

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 1021

Shen Xinyao lay still on the bed. She stared at the man as he kissed her.

Zhuang Jiawen uttered gently, "How am I going to kiss you with your eyes staring at me all the time?"

"Does it make any difference?" Shen Xinyao quirked one of her brows.

Zhuang Jiawen was stumped.

"How about, you close your eyes and let me kiss you?" Shen Xinyao twisted her arms around his neck. Her brows were arched like two crescents.

Zhuang Jiawen laughed. "Are you playing tricks?"

"No," Shen Xinyao replied truthfully.

Zhuang Jiawen hesitated for a while before closing his eyes. Shen Xinyao edged in closer to him, but instead of kissing him, she whipped out her phone and took a snap of Zhuang Jiawen with his lips puckered up, ready for a kiss.

Zhuang Jiawen heard the shutter of the camera and opened his eyes wide at once. He saw Shen Xinyao trying to hold in her laughter as she posted the picture on her social media with the caption 'lovestruck'.

"Shen Xinyao!" Zhuang Jiawen leaped forward to grab Shen Xinyao's phone but she quickly hid it behind her back. "Nope! I won't give it to you!"

"You are already mine, so your phone should be mine too!" Zhuang Jiawen retorted.

Shen Xinyao was at a loss for words.

That doesn't sound right!

"Let's take a shower." Zhuang Jiawen hoisted Shen Xinyao into the air and carried her to the bathroom.

Shen Xinyao decided to go along with her husband this time.

Meanwhile, a few floors below the couple's room, Zong Yanxi was resting on the sofa in the lounge.

"Hahaha!" She laughed as she scrolled her phone.

Tawan poured her a glass of water. "What are you laughing at?"

Zong Yanxi passed the phone to Tawan. "Look at this!"

On Zong Yanxi's phone was a picture just posted online by Shen Xinyao. It was Zhuang Jiawen making a duck face with his eyes closed. Tawan chuckled and handed the glass of water to Zong Yanxi. "Drink some water."

Zong Yanxi took the glass and said, "Thank you."

Tawan sat down on the sofa next to Zong Yanxi. "You're always so uptight around me."

Zong Yanxi lowered her gaze to the glass of water. She tried to evade the topic. "How's Sorn?"

"She's doing fine. I've already sent her to school," Tawan replied.

Zong Yanxi nodded. An awkward silence descended upon the room.

"Uhm, I..."

"About the..."

The two tried to initiate a conversation at the same time.

They didn't expect the other to talk.

Tawan responded, "You go ahead."

"Oh, it's nothing. I am considering a job in Thailand," Zong Yanxi replied.

Tawan seemed to have an inkling about what she was talking about. "Is your father..."

"Jiawen just got married. Where are you going?" Lin Xinyan's voice came from outside the door.

The two of them in the lounge immediately dropped silent. They looked at the door.

Creak!

The door was pushed open.

Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao were surprised to see the two of them. They didn't know they were in the lounge.

"Mom. Dad." Zong Yanxi rose from her seat and walked towards her parents.

Zong Jinghao furrowed his brows. "Get a room to rest in; you drank too much."

She nodded. "Alright, I'm going then."

With that said, Zong Yanxi left the room.

"Were you taking care of her?" Lin Xinyan directed her question at Tawan.

Tawan answered, "Not really. She wasn't that drunk."

She looks drunk but her mind is still very much sober.

"Alright, I think it's best I leave you two to discuss your matters in private. I'll take my leave now." Tawan's tone was that of a gentleman. He could tell that the elders had serious matters to confer.

"We still have rooms booked under us. Ask for them at the reception." Zong Jinghao reminded Tawan.

"Okay. Thank you!"

Tawan left the lounge and closed the door behind him.

Lin Xinyan turned around to look at her husband. "What matters do you have to tend to at this time of the day?"

Zong Jinghao went to the sofa and sat down without giving Lin Xinyan any replies. The truth was, there wasn't any new lead from Wen Xiaoji. Zong Yanchen was still missing, and as his father, Zong Jinghao could wait no more.

Yanchen could be in grave danger.

I need to find him as soon as possible.

However, Zong Jinghao couldn't make his plans known to Lin Xinyan. She was barely able to recover from the shock of Zong Yanxi's trauma.

Zong Jinghao didn't want Lin Xinyan to be burdened by more qualms.

"Say something." Lin Xinyan scrunched her brows.

Zong Jinghao said, "Something happened at the company."

"Isn't Guan Jing doing pretty well?" Lin Xinyan obviously didn't believe in her husband's statement.

"But there are still some matters that I have to tend to myself—"

Before Zong Jinghao could finish his words, Lin Xinyan made her way to the exit. Zong Jinghao caught up with her and grabbed her hand. "Where are you going?"

"Guan Jing still hasn't left. I want to ask him about the matter you were talking about." Lin Xinyan looked Zong Jinghao in the eyes. "After so many years of marriage, there is still something you can't talk to me freely?"

Lin Xinyan could sense that Zong Jinghao was hiding something from her.

Zong Jinghao let go of her hand. "Sigh, I guess there's no helping it."

Perhaps after spending so many years together, the couple could now read each other's minds very well. It was very difficult to lie to one another when they knew each other like the back of their hands.

"I want to send Yanxi to work at Tawan's company."

"What?" Lin Xinyan gawked at Zong Jinghao. "But why?"

"Then, she will be close to us. Also, I figured the experience will help her grow." Zong Jinghao pulled his wife into his arms. "She will grow up someday, right? We can't always be by her side."

Of course. Lin Xinyan could understand her husband's point.

Still, she had a question. "But why Tawan's company?"

"Tawan asked me to help him scout for a manager. I think it's a good opportunity for Yanxi to develop herself." In the end, Zong Jinghao still kept Lin Xinyan in the dark. He deliberately brought up his daughter to divert Lin Xinyan's attention.

Lin Xinyan didn't know what to say.

A beat later, she stared at Zong Jinghao and asked, "Do you think it is a good arrangement?"

Aren't we experimenting with Tawan's company in this case?

"Well, if anything happens, I am around." Zong Jinghao coiled his arms around Lin Xinyan's waist. "That is the reason why I'm heading out now. I need to check up on Tawan's company."

In other words, he was trying to say that he was looking out for their daughter.

Lin Xinyan still felt that something was off. "Even if that's the case, can't you send someone else on your behalf instead? Also, we have worked with Tawan before. Don't we already know his company pretty well?"

“You look good in your cheongsam.” Zong Jinghao abruptly interrupted Lin Xinyan.

He was reaching his limits.

The woman in front of him was too difficult to deal with.

Lin Xinyan took a quick glance at her outfit before tilting her head at her man. “Don’t you dare change the topic.”

At that moment, Zong Jinghao knew he was done for.

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Zong Jinghao bit the bullet and replied, "I'm speaking the truth."

Lin Xinyan got up from his lap. She shot daggers at him.

Zong Jinghao could feel the temperature in the room plummeting. "Why are looking at me like that?"

"Zong Jinghao, since when have you learned to lie to me?" Lin Xinyan's eyes bore through Zong Jinghao's soul. "If you don't give me a satisfactory explanation, I won't let you out of here."

Having made her mind clear, Lin Xinyan stomped towards the entrance. Zong Jinghao hurriedly halted her. "Your son is already a married man, and you are still trying to throw a tantrum? What will people think of us?"

"Then tell me the truth." Lin Xinyan turned her head around to stare at her husband. "Where are you going?"

Knock! knock!

Someone knocked at the door. Lin Xinyan shrugged Zong Jinghao's hand off her. "This is inappropriate."

Zong Jinghao let go of his hand. "I'll open the door."

Behind the door was Guan Jing and a gorgeous Caucasian woman. She was Guan Jing's wife. Her skin was as fair as snow and she had a deep set of eyes. She was holding on to the hand of a ten-year-old girl. The Eurasian girl was Guan Jing's daughter.

The girl's hair was light brown. Her skin was also fair but not as pearly as her mother's. Her cheeks were rosy and she had a pair of big beautiful blue eyes.

The girl was wearing a one-piece dress that went down to her thighs. Her hair was tied up into a bun, which made her even more adorable than she already was.

Lin Xinyan waved at her. "Kmi, come here! Let me take a good look at you!"

"Mrs. Zong!" Kmi's voice was as sweet as honey. She then flopped into Lin Xinyan's arms.

Even though Kmi was still a child, she was technically of the same generation as Lin Xinyan's children.

Lin Xinyan hugged her. "Oh my, you've certainly gotten heavier!"

Kmi giggled. "Mrs. Zong, I love the food here!"

"Her appetite has gotten so good ever since she came here. The little fella just can't stop eating!" Lina was full of smiles.

"It's okay for her to grow chubby. She's still a kid." Lin Xinyan pinched Kmi's cheeks.

The husbands of the two women left the lounge to converse.

However, they were back not before long.

Lin Xinyan had Kmi sitting on her lap as she peeled the wrapper of a chocolate bar for her.

"Mrs. Zong." Guan Jing sat down on the sofa. "I want to take a short leave."

Instead of looking at Guan Jing, Lin Xinyan's eyes went straight to her husband. "What were you guys talking about?"

"Guan Jing were talking about the issues he had at work." Zong Jinghao replied matter-of-factly.

Guan Jing initially wanted to talk to Zong Jinghao about some work matters and his decision to take a short break two days later, but the latter asked for his help to lie to Lin Xinyan.

Meanwhile, Lin Xinyan felt that there was a connection between Guan Jing's sudden leave and Zong Jinghao's untimely decision to travel.

"Guan Jing has already mentioned it to me before," Zong Jinghao added.

"You want to take a break?" Lina looked at Guan Jing questioningly. "Why haven't you told me about it?"

Even though Lina's Chinese was not fluent, she had no problems conversing and making herself clear.

"Didn't you say you wanted to bring Kmi to F Country? Since I am taking a break from work now, I can take you two there." Guan Jing uttered in a hurry.

"But weren't you the one who said you like to work?" Lina was completely oblivious of the show Guan Jing was trying to pull off.

Guan Jing was speechless.

Damn, can't you tell I'm trying to get out of something here?

"Even if I love to work, there will still be times I want to have a break. I haven't taken a leave in ages. I figured that we should go traveling every now and then before we get too old for it." Guan Jing really went all out to deceive Lin Xinyan.

"Alright then. It's been quite some time since we last went for a vacation." Lina was actually pretty excited to hear about her husband's sudden intention to bring the family on an overseas trip.

Zong Jinghao saw the window for him to speak and went ahead. "I can't allow you to take a leave now."

"Why?" Lina asked unwittingly in her husband's place.

"She doesn't want me to go to work." Zong Jinghao's gaze was clearly directed at Lin Xinyan.

"Mrs. Zong, you're not okay with Guan Jing taking a leave?"

That left Lin Xinyan at a loss for words.

Why am I suddenly the bad guy?

What did I even do?

"Actually, I'm okay with it." Nope, I refuse to be the bad guy.

"Ooh, then I can finally take my family out for a trip!" Guan Jing chuckled with glee. Now that he thought of it, a getaway was a good idea too.

Zong Jinghao side-eyed him casually.

Immediately, the smile on Guan Jing's face diminished.

Crap. So what if Mrs. Zong agrees to let me have a break? Now I still have to finish what Mr. Zong wants me to do!

All of a sudden, Guan Jing felt as if his life was a tragedy. His work was endless.

He made a mental note to talk to Zong Jinghao about it someday.

Having partnered up with Guan Jing, Zong Jinghao successfully got off Lin Xinyan's hook and concealed from her the truth about Zong Yanchen.

"If you're heading to the company, then I'll stay here for a few more days." Lin Xinyan spoke after she and Zong Jinghao had returned to Su Zhan's house. She wanted to spend more time with her children.

Of course, Zong Jinghao supported his wife's decision. It was better than her heading over to Thailand alone as he was sure she would freak out.

“Let’s just move into a new house. You can help look around.” With what happened in the villa, it was not fit for a home.

Lin Xinyan replied, “Alright, I’ll make sure it is done.”

“Also, I will come back quite soon so just let Guan Jing take a few days’ break,” Zong Jinghao added.

Lin Xinyan, who was in the midst of packing up, lifted her head to look at her husband.

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“Guan Jing hasn’t really taken any break for a very long time. A vacation will definitely do him good.”

Zong Jinghao seemed to have picked up something else. He asked inquiringly, “You don’t mind me being away from you for a longer period of time?”

Lin Xinyan stacked up the clothes for Zong Jinghao to change into and closed the luggage.

“You’ve really let go a lot.” Lin Xinyan raised her hands to touch the end of Zong Jinghao’s eye. “Without realizing, your wrinkles are already so deep.”

Lin Xinyan was aware that she was the reason Zong Jinghao had let go of most work.

“I think it will take me more than a few days to set up our new house. I’ll take the opportunity to take care of Jiawen more. After all, he left home at an early age.”

From Lin Xinyan’s words, Zong Jinghao assumed that she wasn’t suspicious of him anymore.

Zong Jinghao let out a breath in relief internally. “Alright then. Guan Jing deserved this too.” He placed his hand on Lin Xinyan’s. “Have we gotten old?”

“Yes, but I still love you.” Lin Xinyan smiled. Her eyes were still twinkling although they were now age-battered.

However, even though Lin Xinyan had a few lines around her eyes, she still looked young compared to the ladies of her age.

There was a saying that humans who were indebted to each other in their previous lives would become lovers in this life.

Lin Xinyan believed that Zong Jinghao and her were such a couple.

Before, Lin Xinyan was more reserved in love. However, as time passed, she learned that love needs to be expressed.

Zong Jinghao chuckled lightly. "We're already so old. Are you still going to seduce me with your beauty?"

Lin Xinyan's brows arched. "Do I still have it in me?"

Knock! Knock!

Someone knocked on the door. Lin Xinyan said, "I'll get the door."

Sang Yu was at the doorsteps. When she saw Lin Xinyan, a warm smile broke out on her face. "Did I interrupt anything?"

"No, you didn't. Come on in!" Lin Xinyan slanted her body to let Sang Yu pass through.

But Sang Yu didn't enter the house. "It's fine. I'm just here to tell you that Peichuan and I are leaving."

"So fast?" Lin Xinyan frowned. "Are you guys leaving now?"

"Yeah. Peichuan has something to tend to." Sang Yu sighed. She also didn't want to leave so soon but her husband said it was work-related. He had no choice but to leave.

Lin Xinyan had a hunch that Shen Peichuan had to deal with the incident their families faced just a few days ago. Even though the perpetrator of the crime was dead, he still had administrative matters to tend to.

Since he was placed in charge of that case, he had to be there to close the case.

Both Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao sent them off.

“Will you be staying longer?” Sang Yu queried Lin Xinyan as they stood in front of the car outside the building.

“Yup. I will stick around longer.” Lin Xinyan could guess what Sang Yu was thinking about. “It’s okay. I will look after our children. There’s nothing to worry about.”

“Alright. Oh, I forgot to tell you about it. I have asked Peichuan to retire earlier. Our days will finally be more laid back. Honestly, even though no one was hurt in the incident, I still fear that something might happen to him in his next mission or something.”

Lin Xinyan nodded. Sang Yu had always been supportive of Shen Peichuan’s career. She had been an excellent housewife at taking care of the household as she didn’t want Shen Peichuan to worry about anything at home. But now, she figured it was time he retired. The two could spend the rest of their days in a carefree manner.

“Yes, I totally understand you. Both of you should really plan on how you are going to live your lives now.” Lin Xinyan patted her friend’s hand.

“Mmhhh. I’ll get going now! See you!” Sang Yu and Shen Peichuan got onto the car. They rolled down one of the windows to bid their friends a last farewell. Lin Xinyan added, “Come over to visit us after you retire, Peichuan!”

Sang Yu answered on her husband’s behalf, “Will do!”

As the car sped off into the distance, the couple got back into their house. Su Zhan was at their doorsteps. “Peichuan is too busy! His daughter just got married and now he already has to leave?”

“It’s not like you don’t know how his line of work is like.” Lin Xinyan glanced at him.

Su Zhan replied, “I know he’s busy, but he doesn’t have to work so hard. He can actually take things slower.”

Once they got into the house, Lin Xinyan said, “I will stay here for some time.”

Su Zhan was shocked. “You’re not going back to Thailand?”

Lin Xinyan nodded. “Jinghao has to run the company for some time before we leave. I’ll stay here with him for the time being.”

"Huh?" Su Zhan was even more astonished now. "But why?"

"Let's talk about it another time. It's quite late. Let's get to sleep." Zong Jinghao cut Su Zhan off as he didn't want the latter to question much. He was worried that Lin Xinyan might find out that he was lying.

Su Zhan was speechless for being intervened so crudely.

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Did I say anything wrong?

Su Zhan looked dazed.

“Did I say anything wrong?” Su Zhan gazed innocently at Zong Jinghao.

Lin Xinyan also turned to look at her husband, as he had indeed cut Su Zhan off abruptly.

Zong Jinghao slanted his eyes at Su Zhan. “Do you have to know why? Has age made you oversensitive like a woman?”

Su Zhan was stumped by Zong Jinghao’s sudden onslaught.

Nothing I say now seems to be right!

Lin Xinyan was also at a loss for words.

Who says all women are sensitive?

So now I can’t ask you about anything without you calling me ‘sensitive’?

Once they got into the house, Lin Xinyan exploded, “Were your remarks just now directed at Su Zhan or me?”

It was Zong Jinghao’s turn to be speechless.

Tsk, why are you so sensitive?

"I know what you're going to say next. You are going to say I'm being too sensitive, right?" Lin Xinyan spoke Zong Jinghao's mind and chuckled lamely. "Alright, maybe I'm too sensitive. Let's sleep earlier. You still have a flight to catch tomorrow morning."

Lin Xinyan was reflecting on her recent behavior. As of late, she seemed to be quite edgy. Now that she thought of it, she couldn't believe that she still suspected Zong Jinghao of hiding things from her after they had spent almost a lifetime together.

"When was the last time we spent time away from each other?" Lin Xinyan gently helped Zong Jinghao to unbutton his shirt. It had been a while since he last wore anything formal. After he stopped going to the office, Zong Jinghao stopped wearing suits until today, the day of Zhuang Jiawen's marriage.

After Lin Xinyan was done with the last button, she said, "Go and have a shower."

Zong Jinghao lowered his gaze to her. "Why are you suddenly so nice towards me?"

Lin Xinyan arched her brow. "Did I ever mistreat you before?"

"Okay." Zong Jinghao took his wife's hand in his. "Since you've already taken off my shirt, why don't you help me scrub my back too?"

"We're already so old. Why are you so cheeky?" She slapped Zong Jinghao's hand away. "Go."

Zong Jinghao only smiled blandly. He obediently went to the bathroom. Weirdly, after Su Zhan intercepted the two of them, all of Lin Xinyan's suspicions towards him had vanished.

The next day, Zong Jinghao took the first flight in the morning.

Lin Xinyan extended her stay at Su Zhan's house.

The lot of them at Su Zhan's place didn't wait for Zhuang Jiawen and Shen Xinyao to come back to have breakfast.

"Let's eat first." Qin Ya poured Lin Xinyan a glass of milk. "They should've already eaten at the hotel."

Lin Xinyan took a sip of the milk. "Can you take a break from work and go out with me today?"

There were many in-house designers at the boutique. It didn't make much difference if Qin Ya wasn't there. Qin Ya sat down at the table and grabbed a piece of toast. She slathered some peanut butter over it. "What's up?"

"I'm looking for a new home for the children. They can't stay at the hotel forever. Also, they can't stay here; it's too crowded. It's better if they can have their own place," Lin Xinyan replied.

"Mmhmm, I agree with you. They are still a pair of young, newly-wed lovebirds. They won't want anyone to interrupt them. Alright, let's go out to look for a new house after breakfast."

"You guys are going to have breakfast so early?" Zhuang Jiawen and Shen Xinyao walked into the dining room.

"So you guys didn't plan to wait for us?" The couple walked to the table. Zhuang Jiawen pulled a chair for Shen Xinyao.

"Not that we don't want to wait for you, it's just that we thought you guys won't be back that early. Speaking of it, why are you lovebirds here so early?" Qin Ya went to get cutlery for the two of them.

"We aren't the kind of people who will laze in bed all day," Zhuang Jiawen explained himself with a charming smile.

Before Qin Ya could reply, Su Zhan spoke, "But you guys literally just got married yesterday. We really thought you two will have better things to do."

The couple could sense what was the older man trying to imply.

Shen Xinyao lowered her head bashfully, her face reddening.

Even though Zhuang Jiawen was junior to Su Zhan, the two were more like friends. Their conversations were usually lively and outspoken, occasionally filled with banter.

"Quite the experienced man you are, I see."

Su Zhan was stumped by the younger man's refute.

"You little rascal. How dare you made fun of me?" Su Zhan sounded livid but there was an obnoxious grin on his face. "You sure act more like me day by day. People might even think you're my son!"

"I can be your son. But you will have to name me in your will." Zhuang Jiawen accepted the utensils from Qin Ya and chuckled, "So what do you think? Will you take me as your son?"

Qin Ya pretended to be angry. "Tsk, you haven't even called us mom and dad and you already have your eyes on our assets? What a gold-digger!"

"Yeah, what a gold-digger you are!" Su Zhan chimed in.

"You guys are so petty!" Zhuang Jiawen stuffed a bun into his mouth. "I want to eat the herbal egg."

"I'll cook it tomorrow," Qin Ya replied.

Zhuang Jiawen smiled. "Yay! Thank you!"

"Kids, I'm going to look for a new house for you guys today. Do y'all have any special requests?" Lin Xinyan moved an egg from her plate to Shen Xinyao's.

"We'll probably be okay with anything you choose. But it will be better if it's close to Jiawen's office, so he can get back from work earlier." Shen Xinyao seemed shy when she told Lin Xinyan her request. "Mum, you eat the egg."

She pushed her plate to Lin Xinyan. "I'm not that hungry. I just had a piece of toast."

Breakfast was simple that morning. There were fried eggs and toast other than some fruits and milk.

"You eat it." Lin Xinyan tucked in a strand of hair behind Shen Xinyao's ear. "Alright, I'll try to find somewhere close to Jiawen's office. After breakfast, get back to the hotel to rest."

Lin Xinyan could sense that Shen Xinyao didn't feel completely at ease at Su Zhan's house.

Shen Xinyao lowered her head and responded politely, "Okay."

After breakfast, Lin Xinyan began to clean up the table. Qin Ya stopped her in a hurry. "Let Su Zhan take care of it. We can leave now."

At once, Su Zhan's eyes had a pitiful light in them. "I can take care of the dishes but can't y'all bring me out with you guys too?"

Since Shen Peichuan and Sang Yu already left, after Zhuang Jiawen and Shen Xinyao got back to the hotel, Su Zhan would be the only one at home if Lin Xinyan and Qin Ya went out.

"If you have nothing to do, go and check on the factory." Qin Ya looked at her husband. "Don't you dare take your hands off it completely even though Jiawen is in charge of it now. He just got married, so let him have some fun. Watch over the factory for him, will ya?"

Su Zhan was at a loss for words.

"Why do I have a feeling that you love Jiawen more than you love me? You always think of him but you never think of me. Hmph!" There was a childish grievance in Su Zhan's tone.

"Jiawen has never pissed me off. What about you?" Qin Ya chortled at Su Zhan.

Su Zhan was at a loss for words.

"Not only am I going to wash the dishes, but I will also prepare lunch."

Lin Xinyan who was watching the two of them quarrel almost burst into laughter. She tapped Qin Ya lightly on her shoulder. "Don't tease him anymore, Qin Ya! Why did you make him do so much work though?"

"No, I actually volunteered," Su Zhan hurriedly explained.

Qin Ya glanced at Su Zhan and headed for the stairs. "Let me change into something else before we leave."

Previously, Lin Xinyan had felt sorry for Qin Ya. She had to endure a lot of hardships because she chose to be with Su Zhan. Because of Su Zhan, she lost the ability to conceive children. It was a lifelong regret she always had as a woman.

However, now it seemed that Su Zhan was the one Lin Xinyan should feel sorry for. Still, she didn't think that Qin Ya acted over the top. Lin Xinyan was happy for Qin Ya now that she could finally live freely after all the troubles she had to put up with.

"Boohoo! No one cares about my dignity as the householder anymore!" Su Zhan rubbed his nose. He didn't think that even at this age, he would still be oppressed.

While Qin Ya was getting changed, Lin Xinyan helped Su Zhan to clean up the tables. "Let me help you. Don't let Qin Ya get to you. She's suffered a lot before, so just let her be. If anything, you should shower her with more love."

"It's fine. I can do everything on my own. You guys just go on and have fun. Don't worry, Xinyan. I've never gotten angry at Qin Ya before. I already owe her a lifetime. I am so thankful that she forgave me and even agreed to marry me. It's the greatest blessing I've ever received," Su Zhan sounded earnest as he reflected on himself.

I know I owe you a lot, Qin Ya. I will love you forever.

Meanwhile, Mu Yuan'er had already managed to find the herb she needed to cure Zong Yanchen and was now in the midst of treatment.

"Rest assured. I will cure you." Mu Yuan'er was weighing the herbs needed to concoct his medicine.

In Mu Yuan'er's house, there was a room lined with cabinets filled with herbs. In the middle of the room was a rectangular table with an electronic scale. Nowadays, traditional Chinese medicine practitioners no longer used counterweights to weigh their herbs and have opted for modern technology, including Mu Yuan'er herself.

Zong Yanchen sat on the chair as he waited for Mu Yuan'er. By now, he had already gotten used to the smell of various herbs in the house. Out of the blue, he spoke in the direction of Mu Yuan'er's voice, "How are you sure I'm not blind because of external trauma?"

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Mu Yuan'er fluttered her eyes at Zong Yanchen. "Do you not trust me? Or are you afraid that I am not able to heal your eyes?"

"Actually, I'm quite comfortable now." Zong Yanchen chuckled.

"You can't even see me. How is that nice?" Mu Yuan'er's expression was stern. "I'll definitely cure you."

Zong Yanchen beckoned her to come over.

Mu Yuan'er put down the herbs in her hand and walked to him. She instinctively sat on his lap. There was a faint yet invigorating aroma of herbs around her.

Zong Yanchen's hand slid along the length of her back before going up to her cheeks. He pinched her face endearingly, "I'm worried that your ugliness might terrify me."

Mu Yuan'er rested her head at his shoulder. "Hey, didn't you say you're not going to abandon me even if I am ugly? Are you going against your words now?"

"No, I don't regret anything I said." Zong Yanchen's voice was serious and uncompromising. "Even if you are ugly, I will still marry you."

"I'm both ugly and broke, what do you even like about me?" Mu Yuan'er's eyes were fixated on Zong Yanchen. She prodded the side of his face with her pointy nose.

Zong Yanchen could feel her warm breath on his face. He didn't hate it in the least.

What do I even like about you? Maybe it's because you have a sweet voice? Perhaps it's because you know traditional Chinese medicine. Oh, or is it because you are a kind soul?

Zong Yanchen had no answers to the questions he had for himself. He just knew he liked being around Mu Yuan'er. Even though he had never seen her face before, her honey-like voice already made him fall for her.

It was like the breeze on a summer's day, refreshing and calming.

Zong Yanchen hugged Mu Yuan'er tight. He could feel her dainty frames and the butterflies in his stomach.

Hmm, maybe it's because I feel something for her.

Something which I have not felt for other women.

"You're so skinny! How did you manage to carry me down the mountain?" Zong Yanchen found it difficult to believe that a girl as meek as a lamb like her was able to carry him down the mountain alone.

"I might be skinny, but I am not weak at all," Mu Yuan'er emphasized each of her words. "You never know you might lose to me in a fight."

Since young, Mu Yuan'er's grandmother had trained her to be strong and she had even learned martial arts from an old master. Not only was she good at it, but she was even better than the male fighters who had the advantage of strength and stamina. Although Mu Yuan'er seemed frail, her physical prowess could definitely impress.

"Is that so?" Zong Yanchen laughed in disbelief.

Mu Yuan'er flicked her eyebrow. "Let's have an arm wrestle."

"For real? Alright! I am intrigued." Zong Yanchen pursed his lips. There seemed to be a hint of slyness in his eyes.

However, Mu Yuan'er didn't notice it at all as she was busy thinking of what bet she should make.

"The loser has to unconditionally grant the winner one wish. What do you think?" Zong Yanchen proposed.

Ever since Mu Yuan'er brought Zong Yanchen back, he had been under her care. Even though he was a burly man, he seemed quite weak at the moment. Mu Yuan'er figured that she could defeat Zong Yanchen if she were able to take down two adult men before.

Unfortunately for her, she had completely forgotten the fact that he was a soldier.

"Alright! There's no going back on what you just said."

"Alrighty." Zong Yanchen reached out his hand.

Mu Yuan'er responded, "Hold up."

She went to get a bench and placed it between herself and Zong Yanchen. There was even a table in the middle. Now, it seemed like an official competition.

"Alright, I'm done." Mu Yuan'er settled down opposite Zong Yanchen. She held his hand. "We can start now."

Zong Yanchen's face was filled with nonchalance. "If you manage to tilt my hand even by one degree, you win."

Mu Yuan'er arched one of her brows. "Tsk, don't you dare look down on a woman. You shall pay the price."

Zong Yanchen only returned her a bleak smile.

When Mu Yuan'er started to push the man's hand down, she realized that even though he seemed feeble from his injury, he still had the strength of an ox. She could not make his hand budge even one bit.

Mu Yuan'er furrowed her brows. She now thought that she was being too reckless, but it was too late to back out now. Desperate to win, she stealthily added her other hand to her arsenal, as she realized Zong Yanchen couldn't see her cheating anyway.

Little did she know, Zong Yanchen could sense her other arm rising to the table. However, he continued the wrestle without saying anything.

Even though she was using both of her hands, she could still not make Zong Yanchen's arms move at all.

"I'm a lady. Please go easy on me." Mu Yuan'er pouted.

"I'm not even using half of my strength. I don't think I can go any lighter on you." Zong Yanchen smiled smugly. "Now that you lose, you have to grant me a wish."

Mu Yuan'er accepted her defeat in silence.

Only now that she realized she had been tricked.

"Ugh, I'm not playing with you anymore." Mu Yuan'er let go of Zong Yanchen's hand.

But before Mu Yuan'er's hand could leave, Zong Yanchen tugged on it with all of his strength and pulled her into his arms. The table in the center was knocked out of place, and it made a sharp screech against the floor.

"Ahh!"

Mu Yuan'er was taken aback by Zong Yanchen's sudden action. By the time she came back to her senses, she was already in Zong Yanchen's embrace. "What are you trying to do?"

"I'm getting my reward for winning the game." Zong Yanchen's arms were wrapping around Mu Yuan'er's waist. His fingertips caressing her skin.

Mu Yuan'er's heartbeat was racing. She found herself stammering, "W-what are you trying to do?"

Usually, Mu Yuan'er was quite an eloquent speaker, but now she was so bashful that even Zong Yanchen could sense it.

Zong Yanchen thought that the girl in his arms must be very adorable with her face flushing.

He smiled. "Give me a kiss."

Mu Yuan'er was speechless.

She lowered her voice. "Did you just tricked me?"

"How can I trick you? I'm blind," Zong Yanchen denied. "A loser has to admit defeat."