waiting for the call to go through, he looked up at Zong Yanxi. "Could you leave a mobile phone number for us, please?"

The receptionist offered her a pen and a piece of paper.

Zong Yanxi jotted down her number on the paper.

She handed the stationery back after she was done. The manager glanced at the paper at the same moment that the call went through. He raised his head to look at Zong Yanxi and asked, "When did the incident happen?"

"Just now," Zong Yanxi replied.

The manager cast a glance at his watch. "Please get me a copy of the surveillance monitors' footage between twelve and one in the afternoon. There should be a scene involving a conflict between two ladies. Send it over to this number." The manager read out the phone number written on the paper.

The manager hung up the phone after the person on the other end expressed his acknowledgment. "Is there anything else that we can do for you, miss?" He asked politely.

Zong Yanxi shook her head. "That will be all. Thank you."

She received a message on her mobile phone after a short while. She clicked on the link and viewed the footage through her web browser.

She exited the hotel and flagged a taxi to head to the Hengkang Group, bringing her phone with her.

It didn't take her long to reach the lobby of the Group's office building, and she got out of the taxi after paying the fee.

The Hengkang Group and Rui Mei were collaborative partners, and as a representative for Rui Mei, Zong Yanxi was no stranger within the Hengkang Group. Thus, the receptionist smiled upon seeing her walking into the building.

"I'm here to see President Jiang." Zong Yanxi stated briefly.

The receptionist smiled. "Sure." She made a call to the president's office line and it didn't take long for Jiang Mohan to pick up.

"Yes?"

"Ms. Lin is here to see you."

Jiang Mohan didn't think of Zong Yanxi at first. Perhaps it was because they had just met up for lunch, so he didn't think that she'll want to see him so soon. "Which Ms. Lin?" He asked.

"The representative from Rui Mei, Ms. Lin Ruixi."

Jiang Mohan closed his eyes briefly. "Let her into my office."

The receptionist hung up the phone. "Ms. Lin, please head inside. President Jiang is waiting for you in his office."

Zong Yanxi nodded and stalked toward the elevator. She quickly reached the top level where Jiang Mohan's office was located.

The elevator halted to a stop, and its doors opened with a ding. She walked down the corridor toward Jiang Mohan's office and raised her hand to knock upon reaching the entrance.

A voice sounded out from inside of the office. "Come in." Zong Yanxi then pushed the door open and walked in.

Hearing her footsteps, Jiang Mohan raised his head. He shut the document that he was vetting mid-way and leaned back on his chair. "Ms. Lin, are you here to see me because you've finished the proposal for the project?"

"I said I'll hand that to you within a month. The time is not up yet, is it?" She pulled out a chair in front of the desk and slid into it. "President Jiang, I've come here today to ask for an explanation from you."

"Oh? Tell me more." Jiang Mohan was curious. His lips curled into a smile due to his interest in the topic, but his demeanor remained unapproachable.

He was cold and indifferent.

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"I would like to show you something, President Jiang." Zong Yanxi fished out her mobile phone and played the footage on it for him.

Jiang Mohan's gaze was lowered and glued onto the phone screen. His eyebrows furrowed. He seemed to have heard Lin Ruixi saying that she wanted to pursue him and was shocked to find that he was delighted by that information.

"Are all of the Hengkang Group's employees so overbearing? I've received a warning from one of them for no apparent reason. I think I'll need an explanation from you, President Jiang. Else, there'll be a need to put aside our collaboration matters for a while."

Jiang Mohan nonchalantly rested one of his arms on the desk. "I don't think this should affect our collaboration."

"I wouldn't be too sure about that if I were you, President Jiang. I represent Rui Mei. Our companies are business partners, but one of Rui Mei's employees has been bullied by your company's employees. Don't you think that I deserve an explanation?" She leaned forward and closed in the distance between them. "This woman seems to be very fond of you, President Jiang. Does she send out warnings like this to every single woman who interacts with you? Or perhaps, you actually enjoy being adored and admired? Is that why you are closing one eye on this matter? If that is the case, then I'll have nothing to say. I'll just take it that I've had a bad day."

Zong Yanxi pulled herself up from her seat upon finishing her speech. She grabbed her phone from the desk. "I've seen the attitude of Hengkang's employees. It seems like I wouldn't be able to interact with you any longer, President Jiang. Else, there'll sure be someone chasing after me to send out warnings. I'll contact my company today. It seems like we'll need to delay our collaboration."

She turned on her heel to leave.

“Wait.”

Jiang Mohan stopped her. “Ms. Lin, please wait a moment.”

He walked out from behind his desk. “I never said that I wouldn’t do you justice, Ms. Lin. Why the temper?”

Zong Yanxi whipped her head around.

“How are you planning to settle this, President Jiang?” Zong Yanxi tilted her chin up, emitting an aggressive aura.

This personality...

Jiang Mohan withdrew all his expressions but remained on his path toward her. He pulled in the distance between them, and Zong Yanxi took a step back instinctively. Jiang Mohan didn’t seem like he was ready to let her off just yet, and he continued in his paces toward her. Zong Yanxi had to back away from him as a last resort as he slowly got closer and closer to her.

Jiang Mohan grabbed her wrist and dragged her toward him in one swift movement. Zong Yanxi hastily took a step toward him but shot out her hand and placed it against his chest. She forcefully calmed down her racing heart and chided him coldly. “What are you trying to do?”

“I’ll give you a satisfactory explanation for all the injustice that you’ve faced, Ms. Lin. But before that, I’ll need an explanation from you.” His gaze lowered toward her soft and delicate hands. Zong Yanxi could feel his heart beating against her fingers. His chest felt as solid as it had been before. She curled her fingers, pulling back her hand, and averted his gaze. “What explanation do you need from me, President Jiang?”

Jiang Mohan’s voice deepened. “Were you being serious when you said that you wanted to pursue me, Ms. Lin?”

Zong Yanxi was speechless.

She only wanted to get on the nerves of Ling Wei. Pursue him?

Hmph! He'll have to wait a thousand years for that to happen!

She lifted her gaze to him and played dumb. "When did I say that?"

"How bad is your memory, Ms. Lin?" Jiang Mohan pressed his body closer toward her. "Do you need me to help you regain your memories, Ms. Lin?"

Zong Yanxi felt his hot breath against her cheeks. The familiarity in that feeling made her nervous, but it was only in the slightest. She was no longer intimidated by him. Her heart was no longer uncontrollably palpitating because of him. Her heart would no longer beat wildly from just receiving a light kiss from him.

She was suddenly reminded of their first kiss. It was a rainy day. That day, he sent her all the way back home and kissed her by the door.

She was so excited that she barely slept the whole night.

It was her who first fell in love. He thought that he was the one that had caused her to fall in love with him, but he was wrong. He thought that it was all according to his plans, but he didn't know that she had really given him everything.

If I hadn't been in love with him, how would I have allowed him to easily win over my heart? How would I have trusted him so much? It was because of love. It was because I really loved him, that's why I was willing to gather all my courage and offer him my whole heart. That's why I was willing to give him everything and stand next to him through it all.

"I dislike being threatened. That's why I said those words. You can treat it as a joke, President Jiang." Zong Yanxi's expression was calm and collected. From the moment he told her that he had never loved her, she dug out all her love for him and threw it away. The only thing they had left between them was hate.

"Are you telling me that you were lying, Ms. Lin?" He took a step back and kept his voice as cold as ice.

Zong Yanxi glared back at him. "What was I supposed to say? Do you expect me to agree with her words? Apologize to her? Promise her that I'll never interact with you again? We have a business contract, President Jiang. There will be too many occasions for us to interact with each other in the future. Do you expect me to break our contract just because of that warning she issued out to me?"

Jiang Mohan frowned. Damn this woman. Why is she so good at arguing?

"Could you please let go of me, President Jiang? I wouldn't want that admirer of yours to catch this scene. She'll probably skin me alive."

Jiang Mohan gradually let her go. He didn't know why he felt so empty and disappointed.

"How do you want this to be settled then, Ms. Lin?" He shifted back into his seat behind the desk.

"I want an apology. I want her to apologize to me in public," Zong Yanxi said.

"I'll pay for a new mobile phone to replace the one that's been damaged, Ms. Lin. As for the apology..."

"I demand an apology!" Zong Yanxi remained firm in her attitude. "I'm here to work. I'm not here to get threatened by people."

Jiang Mohan stared at her for a few seconds. "You've lied to me as well, Ms. Lin. Don't you think you'll have to apologize to me too?"

"What have I lied to you about?"

"About how you want to pursue me and about how you seem to like me."

Zong Yanxi was speechless.

She frowned. "I've already explained the situation..."

"No matter what reason it was for, it doesn't change the fact that you've lied." Jiang Mohan's expression was solemn. He seemed displeased.

Seeing his expression, Zong Yanxi clenched her fists. Is this because he couldn't bear for Ling Wei to be humiliated?

Is he... in love with Ling Wei?

"I understand now. I wasn't aware of how much you liked her, President Jiang. Since you're so infatuated with her, why haven't you married her? Must you publicly display your affection for her in this manner? Fine. I'll take it that I've had bad luck today. As for the new mobile phone, I have the money to buy one myself. I don't need you to pay for it, President Jiang."

She turned on her heel to leave the moment she finished her speech.

"Ms. Lin, if you continue being so stubborn, no one will want to love you." Jiang Mohan sounded out.

Zong Yanxi snapped her head around. "Well, I'm sorry to disappoint you, President Jiang. I do have admirers. Beauty is in the eyes of the beholder, after all. President Jiang may not like me, but there are people out there who are fond of me."

She was once the target of many pursuers, but alas, she chose someone who didn't hold real feelings for her.

Jiang Mohan didn't know why these words sounded so sharp to his ears. His voice came out cold as he spoke. "Ms. Lin, I thought you've just fallen out of love?"

"I've fallen out of love, but I haven't given up on it. I've dumped that trash of a man, but I'll find myself a better one." Zong Yanxi stared right into the eyes of Jiang Mohan. "Since you have the intention to cover up and refuse to ask that lady to apologize to me, then I have nothing left to say. Once again, I'll take it that I've had a bad day. President Jiang, if you have anything else you need to tell me, please make it quick. I've got things to attend to and haven't got the time to play games with you here."

Jiang Mohan stared at her solemnly for a few seconds. Her personality was just like hers.

She used to be like this too, unwilling to let herself suffer at a disadvantage.

She wouldn't go around finding trouble, but she'll also never let herself get bullied.

I had once thought that she was a stubborn mule and that she had been pampered and sheltered by her family while she grew up. Now that I think about it, she was being realistic. In front of me, she had never hidden a shred of herself. She had presented herself sincerely. She had given me everything.

Why is it that every time I look at Lin Ruixi, I'll think of her?

He massaged his temples and lowered his voice. "Hold on a second."

He pressed his intercom button on his phone which was connected with the secretary's desk. "Inform Ms. Ling to come over to my office."

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He hung up the call. "Ms. Lin, you've come all the way here for the project. You are still unfamiliar with the surroundings and people in this area. As your business partner, I have a duty to ensure that you aren't bullied or threatened under my care."

Zong Yanxi stood by the door and looked at him. "Aren't you afraid that she'll get into a fight with you?"

"I'm not in a relationship with her." He regretted those words the minute they left his lips. Why do I need to explain myself to her?

He chided himself for acting on impulse and massaged his temples. I hate not being in control of my emotions.

Zong Yanxi walked over, pulled a chair out, and sat back down.

Knock knock.

At that moment, a knock sounded outside the office door. Ling Wei was dressed in her professional business attire and had her makeup delicately done. She was elated when she received the call from the secretary, and a bright smile was plastered on her face as she opened the door. Upon seeing Zong Yanxi in the office, however, her smile froze on her lips.

"President Jiang." She cast a sideward glance at Lin Ruixi before fixating her eyes onto Jiang Mohan. "Is there anything I can do for you?"

"You went to look for Ms. Lin today?" Jiang Mohan went straight to the point.

Ling Wei nervously clenched her fists and forced a strained smile. "Yes..."

“Apologize to Ms. Lin.”

Ling Wei had yet to start explaining herself when Jiang Mohan gave her the order to apologize.

Ling Wei couldn't believe her ears. She thought that she had heard him wrong. “Mohan, What are you talking about? Why do I need to apologize to her?”

“You came to the hotel to find me today, damaging my phone during our interactions. I haven't wronged you, have I, Ms. Ling?” Zong Yanxi crossed her legs with an air of elegance. She was looking at Ling Wei with a cold and indifferent expression.

“I don't know what you are talking about, Ms. Lin.”

Zong Yanxi was in the mood to entertain her, so she smiled as she leaned on the table and looked at Jiang Mohan. “President Jiang, it seems like this woman who is very fond of you doesn't have too good of an attitude. She denied everything that she had just done. How did she become the head of a department with such a personality?”

Jiang Mohan's expression turned cold. “This has nothing to do with her ability to handle work.”

Zong Yanxi gasped in mock revelation. “Oh, so the Hengkang Group only looks at the competence of their employees but neglects their attitude and personalities. That means they'll have a place in the Hengkang Group even if they had the worst personality in the country. I'm deeply impressed with how generous you are with running the office, President Jiang.”

Ling Wei's face had turned so red then that she looked ready to blow up. She couldn't care less about the fact that Jiang Mohan was still in the office. She promptly began to scream at Lin Ruixi, “Watch your words! Stop twisting the facts, will you? Since when have I gone to find you...”

“Ling Wei!” Jiang Mohan had initially thought of letting the matter pass with Ling Wei's apology. He never expected that the girl would stubbornly refuse to admit to her mistakes. He had to take a deep breath to keep his anger in check. “Apologize to Ms. Lin.”

Ling Wei stood rooted to the spot unmoving. “I did nothing wrong. I don't want to apologize.”

Zong Yanxi leaned back against the chair as if she were an audience enjoying an opera show. "Ms. Ling, aren't you afraid of getting fired with that attitude you're using to talk to your boss? Or perhaps, it's because you're confident of your worth to the company that's why you dare to act so audaciously?"

Jiang Mohan stared at Lin Ruixi. "Ms. Lin, are you enjoying yourself while looking how I've been put in a tough spot?"

"It's not that I want to see it. It's just that Ms. Ling over here insists on putting you in that tough spot. I have no choice but to sit back and watch this show." She leaned back lazily with a leisure-filled expression. It looked like she was enjoying herself.

"Ling Wei, would I have asked you to apologize for no reason if she didn't hand me substantial evidence?" Jiang Mohan didn't like Ling Wei, but he had never expected her to be a liar. He found it shocking that she was someone who'll deny all her wrongdoings despite having done them.

The embarrassment of the company losing its' reputation was nothing to him as compared to the disappointment he had for Ling Wei.

"I..."

Ling Wei opened her mouth in an attempt to explain herself, but Zong Yanxi interrupted her. "Ms. Ling, I suggest you to hurry up. I haven't got the time to waste waiting for you to apologize."

Ling Wei's blood was boiling. If it weren't for that last shred of rationality holding her back, she would have grabbed Lin Ruixi and slapped her.

I never would have guessed that she would come to Jiang Mohan!

She clenched her fist, relaxed it, and clenched it again. She repeated this action multiple times but refused to look at Zong Yanxi. "Ms. Lin... I'm... Sorry..."

Zong Yanxi stood up. "Well, seeing as Ms. Ling has apologized, I won't ask for compensation for my mobile phone."

She turned to Jiang Mohan. "President Jiang, I won't disturb you from working any longer. I'll be taking my leave now."

Jiang Mohan's expression darkened but remained silent. Zong Yanxi's lips curled upwards but couldn't care less about his lack of reaction.

Don't tell me you've only now realized that Ling Wei was a liar?

No. Not only was she a seasoned liar, but she was also a backstabber as well.

Jiang Mohan waited until the door to the office shut before he spoke. "Why did you do that? Why would you lie?"

"I-I..." Ling Wei wanted to explain herself, but she realized with a start that she didn't know where to begin explaining. "I just thought that she was trying to hit on you..."

"So your solution was to threaten her?" Jiang Mohan cocked a brow. He was obviously dissatisfied with her answer. "Ling Wei. I've told you before. I won't have feelings towards you, neither will I be together with you. Don't ever let me catch you doing such unreasonable things again."

"Is it because of Zong Yanxi? Are you still scrupling because of her? But she's already dead..."

"Ling Wei!" Jiang Mohan was enraged. "I did want her to suffer, but I never wanted her to die! It's been a year since she died, and I've been suffering every single day. You were close friends with her..."

"Haha..." Ling Wei burst out in laughter all of a sudden. "Jiang Mohan, what are you trying to say? Don't forget that you were the one that caused her death! You were the one who had hurt her and lied to her the most! Are you trying to make things up now? Don't you think that it's a little too late for that?"

The resonance of Ling Wei's voice filled Jiang Mohan's head. All the hurt. All those lies. It was me. I was the one who made her suffer the most.

"You're right. She's already dead, and that's all the more reason why I won't be together with you. I can't make her feel uneasy even in her afterlife. Ling Wei, seeing as you have been with the company for so many years, I'll let you off this time. If this happens again, you can pack up your things and leave the company." Jiang Mohan picked up the phone and instructed, "Ask the driver to prepare the car."

“Alright, Sir.”

He hung up the phone and picked up his coat, walking out of the office.

“Mohan...”

Ling Wei rushed forward and hugged him by the waist. “Why must you treat me this way? Over someone who is already dead?”

Jiang Mohan peeled her fingers off of himself and pushed her away. “Don’t test my patience!” He scolded fiercely.

Ling Wei staggered back and fell onto the floor. Tears rolled out of her eyes as she stared up at him miserably. “Is it wrong for me to love you?”

Jiang Mohan ignored her, pulling the door to the office open, and stalked out.

Ling Wei’s pathetic cries came sounding out from behind him. “Jiang Mohan! Is this what you call showing mercy towards her? You stole her family’s business! You took her life! You lied to her! You hurt her! You used her! What would she think of you? Do you think she’ll forgive you? Do you think that’s possible? She’ll only hate you! She’ll never forgive you!”

Jiang Mohan’s footsteps halted. He froze in place and stood rooted to the ground, unable to get a hold of himself. Would she really hate me and never forgive me?

He clenched his fists. How despaired must she have been? To take her own life the way that she had?

“President Jiang.” The secretary walked over. “Are you not feeling well?”

Jiang Mohan came back to his senses. “I’m fine.”

He stalked out after giving his confirmation. The driver was waiting for Jiang Mohan at the entrance of the building. He rushed to open the back door for him upon seeing his arrival. Jiang Mohan slid into the car, and the driver closed the door after him. He jogged his way back to the driver’s seat and started the car. “President Jiang, where would you like to go?”

Jiang Mohan massaged his temples and subconsciously replied, “Send me home.”

The driver froze in place. It's been too long since President Jiang last said that. Which home is he referring to?

Is it where he currently stayed? Is it the mansion that he used to stay in? Or is it the Jiang Residence?

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"Forget it," Jiang Mohan ordered. Ultimately, he still did not have the courage to go over. He was still not ready to face those haunting memories after all this while.

Over at the driver's seat, the driver had been taking an unusually long time to get the engine started because he knew Jiang Mohan would change his mind after he calmed down. The driver gave him a quick look from the rearview mirror and asked where they should head for instead, but Jiang Mohan remained silent.

He leaned his head against the headrest and closed his eyes as the driver drove off, wandering aimlessly through the bustling city. Jiang Mohan needed to get his mind off his feelings. But before long, he opened his eyes in frustration, reached for his phone, and dialed a number.

"Nan Cheng?" The call got through instantly.

"Yes, speaking." Over on the other end, Nan Cheng was standing right before Jiang Mohan's office. He was dropping him a document when he ran into Ling Wei crying her eyes out on the floor in his office.

They had been colleagues for some time ever since he started working for Jiang Mohan. Although he did not agree with her on how she handled things, he still saw her as a friend.

When he saw Ling Wei on the floor, he went over and helped her up.

Back in the car, Jiang Mohan shifted his gaze to the fleeting skyline of the city outside the car window. "I need you to run a background check on Lin Ruixi."

Jiang Mohan simply had to get to the bottom of it. He hated that feeling when he mistook her for Zong Yanxi. But most of all, he hated himself for acting unusual whenever he was with her.

He needed to know badly who she was and why he kept taking her for Zong Yanxi.

A brief silence came from Nan Cheng's side when he heard Jiang Mohan's request. He was still trying to get his head around why he asked him to do a search on her. "What am I supposed to look for? How she got into Rui Mei?"

"No. I want to know why she got into Rui Mei," Jiang Mohan corrected.

"Alright, I'll look into it," Nan Cheng replied before Jiang Mohan ended the call.

Beside Nan Cheng, Ling Wei overheard their conversation and shot him a questioning look. "Did he ask you to run a check on Lin Ruixi?"

Nan Cheng nodded briefly without looking at her. "Did you guys get into a fight?" he asked.

Judging from how she was balling her eyes out on the floor, Nan Cheng knew something must have happened. "This is our workplace and you're the head of the Planning Department. What do you think other people will say if they see you like this?" Nan Cheng criticized.

But Ling Wei was lost in her own thoughts. Instead of answering him, she asked, "Don't you think Mohan has changed a lot?"

Nan Cheng shook his head definitely.

Yet Ling Wei disregarded him and her gaze hardened. "I can tell he's changed. He asked me to apologize to Lin Ruixi, and now he's asking you to do a background check on her. What does he think he's doing? Is he interested in her? We've worked for him for a long time, and we know what kind of a person he is. He's not someone who's into women. Yes, he got together with Zong Yanxi and was loyal to her throughout, but that's because he wanted to get revenge. But what about Lin Ruixi? I can't believe I have to tackle yet another woman now that Zong Yanxi is dead!"

A short silence followed Ling Wei's spiteful tirade before Nan Cheng finally spoke calmly. "Ling Wei, Mohan stayed away from women even after he divorced Mrs. Jiang because he genuinely loved her. I don't think it's because he's not into women."

Ling Wei glared at him in ferocity and cried out, "Are you out of your mind? He loved Zong Yanxi? She's his enemy! Also, they're not married anymore, so stop calling her Mrs. Jiang!"

Nan Cheng stood unmoved in face of her aggressive reproach. He knew she was too blinded by jealousy to look at the situation objectively.

In this regard, Jiang Mohan was the same as Ling Wei. He was so consumed by vengeance that he did not realize his own feelings for Zong Yanxi.

Over the past year, he had become colder to people around him and had even cut all the women out of his life. In Nan Cheng's eyes, that was all because he had lost Zong Yanxi.

But there was nothing Nan Cheng could do—they were all too deep in the abyss of their emotions.

Having made up his mind to leave Ling Wei alone, Nan Cheng walked towards the door. Before vanishing around the door, he turned towards her and left her some words of advice. "Ling Wei, it's time you stop."

But his advice fell on deaf ears. Seeing Nan Cheng leave, Ling Wei dashed over and clung to him. "Nan Cheng, we're friends, right?" she asked imploringly.

"Yes," Nan Cheng replied.

"Then do me a favor. Please add one extra piece of information about Lin Ruixi regardless of what you find out about her."

A frown deepened on Nan Cheng's face the moment he heard her request. "What?"

"Just add on something saying that her private life is scandalous and that she's a playgirl. Mohan will definitely not fall for an indecent woman," she begged desperately.

Nan Cheng's gaze sank through her in disbelief. "Ling Wei, you know how seriously women take their reputation. How can you ask me to smear her reputation?"

Ling Wei's grip tightened around his arms. "I'm not asking you to publicize it. You just need to let Mohan know what kind of a person she is."

Instead of making things sound better, her explanation only intensified Nan Cheng's despise towards her. "Ling Wei, I'll only report facts I find out about her to Mohan. If you really love him, you'll wish for his happiness," he said before pulling her hands off his arm.

Ling Wei stood still and called out to him as he walked away. "Nan Cheng, have you ever loved someone?"

Over at the corridor, Nan Cheng's steps halted and his brows twitched for a second.

"Don't you wish you can be with the person you love? That's all I ever wanted for Mohan and me."

But a smirk curved on Nan Cheng's lips upon hearing her words. "Loving someone doesn't necessarily mean you have to be with that person. You can also love them from afar and cheer them on from behind. Seeing them do well in life is enough of a reason for you to be happy for them."

"That's not love. That's foolishness! You have to fight for the things you love!" Ling Wei retaliated.

"Whatever," Nan Cheng said with a sigh. He knew there was no point in trying to talk sense to someone who was compulsively obsessive.

He walked off determinedly and disappeared around the corner without saying anything else.

Outside the office, Ling Wei stomped her feet furiously. Her original intention was to warn Lin Ruixi to stay away from Jiang Mohan. But now that things had taken a turn, she had to get rid of her.

She took out her phone and made a call. "I'll send you her hotel room number. Make sure you deliver it to her as soon as possible."

A sinister voice agreed curtly on the other side before Ling Wei ended the call.

After leaving Hengkang Group, instead of going back to the hotel, Zong Yanxi decided to swing by the company to look for Gu Xian.

When she thought about it, her life was pathetic. Back then, her whole life revolved around Jiang Mohan, and Ling Wei was her only friend. Now that she was back, she had no one else to spend her time with.

Those people she loved and trusted with her whole heart turned out to be the people who hurt her the most.

What a fool I've been.

Zong Yanxi shook her head lightly and dismissed all the negative thoughts bugging her. Since Gu Xian was not around, she walked out of the company and hailed a cab to return to the hotel.

Not long after she arrived, the doorbell rang and she leaped from the sofa and hurried for the door in her cotton slippers.

"Ms. Lin?" the delivery guy asked after she opened the door.

"Yes, it's me." She confirmed with a nod.

"Here's your parcel," he said as he held out a paper box.

"A parcel for me? I wonder who it's from," Zong Yanxi mumbled. She did not remember buying anything online. Besides, she just got back to the country. No one could possibly send her a parcel.

"I have no idea. My job is to send it over. Your signature, please," the man said, passing her the delivery slip.

Zong Yanxi took it over and signed the slip without any further questions.

She held the paper box close to her ears and shook it. From the sound of it, she figured the item inside was light and small. After closing the door, she cut open the box and saw a USB drive.

Zong Yanxi squinted her eyes trying to make something out of this brazenly common USB drive. She threw the box into the trashcan and proceeded to switch on her laptop.

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She inserted the USB drive into the port and clicked the file open.

On the screen, the video player popped up and a video started playing. It showed a woman with her mouth taped and bounded in ropes on the ground.

She was trying to articulate something but her words came off as unintelligible and muffled.

Zong Yanxi's pupils dilated as she saw the poor woman.

What on earth is this?

Why am I seeing this?

What is the sender trying to get at?

Her shaking fingers reached for the mouse and zoomed in on the woman's face.

It was the woman in the rumored nightclub scandal relating to Jiang Mohan.

Why are they doing this to her?

Unanswered questions flooded her thoughts as Zong Yanxi struggled to make head or tail of what she was seeing.

Just as she was trying to comprehend this whole incident, her phone rang in her pocket.

A message notification from an unknown number lighted on her screen: This is what happens to people who get near Mohan. Try me and you'll end up worse than this woman.

Zong Yanxi's knees felt weak and she collapsed on the chair next to her.

But she told herself to calm down and sat up straight, trying to connect the dots between everything that happened.

She finally understood what Ling Wei meant when she asked her to join her for a "good show."

She wanted Zong Yanxi to watch that woman being tortured so she would beat a retreat, but Zong Yanxi did not even go.

Yet Ling Wei was not letting her off the hook this easily. The fact that Ling Wei had the audacity to send Zong Yanxi the clip meant she no longer cared if the latter told Jiang Mohan about what she did.

This also meant Ling Wei was going all out this time around.

A shudder spread down her spine as Zong Yanxi thought about what Ling Wei would do to women who approached Jiang Mohan.

She was clearly out of her mind to be inflicting such atrocious pain on a human being.

Zong Yanxi slammed her laptop screen shut as the screams of the women echoed throughout the room.

Her heart was beating furiously as she thought about how close she and Ling Wei used to be.

Never had it crossed her mind that her close friend was actually this cold-blooded.

She wiped the cold sweat off her forehead and heaved a sigh of relief. Thank God I'm still alive!

But her heart started beating faster as she sensed the looming danger awaiting her.

This video was just Ling Wei's first move and it would definitely not take long before she dealt her another blow. I have to act first!

I need a plan.

Ling Wei, I'm gonna play you at your own game this time. I'll show you I'm not a sitting duck anymore!

Determination glimmered in Zong Yanxi's eyes and she grabbed her phone before walking out of the room confidently.

She went downstairs, hailed a cab, and told the driver Gu Xian's address.

By the time she went on her way, the setting sun had dyed the horizon red.

Cars were traveling on the road as people sluggishly dragged themselves home after a long day of work. After they arrived, Zong Yanxi paid the driver and hopped off in front of Gu Xian's neighborhood.

Zong Yanxi knew the security guards would not let her in unless Gu Xian came to pick her up, so she pulled out her phone and called him.

But a ringtone pierced through the quiet neighborhood and she turned to see Gu Xian walking out of the neighborhood.

She waved her hand at him and shouted, "Gu Xian!"

Gu Xian turned around and hastened his pace towards her. "Hey, it's a surprise to see you here," he greeted as he rejected her call on his phone.

"How's the investigation going?" She cut to the chase.

"You mean the man you asked me to find out more about?"

Zong Yanxi nodded as they walked towards his car.

"I have a few clues and I'm just about to go check it out," he replied.

"I'll go with you," Zong Yanxi suggested.

Gu Xian's hand stopped on his car door handle and he looked at her reluctantly. "You sure? It's not a pleasant place though."

"I have to get to the bottom of this urgently. Someone is coming for me," she replied.

"Who?"

Zong Yanxi scoffed, "Who else can it be? It's the person who failed to kill me once."

Gu Xian opened the door and sat in the driver's seat with a severe face. "What does Ling Wei want? She doesn't know you're Zong Yanxi. Why does she want to target you?"

Upon hearing her name, the scenes of those thugs beating the frail woman up played back in Zong Yanxi's mind. "I think she's gone crazy. She's so obsessed with Jiang Mohan she's willing to kill every single woman around him. Come to think of it, that man is really lucky to have someone who's so devoted to him."

A smirk curved upon her lips as Zong Yanxi thought about how ironic things were.

Gu Xian spared her a quick glimpse and teased, "Does that mean you don't love Jiang Mohan anymore?"

Zong Yanxi glared at him and pursed her lips. "Seriously. You need to at least try being more likable," she complained as she fastened her seatbelt.

"Come on, are you angry over a joke?" he asked, closing the door and starting the engine.

"Why do you have to talk like this all the time?" she questioned grudgingly.

"I promise this is the last time," he said cheekily.

"Please focus when you drive," Zong Yanxi replied, rolling her eyes.

Gu Xian knew she was just faking her anger and he drove off with a laugh.

"But seriously though, what are you gonna do? You know how cruel Ling Wei is," he asked in a more serious tone.

"It depends," she said. She already had a plan drafted out.

"I'll get two bodyguards to follow you in secret," Gu Xian offered.

“Can do. I’ll let you know when I need it,” she replied. It was always better to err on the safe side when dealing with Ling Wei.

Luck was on her side and someone saved her the first time—else there was no way she could have survived Ling Wei’s scheme.

Gu Xian and Zong Yanxi finally arrived at the destination and he got off the car to open the door for her. “We’re here.”