

Chapter 331: Have You Ever Regretted Anything? (1)

Before Fatty could finish talking, a voice interrupted what he was going to say. "Fatty."

When Fatty heard this, he suddenly stopped the word "you" from slipping out. At the same time, Fatty and Ji Yi turned their heads reflexively towards the source of the sound.

It was He Jichen, returning from his fit of anger. It wasn't clear when he made it back to the room. Despite being quite some distance away from Ji Yi and Fatty, Ji Yi could still clearly smell the thick smell of cigarettes on his body.

After he left, did he go smoke by himself?

Ji Yi furrowed her eyebrows slightly then heard He Jichen's voice drift over. "I have something to discuss with him. Please wait here for a moment."

After hearing He Jichen speak, Ji Yi's attention was drawn to his body then she realized he was talking to her.

The expression on his face looked extremely serious.

Ji Yi understood he and Fatty had something important to talk about, so she gave a gentle nod.

With her silent response, He Jichen's gaze fell on Fatty. "Come outside for a moment."

"What's up? Did something happen?" said Fatty, puzzled.

Seeing as Fatty didn't move from his chair, He Jichen furrowed his brows and repeated himself with a heavier tone and simplified words: "Come out!"

Fatty didn't dare fight back, so he put the wine bottle down and quickly got up.

He Jichen waited until Fatty left the private room and softly shut the door.

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"What's up Chen Ge? What's so important that you couldn't stay in the room? Why do we have to step out?" asked Fatty as he walked beside He Jichen.

He Jichen deliberately ignored him and continued walking until they were quite some distance away from the room. He Jichen suddenly stopped and looked at Fatty with a sense of urgency. "After I stepped out, what did you talk to her about?"

Fatty's heart was terrified by the serious expression on He Jichen's face. He stuttered, "Nah, nothing."

He Jichen's brows twitched.

Fatty hastily and honestly fessed up to what he told Ji Yi in great detail.

After He Jichen confirmed that Fatty didn't let slip that He Yuguang passed away or that the person he liked was her, he shut his eyes and let out a sigh of relief.

Fatty and He Jichen had known each other for many years, so he knew him very well. Seeing him react like that, Fatty instantly understood why he called him out of the room.

Fatty pursed his lips slightly and was silent for a moment before he said, "Chen Ge, you stopped me just now because you were afraid I'd tell her she's Cola girl, right?"

He Jichen silently glanced over at Fatty. He reached for a pack of cigarettes in his pocket and handed Fatty one.

Fatty didn't take it but moved his lips instead: "Chen Ge, why didn't you let me tell her? Why don't you let her know that the Cola girl you were searching for back then was her?"

He Jichen still didn't say anything. He retracted the cigarette he offered Fatty and shoved it between his lips then lit it up.

"Chen Ge, I don't understand. In the third year of senior high, you already had your mind set on confessing to her after graduation. It's been four years now – what's there to worry about? Why can't you let her know that she's the person you like? What's more, you've liked her for years!"

Chapter 332: Have You Ever Regretted Anything? (2)

He Jichen's eyelids blinked leisurely as he silently took a drag. He acted as though he hadn't heard Fatty's overbearing questions.

"Chen Ge, if you like her, just go for her! If you don't tell her, how would she know that you like her? If another man took a little more initiative and got together with her, you'd be the one crying!"

Darkness flashed in his eyes as He Jichen's fingers trembled with the cigarette between them.

His Adam's apple bobbed up and down, yet he didn't say a word and continued to put the cigarette to his lips.

"Chen Ge, is this the time to still play cool? Alright, if you won't say it, I will! If you don't chase her, then I'll think of ways to help you!" After he said that, Fatty turned right around and headed for the room with impatience and resentment.

"Chase? You think I want to chase her?" After staying quiet for a long time, He Jichen finally spoke up. "I dream about chasing her; all I want to do is stand outside her dorm every day just to give her breakfast; when it's stormy outside, I want to be able to hold an umbrella out for her; when she's not feeling well, I want to carry her to the hospital..."

Fatty stopped walking but he didn't turn to glance at He Jichen.

"I even thought about the whole setting and how I was going to confess. Deep down, I went through my lines an infinite amount of times, but Fatty, did you know? I was afraid. I was afraid she wouldn't believe

me. I was afraid that after I confessed, we'd be saying our farewells. I was afraid that she'd be put in a difficult spot because she liked He Yuguang."

Hearing the last line, Fatty abruptly turned his head and looked over at He Jichen. "Chen Ge... did you say that Ji Yi... she-she likes Yuguang Ge?"

He Jichen didn't respond, acting as if he hadn't heard Fatty.

With deep sorrow across his forehead, He Jichen stared at the traditional painting of a beautiful woman on the wall.

He looked as though he was stuck in a difficult and upsetting situation he couldn't get out of. He took big drags of his cigarette, and after a long while, he slowly turned to look at Fatty. "Fatty..."

His voice sounded a little far off as he said, "Have you ever regretted anything? I'm talking about the kind of regret you feel when you can't forgive yourself no matter how you think about it."

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Ji Yi was the only one left in the room.

She opened the boxes of takeout that Fatty brought and picked some snacks that she liked. She took a few bites but felt too full, so she pulled out a tissue to wipe her mouth clean.

Sitting in the room by herself, she was so bored that she swiped her phone lazily for a while to check out her Weibo and Moments. Seeing as there really wasn't much to look at, Ji Yi figured she might as well put her phone away.

Perhaps it was because Fatty got interrupted by He Jichen at an important moment that Ji Yi was still very curious inside. With nothing to do, she thought back to "Cola girl" again.

From Fatty's tone, it was no secret who Cola girl was and she should know who it was...

Ji Yi furrowed her brows and racked her brain over it for a long time, but she couldn't remember any of the girls who were close to He Jichen. In the end, she simply shook her head and gave up thinking about it. She was going to ask Fatty when he came back.

With no idea where the two of them went to talk, Ji Yi noticed they still hadn't returned yet, but she wanted to go to the restroom. She called for a waiter to let them know they hadn't finished eating yet. Then she headed for the corridors and walked in the direction of the restroom.

After walking for about twenty meters, she reached the corner of the stairway. Before she made a turn, Ji Yi stumbled upon He Jichen's and Fatty's voices.

What a coincidence... The two of them are out here?

Chapter 333: Have You Ever Regretted Anything? (3)

Ji Yi furrowed her eyebrows slightly and took two steps forward. She was planning to say "hello" to them both.

Just as that thought settled in her mind, before she lifted her feet, she heard the sadness in He Jichen's voice as he said: "Have you ever regretted anything?"

Ji Yi's heart suddenly tightened up and her feet came to a sudden stop.

He Jichen's clear yet absent-minded voice immediately drifted over, "I'm talking about the kind of regret you feel when you can't forgive yourself no matter how you think about it."

He Jichen called Fatty out just to have a heart-to-heart?

But why's he asking Fatty this? Could there be something he regrets?

After He Jichen finished speaking, Fatty didn't respond.

A long period of silence ensued. Ji Yi couldn't see past the turn in the corridor or what kind of scene unfolded, so she couldn't help but wonder if the two of them had left already.

Ji Yi hesitated for some time. As she got ready to peer over to sneak a look at them, He Jichen finally spoke again. "I have."

His abrupt voice made Ji Yi instinctively shrink back. Then she heard He Jichen's voice again: "It was four years ago today."

Four years ago today, I was drunk and mistook him for He Yuguang then the two of us had sex... The regretful thing he did couldn't be...

Ji Yi was afraid she was overthinking things. When her thoughts came to this point, her rationality helped her force down these thoughts, preventing her from going any further.

Fatty must've been listening earnestly as he didn't say anything from start to end.

After about a minute passed, He Jichen's neutral voice was heard again: "To this day, I remember how I did the most regrettable thing in my life at twenty-four minutes past ten that evening."

Twenty-four minutes past ten... At the time, we were together in the hotel room. That exact time was when we were sleeping together...

So, my guess was right.

Ji Yi's fingertips trembled as she instinctively tightened them into fists.

"Had I known all the things that would happen after, had I known just how guilty and ashamed I would feel now..." He Jichen paused for a while as though it was hard for him to go on, then he continued to say, "...then I wouldn't have done what I did that night."

Fatty broke his own silence and finally said, "Chen Ge..."

He probably wanted to comfort He Jichen, but after calling his name, Fatty didn't know what to say next so he stopped there.

It seemed like He Jichen hadn't heard Fatty's voice as he was still deep in his own thoughts. With the same soft voice, he continued, "If you experienced just how beautiful those years at Sucheng Yizhong

were... You don't know just how much I miss them. Recently, I've practically been dreaming about her every night..."

Considering what He Jichen said, Ji Yi suddenly thought back to He Jichen's recent apology and what he said that night on her birthday about going back to how things were.

He said so many horrid things, humiliated her, embarrassed her, and even almost made her lose her life on the operating table after that night four years ago...

It was virtually impossible not to hate him.

So in the face of his apology, she remained quiet. She looked as though she didn't know how to react, but she knew very well how she felt. Deep down inside, she simply couldn't believe him.

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In that very moment, she overheard his conversation with Fatty and realized that he truly was regretful and ashamed for that night.

He even missed their younger years together as well as the time they missed out on.

So he was serious when he apologized to her that night. On the night of her birthday, when he suggested that they go back to how things were in the past, he was being serious too.

It felt like something crashed softly into her heart, creating ripples upon ripples in her body, which had no way of calming down.

The two people around the corner didn't say anything further. Ji Yi vaguely heard the flick of a lighter as someone lit a cigarette.

She took two deep breaths, trying to calm her nerves but to no avail.

Her heart raced faster, and the waves in her body grew more violent. Her leg started to tremble as she took a step back and leaned against the wall. She stared at the lights on the opposite side of the wall, and memories of every little thing that happened between them flashed across her mind...

She felt like there was a rubber band around her heart being pulled at each end.

Forgive, don't forgive, don't forgive, forgive... It repeated until eventually, her gaze became vacant and hesitant.

After who knew how much time had passed, Ji Yi heard the faint sound of Fatty's voice. "Chen Ge, it's getting late. I should head back now. It's probably bad to leave Ji Yi alone in the room by herself..."

She twitched her brows then heard He Jichen mumble, "Mhm."

Then there were sounds of footsteps.

With her back against the wall, Ji Yi suddenly snapped out of her daze.

If they bumped into her here, wouldn't they know she'd been eavesdropping?

The next second, Ji Yi straightened up and bolted back to the room.

As she sat back in her seat, Ji Yi was afraid He Jichen and Fatty would notice something amiss, so she pulled out her phone in hurry. She randomly opened Weibo and stared at her phone screen, pretending to be deeply invested in what she was reading.

She hadn't taken a single word in when the door behind her was pushed open. One after the other, He Jichen and Fatty walked in.

Ji Yi's back tensed up for a moment as she pretended to be captivated by her phone, not noticing that the two of them had returned. She stared at the phone screen and steadied her haggard breaths from all the running she just did.

Deep down, she was trying to keep it together. Until she was certain she wouldn't expose anything odd about her, she acted as though she didn't realize that they'd returned. Finally, she turned her head suspiciously and stared at the two of them. "Heyyyyy, you guys are back?"

It was unclear if it was because Fatty said too much earlier, but there seemed to be a faint hint of sorrow in He Jichen's eyes.

She caught just a glimpse of it on his normally emotionless face, but it was enough to make Ji Yi think back to what she secretly overheard. Her heart suddenly skipped a beat, and her gaze hurriedly darted over to the view of West Lake outside the window. She said, "The food's cold now. Are you guys hungry? Do you guys want to order anything else?"

He Jichen didn't say anything. He pulled out a chair and sat down.

"Nah," replied Fatty.

Ji Yi let out an "oh!" Since she had too many things on her mind, Ji Yi didn't say anything else.

Thankfully, the ever-talkative Fatty was there, so the atmosphere in the room wasn't awkward.

Chapter 335: Have You Ever Regretted Anything? (5)

Half an hour after returning to the party room, He Jichen and Fatty wrapped up the party.

He Jichen paid the bill and the three of them exited Lou Wailou.

Fatty was in Hangzhou for work, so his company booked him a hotel room. Back at the party room, he already called for a taxi.

The three of them stood outside Lou Wailou opposite the West Lake. Less than two minutes later, Fatty's taxi arrived.

Fatty had a little too much to drink, so he had his arm around He Jichen's shoulder. They repeatedly said their farewells until the driver rolled down the window and rushed them. Fatty pulled the car door open and got in.

The taxi slowly sped up and Fatty stuck his head out. He continued to talk endlessly until the car had driven off into the distance and they could no longer hear his voice; Ji Yi could still see Fatty's hand waving.

The car took a turn and disappeared from sight.

That was when He Jichen withdrew his eyes from where Fatty's car had just been.

It was already ten in the evening and the heat from the day had subsided significantly. The night breeze blew over the West Lake and mixed with the chill from the surface of the water. The temperature was perfect and pleasing.

There were quite a few people strolling along the path of willow trees by the lake. The lotus flowers on the lake's surface just bloomed, and under the street lights, they looked unusually beautiful.

He Jichen stared at the lake for a moment then suddenly asked, "Walk?"

Ji Yi knew He Jichen meant to ask her for a stroll by the West Lake. She was stunned for a second before she gave a nod and gently replied, "Alright."

He Jichen didn't say anything as he pointed towards the Duan Bridge. He walked on straight ahead.

Ji Yi followed behind.

He Jichen didn't walk quickly but his legs were long, so one of his steps was equivalent to two of Ji Yi's steps. To avoid falling too far behind, all Ji Yi could do was walk faster.

After walking for about five minutes, He Jichen noticed Ji Yi was having trouble keeping up, so he walked a little slower.

Even though he didn't say anything, Ji Yi understood the reason behind his change in pace.

She knew he purposefully slowed down because she was walking so hastily to keep up.

Ji Yi's heart warmed all of a sudden, and she couldn't help but turn her head to glance over at He Jichen.

He was looking straight ahead as he walked leisurely under the dim light of the lampposts by the lake. The light blurred her vision, but his elegance and distinguished air were obvious.

Behind him, the willow trees stirred in the wind, the lotus flowers swayed, and the water rippled.

The entire picture was frighteningly beautiful; the scene was visually-appeasing and calming to the mind. Ji Yi couldn't help but stare a while longer. When she withdrew her gaze, she happened to notice two young girls secretly taking photos of He Jichen with their phones.

Ji Yi instinctively turned her head and stared right at the two girls.

One of them noticed her gaze and gently nudged the other girl who had her phone raised, taking photos non-stop.

The other girl's face was flushed as she instinctively put her phone away. Then she pulled the other girl along and they quickly ran away.

Ji Yi couldn't help but smile as she watched the backs of the two girls rushing away.

He Jichen happened to turn to Ji Yi at this moment and realized that her lips were curved into a smirk. "Why're you smiling?" inquired He Jichen quietly.

The two of them hadn't said much to one another from the moment they started their stroll.

When Ji Yi heard this, she hesitated for a moment but replied, "Two girls were secretly taking photos of you just now, so I stared at them and scared them away."

"Mm," responded He Jichen. Considering how unfazed he looked, it seemed like this was a normal occurrence – people often took photos of him eating.

Chapter 336: Have You Ever Regretted Anything? (6)

For the most part, Fatty brought up a lot about their past over dinner that night, so Ji Yi's thoughts still hadn't completely returned from those memories. After she heard He Jichen's response, she couldn't help but say, "Back then, so many girls secretly took photos of you in school, and there were so many girls who used your photo as their screensaver!"

In actuality, He Jichen had absolutely no interest in how girls treated him, but since those words came from her mouth, he didn't mind discussing whatever topic with her as long as he could talk to her. This was why he turned to look at her and pretended to look shocked. "Really?" he replied.

Ji Yi thought He Jichen would be really happy as she gave him an earnest nod. "Of course."

She was afraid he wouldn't believe her, so she gave an example. "The classmate who shared my table – Xiao Li – you've met her before but I'm not sure if you remember her. Anyways, you were her screensaver on her phone. You were even the background to her QQ chat screen."

He had forgotten just how many years it'd been since they spoke calmly like this together. For some reason, He Jichen was in a great mood as his voice became relaxed. "Something like that happened?"

"Yeah, at the time, you were every girl's dream guy..." Ji Yi paused for a moment then said, "...Back then, the girls would get together and talk mostly about you. Everyone was curious to know what kind of girl you liked..."

As Ji Yi said this, she suddenly remembered what Fatty said about that "Cola girl."

She originally wanted to wait for Fatty to get back to ask who "Cola girl" was, but she ended up overhearing He Jichen and Fatty's conversation and got distracted. She ended up completely pushing the matter to the back of her mind...

At that thought, Ji Yi turned and glanced over at He Jichen.

For some reason, the man looked as though he was in a great mood; his brows were relaxed and he had a slight smile on his mouth. His usual distant feeling seemed a lot more approachable.



With He Jichen like this, Ji Yi felt a lot braver; she couldn't help but ask the question that had always been on her mind. "Tonight, Fatty and I were talking and happened to mention that Cola girl. He said she was the girl you liked?" asked Ji Yi bravely.

He Jichen never imagined that she would suddenly ask about his private life. After a pause, he gently nodded and responded with an "Mhm."

Seeing as he didn't reject her question, Ji Yi got even braver and figured she'd open up the conversation. "So did you eventually find her?"

"Yeah." After He Jichen answered, he silently added in his mind: And she happens to be by my side right now.

"Who is she? Did you get to know her?" blurted Ji Yi.

He Jichen kept silent for some time then answered the second question. "You know her."

I know her? Then who is she? I never saw He Jichen get close to any girl. Could it be that we weren't really close when he and Cola girl ended it?

With that thought, Ji Yi glanced over at He Jichen again and noticed a gloomy look in his eyes.

He became that sad simply at the mention of Cola girl, so my guess was probably right... Also, he didn't tell me who Cola girl was. Was that because he didn't want to bring up the name that made him feel so heart-broken?

Nevertheless, what kind of girl did a near-perfect man like He Jichen fall for?

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If this was before, Ji Yi would definitely treat He Jichen differently. She didn't even notice it herself, but she actually took an interest in the girl He Jichen liked. Deep down inside, she didn't think too much of it and she asked, "She must be very special for you to like her, right?"

"Mhm, she's very pretty..." A second ago, He Jichen looked desolate, but when he opened his mouth and talked about the girl he liked, his face became a little warmer. "... her back looks beautiful. She's most charming when has her long hair down. She's very smart, and has a wit deep in her bones that very few girls have..."

As he said that last part, there was a subtle hint of a smile in his eyes as though he was sharing something he was proud of. His voice had a loving feel to it that even he didn't notice. "When she smiles, her face has two little dimples... Mm, she's a good dancer... her body is so flexible like she has no bones..."

Ji Yi stared at how gentle He Jichen looked, deep in thought and slightly dazed.

She never knew he actually had such a tender and soft side. He was so similar to the leading male characters from the manhua 1 she secretly read in class when she was younger...

She wasn't sure if something was wrong with her or if it was her growing interest in Cola girl, but her chest started to heave unusually and she wasn't feeling too good. However, it was subtle, so she quickly continued the conversation to mask it. "Hearing you talk about her like this – she must be really special and exceptional. In other people's eyes, she must be the type of girl to make others jealous, right?"

A warm glow engulfed He Jichen's body; it was evident he didn't want to stop talking about her. "I don't care if she's good or not in other people's eyes. In my eyes, she's unique – the best in the world."

Those kinds of words were sappy but moving. If they came from the mouths of other men, they would look like a bunch of smooth-talkers.

But coming from He Jichen, all Ji Yi sensed were deep emotions and seriousness.

Deep down inside, Ji Yi tried to repress the uncomfortable feeling she just had. She thought maybe she'd been deeply moved by He Jichen's feelings. After she gulped, swallowing the uncomfortable feeling in her chest, she casually said, "Looks like you really like her..."

His slow steps towards Ji Yi came to a sudden stop.

Ji Yi instinctively stopped too and stared at He Jichen in astonishment.

She wasn't sure when, but he had turned to look at her. His eyes were unusually bright as though the surrounding light around them gathered in his eyes.

His gaze met hers, locking onto each other tightly. He sounded a lot more resolute than the gentle person just moments ago. "Really like... like her so much that if I stare at her too long, I want to embrace her."

Ji Yi was stunned as she stared back into He Jichen's eyes. She was slow to react.

It was unclear just how long she was in a daze for, but a night's breeze blew in a chill that made Ji Yi shiver, making her snap back to her senses.

She realized she was still staring blankly at He Jichen. With a flustered heart, she hurriedly withdrew her gaze and stared at the road ahead and silently strode away.

After about ten seconds, Ji Yi heard the sound of He Jichen from behind. She knew he caught up to her, and it made her heart race uncontrollably faster.

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She was afraid he could tell she was nervous, so to mask her strange behavior, she pretended like nothing was out of the ordinary when he walked up to her. She asked a question to divert his attention: "Did she and you get into some kind of misunderstanding?"

Otherwise, how's it possible that we were close for so long, yet I never saw him being affectionate with any girls before?

"It wasn't a misunderstanding. I upset her," explained He Jichen.

Upset her? Then why didn't you go ask her for forgiveness?

Ji Yi furrowed her brows slightly and asked the question she was wondering deep inside: "Then why didn't you go suck up to her? Girls love that. As long as you suck up to her a little, she'll forgive you for sure. Isn't there a saying on Weibo? When you fight, give her lipstick. If one lipstick can't clear things up, give her two, and if two don't do the trick, then send her a whole set of them!"

Ji Yi's serious tone of voice almost wiped the smile from He Jichen's face. After that, a pang of loneliness came over him.

If sucking up to her a little could bring her back to him, he would be willing to do that a thousand times over.

It was just a shame that in the past, he didn't know how to love. He was overly confused, and he took things too far, far too many times.

This was something he didn't dare to talk about any further. He was afraid she'd read between the lines and realize she was Cola girl.

He Jichen stared at the ripples of light reflecting off the lake's surface. After remaining silent for some time, he chose a cautious reply: "I used to look for her forgiveness, but after a while, I didn't want it anymore."

"Why?" cried Ji Yi.

After a pause, she added, "Could it be that you wanted to... give up on..."

Before Ji Yi could finish saying "her," He Jichen spoke again, "It doesn't exist."

With his straight-forwardness and decisiveness, Ji Yi paused. Then before she could make a sound, he spoke again without hesitation, "I could never give up on her!"

"I was just afraid to become a nuisance to her. I didn't want my deep devotion to become a disturbance to her."

He Jichen probably realized that his tone of voice was overly agitated, so he calmed down slightly and continued, "But it doesn't actually matter if she forgives me or not, because I can't leave her be anyway. Instead of the two of us being in pain, I'd rather bear it alone..."

As he said this, He Jichen thought back to that night when he learned that she almost lost her life because of his baby. His eyes became unfocused as he pursed his lips slightly and opened his mouth again. "But it took me a long time to learn this principle. If I understood this long ago, then perhaps I..."

An unspeakable pain was lodged in He Jichen's throat, and he couldn't bring himself to say, "...wouldn't have parted ways and become strangers for so many years."

He was silent for a long time. Just when Ji Yi thought he wasn't going to say anything more, he spoke again. "...But it doesn't matter anymore. She's the only good thing in my life, yet she's also my worst memory."

She's the only good thing in my life, yet she's also my worst memory.

To love on such a level must mean he's deeply in love.

It felt like Ji Yi's heart was pierced by something so hard that an indescribable pain came over her.

She wanted to offer some words of comfort, but in that very moment, she couldn't speak a single word.

Her silence made He Jichen realize how awkward the atmosphere was. He slowly composed himself and pretended to look calm as he changed the topic of conversation. "It's getting late. Let's head back to the hotel."

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Ji Yi remained quiet for some time before she realized what he said. She didn't say a word but gave him a gentle nod.

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After Chen Bai left during dinner, he didn't return.

The car was parked in a nearby parking lot. He Jichen drove Ji Yi to the hotel.

The hotel Chen Bai booked was situated just by the West Lake.

It took only about ten minutes to drive there.

Perhaps they'd exhausted all possible conversation during their stroll by West Lake, so after they got into the car, they didn't say a single word to each other.

The radio was turned off in the car, so aside from the soft sounds of the air conditioning blowing, the atmosphere in the car was incredibly quiet. Ji Yi could even hear the faint sounds of He Jichen breathing.

When they reached a red light on the road, Ji Yi averted her eyes away from the window and gently trained them on He Jichen.

The passionate expression he showed back at West Lake when he mentioned the woman he liked had now disappeared. His usual cold expression and arrogant posture had returned, and he was staring straight at the road ahead.

If she hadn't seen just how caring and deeply emotional he looked, there was no way she'd believe the person at the lake was the same person driving the car now.

The red light turned green and the car started to drive off again.

The jostle from the acceleration was so gentle that it was barely noticeable, but it made Ji Yi avert her eyes from He Jichen's face. She glanced down at her hands instead.

She then stared at the ever-receding view of West Lake with He Jichen's seemingly magical words echoing in her ears.

"But it doesn't actually matter if she forgives me or not, because I can't leave her be anyway. Instead of the two of us being in pain, I'd rather bear it alone..."

She wasn't sure why, but at those words, Ji Yi suddenly remembered the night of her birthday and him singing "Within Your Radius."

At the time, she was still astonished that someone who regarded himself as being so much better than others could deliver such an emotional song so incredibly eloquently.

It wasn't until tonight that she finally realized that the sadness she saw then was genuine distress. It wasn't just an illusion, and she finally realized that he revealed his true inner-self that night.

He actually loved a woman irrevocably and he loved her ever since they were young. He loved her so much that he never gave up on her even though they had a misunderstanding.

She figured those lyrics he sang expressed his true feelings; he loved someone, but that was his business and it had nothing to do with her. If this woman, whoever she was, turned around, he would definitely be there supporting her.

Without even realizing it, Ji Yi's gaze fell on the side mirror. Through it, her eyes were glued on He Jichen, who was concentrating on driving.

Rays of passing bright lights shined down on his face through the car window. It allowed Ji Yi to clearly see the obscured expression on his face from time to time.

She stared and stared at him before her gaze became a little distracted.

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He finally reached the hotel entrance and handed the valet his car keys. He Jichen and Ji Yi walked into the hotel lobby together.

Chen Bai must've checked them in because when He Jichen walked over to the front desk and showed his ID, the staff at the front desk immediately presented him his room key.

They got into the elevator on the first floor then exited when they reached their floor. Seeing as He Jichen didn't give Ji Yi her own room key or say "goodbye," she felt a little wary. Don't tell me he wants to personally escort me to my room?

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Just as Ji Yi was pondering whether to politely tell He Jichen: "Give me the room key, I'll enter my room alone," He Jichen stopped. He opened the room himself with a swipe of the card.

Ji Yi instinctively replaced what she was going to say with a "Thank you." However, before she could reach her hand out to take the room key from He Jichen, He Jichen suddenly said, "Chen Bai said that since it's holiday season, this is the only room left."

This is the only room left... Ji Yi was instantly left stunned.

Meaning I'll be alone in a room with He Jichen tonight?

He Jichen pushed the door open and walked in as though he hadn't seen her reaction.

He turned on the lights and casually placed his laptop on the desk. When he reached his hand out to loosen his necktie, his fingers suddenly trembled and he realized that Ji Yi was still standing at the door.

He knew that despite how uneasy she felt, she was really overthinking things because he'd never make the same mistake twice.

He knew she didn't trust him and was afraid something would happen between them which was why she was hesitant to come in.

He Jichen was a little upset inside, but he gently pursed his bottom lip and pretended he hadn't seen anything. As he continued to loosen his tie, he proceeded to add, "But fortunately, it's a suite, so you can sleep in the bedroom. I have some work to take care of tonight, so I'll manage in the living room."

Hearing what He Jichen said, Ji Yi let out an "Oh!" She stood at the door for a few more seconds then finally stepped into the room.

The second the doors closed, He Jichen saw her frame tremble gently.

He looked away from her and walked over to the counter of his own accord. He boiled some water and made a cup of hot milk and cup of hot tea.

He handed her the milk. "It's really late. Drink a cup of hot milk, take a shower, and have a good night's sleep. You still have your shoot tomorrow."

When she heard him say this, she glanced up at him then took the milk. She gave a nod and let out a soft "Mm."

Even though she glanced at him for just a second, he caught a glimpse of her unease. It felt like something was lodged in his throat, stifling his breathing.

If this was before, he would've felt unfairly treated to see her resist him like that. He would've used anger to fight for his self-respect back and he would've used harsh words to mask his embarrassment, but now, all he did was lower his eyes. He chose to turn a blind eye and headed back to the desk.

As he opened his laptop, He Jichen glanced over at Ji Yi every now and then using his peripheral vision.

She sat poised on the sofa; he could tell her back was stiff.

Did what I just said not help her feel at ease?

He'd be lying if he said he wasn't disappointed, but he also didn't have the heart to see her like this. He Jichen turned on the laptop and stared at the screen for about ten seconds then picked up his phone and called Chen Bai.

The phone was quickly picked up. "Mr. He, are you satisfied with the arrangements I made tonight?" asked Chen Bai in a voice that sounded like he was fishing for praise.

"Contact all the high executives to start a video conference in five minutes time," replied He Jichen flatly.

"No way? Mr. He, didn't you say you'd give me the night off? What's more, the night is short and time is precious..."

