

Chapter 281: Can You Give Me A Hug? (1)

A slight look of annoyance suddenly surfaced in his eyes as he fished for the cotton ball in the bottle of alcohol a few times, but he still couldn't manage to get it out. His brows also started to tighten with annoyance growing in his eyes.

With some difficulty, He Jichen tried to pinch the cotton ball again, but in the end, he failed once again. Ji Yi, who became anxious just watching him, didn't think twice about reaching over and holding He Jichen's hand that held the tweezers.

Her sudden touch felt like a jolt of electricity to He Jichen, causing his body to tense up. He hesitantly looked up after a few seconds, looking over at her in disbelief.

When Ji Yi met his gaze, she realized what she had just done and pulled her fingers away from He Jichen's hand. Her eyes suddenly shifted left and right for a while as her face flushed. A little embarrassed, she softly said, "L-l-let me help you."

He Jichen stared firmly at Ji Yi without saying a word.

Ji Yi couldn't understand what was going through his mind; she couldn't tell if he needed help or not, so she didn't dare reach her hand out again. After some time, seeing as he didn't respond, she assumed he didn't actually need her help. Just as she was going to withdraw her hand, He Jichen's voice floated out: "Thanks."

Thanks?

Is he accepting my help?

Ji Yi looked up and shot a glance at him then realized he had his arm out, offering her the tweezers.

Ji Yi didn't say anything and quickly took the tweezers. She swiftly dipped the cotton ball into the alcohol then placed it onto the wound on He Jichen's palm.

Because it wasn't easy to disinfect the wound, Ji Yi reached her other hand out to steady He Jichen's right hand.

Her eyelashes gently trembled the moment their fingers touched, and after about three minutes passed, she forced herself to stay calm. She carefully helped disinfect his wound.

After she finished disinfecting the wound and placed the tweezers down, He Jichen pointed at the bottle of medicine on the table. "That's the ointment," reminded He Jichen.

Ji Yi let out an "Oh" then picked up the bottle and read the instructions on it before removing the lid. She poured out a little bit of ointment then gently smeared it onto He Jichen's palm.

Ji Yi was afraid the medicine would get rubbed away before it could soak into the wound, so she grabbed the bandage and wrapped it around his hand a few times. When she was sure the wound was

wrapped up well, she tore off the excess and quietly said, "I'm scared the bandage will fall apart, so I tied a tight knot there for you. When you remove the bandage, just use scissors to cut it."

He Jichen let out a gentle "Mhm."

Again, Ji Yi didn't respond right away. After she carefully secured the bandage, she finally said, "Or you can ask assistant Chen to help."

This time, He Jichen didn't let out a peep.

Ji Yi examined his hand to make sure there weren't any loose ends then she looked up. She was just about to say "all good" when she realized he was staring, transfixed at her.

Ji Yi's heart fell into a daze as the words she was about to say suddenly vanished.

It wasn't like she wasn't aware of how striking he looked, but when their eyes met, she still felt shocked at his stunning looks.

She never realized just how perfect his eyes were and how impossible they were to break free from. There was a clarity in the very depths of those eyes like the vast starry sky and a profound brightness which seduced people easily...

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Ji Yi wasn't sure just how long she and He Jichen were staring at each other for. It wasn't until her legs started to ache from crouching down that she snapped back to her senses.

She was actually still holding his hand. She hadn't let go...

Ji Yi hurriedly turned her gaze away from He Jichen and awkwardly loosened her fingers.

As the soft sensation of her hand disappeared, He Jichen furrowed his brows and instinctively looked down at his bandaged hand.

He stared at his empty fingertips for some time before he came to his senses.

As she applied the medicine, he stared at that serious expression on her face in a complete daze...

He Jichen secretly took a deep breath as he pushed down the wave of emotions in his chest. That was when he looked up at her.

She seemed embarrassed so her head was lowered, revealing a tinge of light red on her fair neck.

The atmosphere in the room became a little awkward since their eyes just met.

He Jichen lowered his gaze and fell deep in thought for a moment. Then he tried to break the awkwardness. "You...came looking for me?"

"I-I-I-..." Ji Yi, who hadn't thought of a good excuse, felt even more dumbfounded by He Jichen's question. She stammered for a long time before her eyes swept over to the takeout box on the coffee table. Just to mask her odd behavior, she handed He Jichen the bag. "...I came to drop off some food!"

“Drop off...some food?” He Jichen was transfixed by what Ji Yi said.

Seeing He Jichen’s reaction, Ji Yi realized what she just said.

Seeing as he hadn’t eaten much for dinner, she uncharacteristically ordered a portion of egg fried rice and delivered it to his room. But because they weren’t very close, she wavered at his door for quite some time, hesitating to knock... In the end, how did she manage to blurt out what she originally couldn’t bear to say...

To not embarrass herself, Ji Yi instinctively started to explain herself: “...In the evening, I saw that you didn’t eat much at the restaurant, so...”

As Ji Yi said this, she suddenly stopped.

Deep down, she was overcome with an urge to bite off her tongue.

She wanted to give herself a way out, to not make herself look so helpless, but how did it become even more of a mess the more she tried to explain...

Ji Yi hung her head down even lower. Not only did her neck turn red, but her ears turned completely red too.

He Jichen stared at Ji Yi as his heart instantly turned soft; he was reduced to a complete mess.

Though she stammered when she spoke, he could still make out that she saw he hadn’t eaten much at the restaurant, so she especially came to drop off some food for him...

Does that mean she was worried about me?

An indescribable sense of joy crept into He Jichen’s heart. He stared at Ji Yi’s eyes with a shocking warmth and said with an unexpectedly soft voice: “You... came here just for that?”

“No, no, no!” With no hesitation at all, Ji Yi denied what He Jichen said with three consecutive “No’s.”

The light in He Jichen’s eyes dimmed slightly.

Ji Yi tightened her balled up fists; she didn’t notice a change in He Jichen’s expression at all. With all her strength, she racked her brain for some time before she finally found an excuse to see He Jichen. She finally cried, “I came to apologize!”

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He Jichen furrowed his brows as confusion flashed in his eyes.

Yes yes yes, to apologize... this excuse is practically beyond brilliant!

Ji Yi secretly complimented herself on how quick-witted she was as she continued to tell He Jichen: “Even though Qian Ge’s people used so many cheap tricks on me, I still shouldn’t have gone to such drastic measures yesterday. After all, the production team isn’t my home. To completely readjust the shooting schedule must’ve messed with the actors and troubled the production crew. I’m terribly sorry.”

So she denied me with three consecutive “No’s” only because of this... Joy filled He Jichen’s heart as the dullness in his eyes was instantly swept away. His voice sounded a lot softer as he said, “It’s over now, so don’t worry about it.”

Ji Yi never imagined He Jichen had such a well-tempered side, so she was stunned as she gently said, “Mhm.” Then she quietly glanced up at the man.

With his left hand, he pulled out the box of egg fried rice from the bag she brought.

Seeing how inconvenient it was for He Jichen to use his left hand in the restaurant, Ji Yi hurriedly reached her hand out to grab the spoon she asked the waiter to pack.

She pulled the spoon out from the bag and wiped it with a tissue then loosened up the egg fried rice. After she finished scooping with the spoon, she handed it to He Jichen.

He Jichen didn’t take the spoon after he saw everything she did.

Ji Yi glanced up at He Jichen in confusion; his expression hadn’t changed – he was just as cold as usual, but there was a discreet glimmer of a smile in the corners of his eyes.

Stunned, Ji Yi wasn’t sure if she was just seeing things when He Jichen’s expression disappeared. He finally reached his hand out to take the spoon from her hands.

Ji Yi stayed by his side while he ate.

Seeing how tough it was for him to scoop the rice with his spoon, she reached her hand out and help him stir the rice apart occasionally.

The two of them were in sync. Even though they didn’t really talk to each other, the atmosphere seemed friendly.

When Ji Yi saw the bottom of the box of egg fried rice, she got up and walked over to the bar counter and made He Jichen a cup of coffee. When she carried the cup back to him, he already finished eating and was tapping away at his phone.

As Ji Yi gently placed the coffee in front of He Jichen, he looked up and shot her a glance. He pointed over at the sofa beside him and quietly said, “Please wait.” Then he lowered his head and tapped away on the phone with his left hand.

Ji Yi incidentally glanced over at He Jichen’s phone to see that he was replying to an email. Realizing that he was dealing with work, she sat silently to the side.

When she saw He Jichen on his phone, she remembered that she hadn’t touched her phone all day, so she pulled it out of her pocket.

Ji Yi unlocked the phone screen, opened WeChat out of habit, and noticed a series of notifications. Ji Yi swiped down, and after she finished sending Tang Huahua a reply, she looked down at a familiar name at the bottom of the screen: Yuguang Ge.

There were two unread messages.

The timestamp indicated they were sent past one in the morning last night.

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Last night when she didn't receive any reply from "He Yuguang," she assumed he already fell asleep, so she put her phone down and slept too.

She never imagined that he hadn't actually fallen asleep yet...

At that thought, Ji Yi tapped into the chat.

Aside from this "goodnight" message, there was another message. The message wasn't long: "You were never alone, you still have me."

You were never alone, you still have me... Was Yuguang Ge replying to my message: "I can only rely on myself in this world"?

Ji Yi's heart suddenly warmed and she stared transfixed at those words.

You still have me... Although those four words were simple and they weren't some vow of eternal love or a lover's gut-wrenching sweet words, she still thought they were unusually heart-warming.

Yes... As long as you've experienced betrayal, the lowest of the low, have nothing left and have to start life all over again, only then will you know that the words that'll make you feel the most secure in the world aren't "I love you," "I'll marry you," "I'll financially support you," nor "together"... but they were "you still have me."

...

After He Jichen finished working, the first thought he had was to look over at Ji Yi.

She was holding her phone, staring tenderly at something on her screen with a smile on the corners of her lips.

What's making her so happy?

He Jichen was curious, so he instinctively stretched his neck out and glanced over at Ji Yi's phone screen.

He quickly saw the three words "Yuguang Ge."

From the conversation on the screen, He Jichen easily recognized that it was WeChat.

Is she reading the chat between herself and "He Yuguang"?

He Jichen's brows twitched and he stretched his neck out further to get a better look at Ji Yi's phone.

The page displayed the conversation they had last night.

At the top were messages she sent him, but at the very end were his replies to her.

Is she really this happy over that conversation with "He Yuguang"?

Deep down, He Jichen started to feel an intensely bitter feeling. The next second, with his very own eyes, he saw Ji Yi gently stroke the words "You were never alone, you still have me" on her phone.

So, she isn't happy because of the conversation between her and "He Yuguang," but because of those words themselves?

He Jichen's heart was struck by a piercing sharp pain as he instinctively turned his head and looked out the window.

Didn't I send those words to her last night to cheer her up?

Now that she's so happy, shouldn't I feel happy too?

So there's nothing to be sad about... I achieved my goal, didn't I?

He Jichen repeatedly tried to comfort himself for a long time before the pain subsided.

He shifted his line of sight and he silently stared at the reflection of her silhouette through the window for a while. Just as he was about to turn his head and say something to her, his phone started to ring.

The sudden ring woke Ji Yi up.

When He Jichen picked up the phone, he watched through the reflection on the window as Ji Yi's fingers quivered while grabbing her phone.

He Jichen's gaze lingered over Ji Yi for two seconds then he looked down at the phone screen.

When he saw the name on his phone screen, he instinctively glanced at Ji Yi.

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When he saw who was calling, he instinctively looked up and shot Ji Yi a glance.

He wasn't in a hurry to pick up the call, so he got up and walked further away from Ji Yi before tapping the screen to take the call.

It was very quiet in the room, so even though He Jichen deliberately put some distance between himself and Ji Yi, she still managed to hear him say "hello." After being startled by his phone ringing, Ji Yi slowly turned her head and looked over towards him.

He stood with his tall and slender back to her.

The dazzling light penetrated through the window and landed on his body as he stood in front of the tall windows. With the radiating light pouring in, it formed a makeshift halo around him, making him seem deep and mysterious.

At that moment, Ji Yi couldn't quite tear her gaze away, nor could she shake the thought: I haven't seen him for a few years, and he's actually grown to become quite charming. There was a distinguishing air about him as bright as the dazzling light which actually adorned him quite well.

As Ji Yi was lost in her own world, He Jichen, who stood far away, spoke quietly again: "What did you find out?"

It wasn't clear what the person on the other side of the phone said, but after a couple seconds, He Jichen spoke again: "How was it?"

With that, He Jichen remained completely silent.

The person on the phone must've been speaking non-stop as He Jichen didn't for a second remove the phone from his ear.

She wasn't sure what the other person was reporting to him, but after about two minutes, Ji Yi clearly saw He Jichen's silhouette shake violently for a moment. With that, his posture became a little tense.

He had his back turned to her so she couldn't see his facial expression, but she sensed something about him was off in that moment.

He remained silent as he listened to the call. Finally, he spoke again with a little tremble in his voice: "It's been confirmed?"

Perhaps the person on the phone replied to him because seconds later, his fingers seemed to suddenly tremble for a moment.

He didn't say anything but maintained his posture as he listened to the call. However, Ji Yi could see how his knuckles protruded while he gripped his phone more tightly.

The person on the phone must've spoken for a long time or something triggered He Jichen because his body started to stagger like he'd lost it. All of a sudden, the phone slipped from his fingers and crashed hard to the ground.

With the loud "Pap!" Ji Yi bolted up from the sofa.

Although Ji Yi and He Jichen were some distance apart, Ji Yi could still hear a man cry out in a high pitch, "Chen Ge, what's wrong?" The man on the phone must've heard the phone drop.

He Jichen stood in the distance, stunned like his soul had left his body. He must've noticed his phone had fallen to the ground or heard the person on the phone screaming for him as he slowly turned around.

Ji Yi only glimpsed the side of his face, yet she realized just how frighteningly pale it looked.

Her heart thumped "ka-donk!" and before she could ask He Jichen what was wrong, he already ran into the bathroom in a panic.

Ji Yi was left stunned, staring at the bathroom door which was locked from the inside. Then she heard a voice from He Jichen's phone, "Chen Ge?"

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She instinctively looked back at the phone on the floor in front of the tall windows. The screen flickered on and off, and she could still hear the sound of someone on the phone every so often.

Ji Yi hesitated for a moment but eventually, she walked over and bent down to pick up He Jichen's phone.

From the call screen, Ji Yi could see that the name displayed was "Han Zhifan."

Ji Yi didn't know much about Han Zhifan, but she knew he was a local, rich friend of He Jichen.

"Chen Ge, don't be too sad..." said Han Zhifan again.

Ji Yi hurriedly raised the phone to her ear and gently told Han Zhifan that He Jichen couldn't hear him right now. "Hello, Mr. Han. Director He isn't on his phone right now. He's in the bathroom."

The phone instantly fell silent.

After some time passed, Han Zhifan spoke again. "Is Chen Ge in his room?"

If He Jichen wasn't in his own room, whose room would he be in?

Ji Yi thought Han Zhifan asked a ridiculous question but she politely replied, "Yes."

"I'll go..." On the phone, it sounded like Han Zhifan muttered something that resembled swear words then he asked, "So, you're... the supporting actress for "Three Thousand Lunatics," Ji Yi?"

"Eh?" I've never introduced myself before... Ji Yi was stunned. After a few seconds, she said inquisitively, "Have... we met?"

"Must we have met? It's easy to guess! Chen Ge's room..." Han Zhifan only said half of what he was going to say when he realized that he already revealed too much, so he suddenly swallowed the latter half of his sentence. "... do you think just anyone can casually walk in?"

Han Zhifan didn't finish speaking so Ji Yi was a little confused. After she let out an "Mm?" she was about to say "What?" when Han Zhifan changed the topic. "Right! How is Chen Ge right now?"

"He..." Ji Yi lost her train of thought, glanced over at the bathroom door, and answered honestly. "...hasn't come out of the bathroom."

Han Zhifan dragged out a long "Oh..." as he started thinking...

In all the years I've known He Jichen, I've never seen him so moved by a girl before.

He Jichen must be devastated right now after learning the truth, and the only person in the world who can comfort him and make him feel better might just be on the phone with me right now?

With that thought, Han Zhifan spoke again, "...Chen Ge's probably not feeling too good. If you aren't busy, please stay with him a little longer..."

Han Zhifan was afraid that what he said wouldn't be enough for Ji Yi to care, so after a pause, he continued with a serious tone of voice, "...If he doesn't come out of the bathroom after a long period, you have to check on him. Don't let anything happen to him while he's alone in there..."

...

On the other side of the locked bathroom door, He Jichen completely collapsed against the wooden door.

He shut his eyes and stayed there silently for a while before he dared to think back on what Han Zhifan just told him over the phone.

“Chen Ge, I investigated what you told me last night. Four years ago, Ji Yi had her abortion at the Health Care Center for Women and Children.”

“But it wasn’t really an abortion per se because the circumstances were a little special. She could never have kept the child.”

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“She had an ectopic pregnancy. When they found out what it was, she was already two months pregnant. The doctor said it was probably her first pregnancy and she didn’t really have any experience. Her period was late, yet she didn’t go to get it checked. She waited until her abdomen hurt and started bleeding before someone took her to the hospital.”

“Ectopic pregnancies are really dangerous, so when she was taken to the hospital and showed signs of bleeding, the situation was dire. The doctor arranged for an emergency operation.”

“During the operation, she bled excessively. I took a trip to the Health Care Center for Women and Children where she had her operation and spoke with the doctor to get an understanding of what happened. She said that at the time, Ji Yi almost lost her life on the operating table. Her heart really stopped beating, but the doctor practically called all the resident doctors over. They resuscitated her for two whole minutes before they pulled her back from death’s door...”

Ectopic pregnancy, bleeding, emergency operation, excessive bleeding, heart stopped beating, at death’s door... He Jichen’s heart was tugged harshly as each and every one of those cruel words flashed across his mind.

They were young back then. At Sucheng Yizhong, her one phrase “Give them a condom each” and the silhouette of her back caught He Jichen’s attention.

At the time, he was young and reckless, fearless of any consequences, and grossly overestimated himself because of his ignorance about the world. He took advantage of the fact that nobody dared to mess with him at Sucheng Yizhong to order Fatty to search through all the classrooms, looking for her.

From the very moment he bumped into her at his house, he quietly and unknowingly started to change for her.

He studied hard just to help her highlight the key points in her textbook.

He stopped staying out late and came home on time, just to see her.

He protected her no matter what. He protected her so much that his underlings didn’t dare disturb her in fear that if they spoke out of turn to her and upset her, they’d be dragged out to the grove behind the school for a violent beating.

He figured that he did so much for her. He came from a good background and he was surrounded by people who served him well. When did he ever have to work to win anyone's favor? So, when he found out that the person in Ji Yi's heart wasn't him, he was jealous, envious, and assumed that she didn't know a good thing when she saw it...

He really considered wiping her clean from his world and finding someone better, but he couldn't do it. Yet, he couldn't bring himself to see her, so he sneakily came to visit her once a month in Beijing.

At the time, he thought he treated her really well... so well in fact that even he was touched. So after they met again, he couldn't take it when she tried to distance herself, run away from him, or wanted to have nothing to do with him. Whenever he couldn't handle how she treated him, he thought up ways to hurt her the same way she hurt him.

He didn't realize until after he took Han Zhifan's call just now how much of a b*stard, just how repulsive he was.

Did he love her? He truly loved her. For all his life, he gave her his good side, his bad side, his aggrieved side, his crazy side... everything.

But his so-called love hurt her the deepest.

He always thought that Qian Ge setting her up for a car accident which put her in a three-year coma was the vilest, most inexcusable thing to do.

But he realized in that very moment: how was he any different from Qian Ge? Didn't he also almost make her lose her life?

At that thought, He Jichen raised his hand up to his face and harshly slapped himself twice on the face.

Although he realized he loved her, he equally loved preserving his pride and dignity.

Yeah, he loved her, but he didn't know how to love, nor had he ever learned how to love.

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He wasn't sure if he felt regret or heartache over her almost losing her life four years ago. He Jichen furrowed his brows hard and pursed his lips tightly.

He felt like something had violently torn his heart apart. The pain made it hard for him to breathe.

He truly was a b*stard. At first, during the audition for "The Palace" when Qian Ge told him Ji Yi hadn't wanted his child and aborted the baby straight away, he actually believed it. He was actually sad about it.

He was truly repulsive. He actually had the gall to be jealous when he saw how she smiled as she read He Yuguang's message?

It hurt. His heart really hurt. It hurt so much he thought he was going to die.

But the pain he felt wasn't for himself but it was for her.

So this is what real heartache feels like; a pain that makes you wish you were dead, a heart-torn, gut-wrenching feeling...

He Jichen's entire body started to tremble from the pain then he forced himself to walk over to the sink. He stroked the ashtray, lit a cigarette, and started to take big drags as though he was torturing himself.

...

After hanging up Han Zhifan's call, Ji Yi started to worry since He Jichen still hadn't come out from the bathroom. She circled the room twice over. She couldn't help but walk over to the bathroom door, raise her hand, and knock the door.

She was met with a wall of silence.

Ji Yi waited for some time, but seeing as there seemed to be no movement at the door, she couldn't help but put her ear to the door.

It wasn't clear if the hotel was soundproof, but Ji Yi tried to listen intently for a long time, yet she still couldn't hear any movement.

What's he doing inside? Did I knock too softly so he hasn't heard me?

With that thought, Ji Yi knocked on the door again but this time, she knocked harder than before.

"Bang! Bang! Bang!" rang the door for some time, but there was no sign of it opening.

Ji Yi's heart started to grow a little uneasy.

Something couldn't have happened like Han Zhifan said, right? He Jichen doesn't look like someone who would take things too hard... But when he went to the bathroom, he really didn't look too good. Han Zhifan even told me that if he doesn't come out from the bathroom, I should definitely go check on him...

At that thought, Ji Yi was completely rattled. She went from smacking the door to kicking it until her feet hurt, but there was still no reaction from the person inside the bathroom.

All of a sudden, Ji Yi stopped caring about anything else. She walked around the room turning things over and throwing things around left and right until the entire room was in shambles. Yet she still couldn't find anything to break the door.

She was so worried that her forehead was drenched in sweat. Then she rushed over to the bathroom door and kicked it with all her might.

The sheer pain from the blow against her feet made her eyes water.

She raised her leg to hug her foot. Then, she suddenly had an idea. She hobbled out of He Jichen's room and chose the room opposite and hurled herself at the door, kicking and punching.

"Who is it?!" Because the smacking at the door was non-stop, the person who opened it was little annoyed. After his angry reply to Ji Yi, he pulled the door open.

It was the assistant director who opened the door. Over his shoulder, Ji Yi saw that the casting director and the male lead were sitting in his room.

There was a plate of fruit and beers on the table. The three of them were probably hanging out.

The assistant director was clearly stunned to see Ji Yi as he cried “Ji Yi?” in disbelief. Before he could ask why she was there, Ji Yi reached her hand out, grabbed the assistant director by the arm, and dragged him into He Jichen’s room.

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Ji Yi dragged the assistant director all the way to the bathroom door. Without giving him any reason at all, she pointed at the door and said, “Assistant director, quickly think of a way to break the door down!”

Break the door down?

The assistant director silently looked at Ji Yi like she was crazy.

Seeing as the assistant director didn’t move, Ji Yi ushered him again, “Assistant director, what are you doing looking so stunned? Hurry!”

“No, out of nowhere, you want me to break...”

Before the assistant director could finish, Ji Yi was in such a hurry that she looked like she was going to stomp angrily at any time. She cried, “Assistant director! Quit asking so many questions and quickly break down the door, alright?! He Jichen’s in there! If you act too slow, someone’s going to die!”

Die?

When he heard those words, the assistant director burst out laughing. “Ji Yi, your joke is pretty good...”

“I’m not joking. It’s true, He Jichen has been in the bathroom for some time now and he still hasn’t come out. He didn’t look good when he walked in, and Han Zhifan just advised me that if he doesn’t come out, I have to go in to check on him. He said something will happen to him...” The more Ji Yi spoke, the more anxious she got as tears started to pour out.

Seeing how distressed she looked, the assistant director started to take her seriously. “You’re saying Han Zhifan advised you?”

Ji Yi nodded.

The expression on the assistant director’s face changed, and without any hesitation, he yelled for the casting director and male lead to come over.

The casting director and male lead saw the anxiety on the assistant director’s face and realized it was an emergency. Without asking, they immediately followed the assistant director’s plan. The three of them got together and charged at the door, kicking it open.

As the door fell to the ground, it let out a loud “Bang—.” The sight of He Jichen leaning against the sink while smoking came into view.

He Jichen, who was immersed in his own thoughts, furrowed his brows and looked up at the four people on the other side of the door.

After meeting his gaze, they were completely frozen on the spot.

The assistant director, who stood right in the middle, stared at He Jichen in a daze. He finally realized something.

Didn't she say... someone's going to die?

The assistant director turned around and glanced at Ji Yi then realized that He Jichen looked just fine. Without thinking twice, he betrayed Ji Yi. "It was Ji Yi's idea. She said you wanted to commit suicide..."

As the assistant director finished speaking, He Jichen's gaze fell on Ji Yi's face.

This group of people had been around He Jichen for a long time, so they knew just how frightening his temper was and were afraid he'd get angry. Seeing that he was looking at Ji Yi, the assistant director used that opportunity to shoot glances at the other two next to him. Then the three of them quickly slipped out of He Jichen's room.

The sound of the door closing dumfounded Ji Yi and woke her up from her daze.

She finally realized his gaze had drifted to the mess around the room behind her.

Didn't Han Zhifan tell me that something would happen? But in the end, he was just in the bathroom smoking. Meanwhile, I completely turned his room upside down...

Ji Yi awkwardly bit her bottom lip, looked down, and spoke in a quiet voice, "Han Zhifan told me that something was going to happen to you..."

He Jichen didn't say anything but let his gaze fall back onto Ji Yi. He saw her fair neck was drenched in sweat.

Ji Yi didn't dare look at He Jichen. She waited for a while, but seeing as He Jichen didn't react, all she could do was continue to explain herself in a somber voice. "...I knocked on the door for so long, but you didn't even react. I thought it was just as Han Zhifan said, that you..."

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Up until that point, Ji Yi hadn't finished saying the two words "commit suicide" when she suddenly fell silent for two seconds. Then she timidly said, "Don't be mad. When I saw you go into the bathroom with that awful look on your face, I was a little worried, so..."

Worried? He Jichen's fingers trembled slightly as he pinched the cigarette.

Ji Yi looked down and thought about it for a moment then continued to quietly say, "I'll help you pay for any damages to the room. About the room... I'll tidy it up for you now..."

As she said that, Ji Yi turned around.

Before she could approach the mess on the ground, He Jichen suddenly raised his hand, threw his cigarette into the trash can, and took big strides over to her.

Ji Yi sensed He Jichen drawing close as she instinctively turned her head. Before she caught sight of his eyes, he grabbed her arm and pulled her swiftly into his arms, embracing her tightly.

The man's unique scent instantly enveloped Ji Yi's entire body.

She was stunned at first, but after three whole seconds, she realized what they were doing. Her body froze, her heart was startled, and a second later, she was so flustered that she started to struggle out of He Jichen's embrace.

He Jichen realized what she was doing, because the moment she struggled, he hugged her even more tightly. He didn't give her the slightest opportunity to break free.

Through the man's thin clothing, Ji Yi could clearly feel the warmth radiating from his body.

Her heartbeat and consciousness started to become confused, shy, and uncomfortable. She nervously held her breath and her face looked like it was on fire as it was completely flushed and warm.

She wanted to struggle out of his grip so badly.

He Jichen remembered the wound on her waist, so he didn't dare hug her too tight because he was afraid to hurt her. At the same time, she fought him even harder, but just as she was going to break free from his embrace, he suddenly said, "Can you give me a hug?"

He sounded very gently, yet there was an indescribable sense of sadness.

Ji Yi's heart felt like it had been pierced by something as a sharp pain started to surface. All of a sudden, she came to a complete stop, frozen on the spot.

After about three seconds, Ji Yi cried, "I..."

She said just one word, but He Jichen figured she was going to reject him, so he quickly spoke first. "Give me a hug. Just for a while. Just a while..."

He Jichen sounded a lot gentler compared to how sad he sounded a moment ago. Ji Yi wasn't sure if it was all in her head, but she thought she actually heard him beg.

For a man so arrogant and proud, why would he beg anything of me?

In the midst of Ji Yi's astonishment, she heard He Jichen's voice from above her head. "...as friends. Is that okay?"

Friend... To Ji Yi, he was once her most important friend when they were young...

Ji Yi wanted to reject He Jichen but the words seemed lodged in her throat. No matter how hard she tried, the words wouldn't come out.

Her silence and hesitation gave He Jichen a sliver of hope as he slowly tightened his arms, hugging her in his arms.

Unlike before when she tried to push away from him, her body was now tensed up.

He carefully held her a little tighter. Seeing as she didn't fight back, he slowly lowered his head and buried his face in her hair.