

Chapter 501: The Mastermind

When he knew that Jiang Yao was being followed, the thought of his identity being exposed, and enemies coming after Jiang Yao for vengeance first came to his mind.

For the past few days, they were often seen in public together in Jindo City; Lu Xingzhi did not intentionally hide the fact that Jiang Yao was his wife.

He did not reveal his marriage status too, yet he was never seen with a woman at his side; people who wanted to know the truth did not need to dig too deep for answers.

While he was on his way here and searching for Jiang Yao's location, his stomach churned, and his heart palpitated. There was a moment where he regretted bringing Jiang Yao into the social circle of Jindo City.

"Sure, I'll be going now then. Give me a call later and let me know how things turn out."

Mr. Liang looked at his clothing and then at Lu Xingzhi's casual clothes; he knew it was inappropriate for him to be seen in public. Moreover, things were settling down, with Jiang Yao and the gang free from danger, his men were not needed.

Lu Xingzhi jumped out of the car and dashed toward Jiang Yao.

"Xingzhi!" She saw a silhouette of a person running toward her and waved. The smile on her face brighter than the sun shining behind.

"Are you hurt?" Lu Xingzhi held her hand tightly and asked nervously.

"I'm fine, thankfully Xuyao came right on time." Jiang Yao shook her head. Seeing Lu Xingzhi's deep frown, she knew that he was genuinely frightened by her phone call.

"What's going on here?" Lu Xingzhi pulled Jiang Yao into an embrace before throwing the question at Chen Xuyao and Zhou Weiqi.

"They're a bunch of street hooligans paid for by Mrs. Zhou to kidnap Weiqi. Look, she gave them a photograph too." Chen Xuyao picked up the photograph on the ground and handed it over to Lu Xingzhi. "It's funny. They can't find any photographs of Weiqi at the Zhou family's place. Look at this, it's Weiqi's photograph from his student ID when he was still in school. I'm guessing he must've left it laying around somewhere in the Zhou family."

"What is she doing trying to kidnap Weiqi, he's got nothing to do with them anymore." Lu Xingzhi's face looked like thunder. He walked toward the thugs trembling on the floor and asked, "Who's in charge here?"

"The first guy over there." Jiang Yao pointed at Lin Fulian cowering in the corner. "He wanted to escape in the van but Xuyao busted the tires with his pistol. He was frightened bad. Very bad."

Yet, Jiang Yao did not think these people were exaggerating their reactions.

Having lived two lives, this was her first time seeing an actual firearm in action.

The kidnapers were not actual, blood-thirsty criminals too; they were just some random street hooligans.

Even the tattoos seen on most of the thugs were temporary ones, apparently it was to make them look ferocious and vicious. A little bit of water was all it needed to remove these tattoos.

They got in on the act because Du Rongzhen, or Mrs. Zhou, paid handsomely. According to her, their target was a good-for-nothing young dandy. They were to only kidnap him, make him suffer a little bit before returning him to Mrs. Zhou, no killing was involved. Mrs. Zhou was generous with her payment, that was why they got a few of their fair-weather friends together and accepted the job.

Chapter 502: Impossible

For these people who lived at the lower levels of society, firearms were mythical objects that were only heard of, not seen, and something only law enforcement had possession of.

Seeing a gun brandished though, had them immediately on their knees begging for mercy, thinking they had brought the ire of the local mob boss.

“So, Du Rongzhen wants you to kidnap Zhou Weiqi as a lesson?” Lu Xingzhi lightly pinched Jiang Yao’s palm. She looked calm, yet he was boiling in rage inside.

The head thug quickly nodded. Lu Xingzhi remarked, “Remember this, Du Rongzhen came to you asking for a murder-for-hire. She wants you to kill these two people!”

“Let’s call the police.”

“No! No! Stop! That’s impossible! Even though we don’t know the law, but we still know that attempted murder is a far more severe crime than kidnapping! If we say that, we’re done for!” Lin Fulian shook his head vigorously.

“This is not a discussion; you have no choice. Either you die or you confess to being a murder-for-hire. If things go well, it’s not too difficult for me to look for a good attorney for you, or even spend a little money for a shorter prison sentence,” Lu Xingzhi said. “I want Du Rongzhen convicted of the conspiracy to commit murder. I’m going after Du Rongzhen, do you get it?”

Looking at the violent head-shaking, Chen Xuyao was annoyed. “What’s wrong with your brains, eh? Do they work only when shot at? We are going after that woman; your prison sentence duration depends on how co-operative you are. Get it now?”

“Yes, yes, yes! We do now!”

With the gun aimed at their heads, they had no choice but to agree.

“Don’t think you can go back on your words at the police station. Nobody in Jindo City can cross me and stay alive to tell the tale!” Seeing their nodding heads, Chen Xuyao finally stowed his gun away.

The police dispatch arrived five minutes after the call was made. Lu Xingzhi planned to return home with Jiang Yao but thinking that she was also a target for the murder-for-hire plot, they would have to go to the police station to record their statements.

On their way to the police station, Lu Xingzhi gave Mr. Liang a phone call and told him about what happened. He also mentioned that Du Rongzhen wanted to kill through a murder-for-hire. When they arrived at the police station, she was already arrested and brought there as well. When they walked in, the captain responsible for the case was very polite and courteous.

Not expecting to be arrested, Du Rongzhen looked a little panicked. The way she looked at Zhou Weiqi was as if she wanted to strangle him right then and there. Yet, she kept her façade on and put on a face of indifference.

Her façade crumbled after the police officer started his interrogation, hearing that the thugs admitted to receiving her money for a murder-for-hire plot.

“Lies! Lies! Officer, these are lies! I don’t know them at all!” Mrs. Zhou was horrified. “It’s them! They’re framing me!”

Chapter 503: I’ve Never Seen So Much Money Before

“That’s enough, Mrs. Zhou. We found out from the bank that you transferred a sum of money to one of Lin Fulian’s account yesterday. If you don’t know who he is, why would you send him money?” The Captain tapped the table in irritation.

Scandalous affairs of the social elites were plentiful. With Zhou Weiqi banished from the Zhou family, who would have thought that Mrs. Zhou was so wicked as to plot for his death.

The young police constables thought to themselves how they used to admire the lives of people born with a silver spoon in their mouths. It seemed that their lives were not easy as well, it was better to come from a normal household, with loving parents and supportive siblings.

In just a short while, everyone in the police station was sympathetic to Zhou Weiqi’s plight.

“Well, I didn’t ask them to kill! I just wanted them to beat him up. Maybe I could threaten Master Lu and obtain his help to see the Divine Doctor by kidnapping Zhou Weiqi too. I didn’t ask them to kill, I didn’t want him to be dead! Officer, I’m not a fortune-teller, how would I know that Jiang Yao was together with Zhou Weiqi? Plus, I only gave them so little money!” Mrs. Zhou was genuinely horrified.

She could not lie about the money transferred to Lin Fulian, so she could only explain their dealings in detail.

The more she explained, the more afraid she felt. Lu Xingzhi and his gang must have instructed Lin Fulian to come up with this confession, their aim was to have her incarcerated!

A conviction for conspiracy to commit murder carried a far more severe sentence than a kidnapping charge, Mrs. Zhou knew she could never confess to the accusation.

Lin Fulian wanted to stay silent, perhaps the officers would come to their own conclusion without him having to confess to being a murder-for-hire.

Yet, he immediately felt a heavy weight on his shoulders. Raising his head abruptly, his gaze met a pair of frigid eyes.

His heart dropped; he knew what those eyes meant.

"I've never seen so much money before! For you, it's a small amount, but for me, it's a huge sum! You wanted us to kill them both!" Lin Fulian affirmed his previous confession, that they were paid to kill, not just to kidnap. He kicked his mates beside him and said, "Even they heard it!"

"Officers! It was our mistake; we have nothing but regret! Please! We will never lie!" Lin Fulian started crying.

Chen Xuyao tried his hardest to contain his laughter, his shoulders trembled ever so slightly.

"My wife is shaken; we'll be leaving since we have our statements recorded. I believe you'll handle this case of a conspiracy to commit murder appropriately." Lu Xingzhi emphasized the word murder before thanking the police officers and left the police station with the rest.

"Xuyao, get two attorneys, one for Lin Fulian, one for you and Jiang Yao. Mrs. Zhou will be in prison for a long time."

As they were exiting the police station, Lu Xingzhi said to Chen Xuyao, before adding, "Attempted murder of a military family, I'll get something done on the military side too."

Chapter 504: A Few Years' Wait

Chen Xuyao nodded in acknowledgment and had Zhou Weiqi give his car keys to Jiang Yao, while both he and Zhou Weiqi would take his own car instead.

Mrs. Zhou was in big trouble this time round, having crossed Lu Xingzhi's limit. That was why a kidnapping case became a murder conviction.

Frankly speaking, Chen Xuyao thought Jiang Yao was not harmed in the process, and was not really traumatized by the experience. Yet, Lu Xingzhi was genuinely angered, it seemed like his soft spot was Jiang Yao, his wife.

Including past events, Mrs. Zhou offended Lu Xingzhi thrice. With this incident, perhaps he wanted to get his revenge once and for all.

No wonder people said that the only person you could never cross among the Masters of Jindo was Lu Xingzhi.

Wanting Mrs. Zhou to stay in prison longer, Lu Xingzhi was willing to put a charge of attempted murder of a military family on her.

Tonight, they decided to have dinner at a hot pot restaurant instead.

Lu Xingzhi drove, with Jiang Yao in the passenger seat.

"When Weiqi told me that we were being followed, I was genuinely afraid! Fortunately, nothing bad happened." Jiang Yao rested her head on her hand and looked at Lu Xingzhi intently. "Were you frightened as well?"

She still remembered the moment he dashed out of the car and ran toward her.

He was facing away from the warm afternoon sun. As he ran, the sleeves of his shirt sliced through the air like sharp daggers, his cold yet handsome face was filled with concern, his eyes, black as coal, stabbed through the air into her heart.

“After returning to Jin City, I will have people wipe off your presence here in Jindo City. Even though I was worried, I wanted to hold your hand and tell the world that you are mine. That’s why I was bringing you around these past few days. Yet, receiving your phone call today, I realized, the fear never left.”

Lu Xingzhi’s voice was low and distant, like the ringing of a bell from a monastery in the mountains.

“It’s not time yet,” he said.

He realized that he was not strong enough to protect Jiang Yao from all danger.

Yes, he wanted to declare to the world that Jiang Yao was his wife, but he was more concerned about her safety.

This slightly amusing and ridiculous incident today had him thinking.

“A few more years.” He promised. “Just wait a few more years.”

Jiang Yao did not know what he had in his mind, but her heart fluttered hearing his promise.

She smiled. “Don’t forget that I have my own powers too!”

Chapter 505: Xuyao

Lu Xingzhi smiled.

“Which reminds me, Xuyao carries a gun wherever he goes? It seems like one with a silencer too! He has such good aim, shooting the tires of a moving van!”

If she did not see it today with her own eyes, she would not have thought that the cheerful Chen Xuyao had such a terrifying side to him.

When he opened fire, there was no hesitation, no concern if lives were at stake.

In his eyes, Jiang Yao did not see any compassion.

“He was kidnapped when he was still a boy.” A brief pause later, Lu Xingzhi added, “They were not like the ones you saw today; those were actual, ruthless criminals. After his rescue, he did not leave his house for a whole two years. He would either daydream incessantly or throw a hysterical temper. Fortunately, with the intervention of a therapist, things became better. Since then, he’s always carried a gun with him.”

“Xuyao...”

“Nobody knows what happened when he was kidnapped, even the therapist could not glean anything from Xuyao.” Lu Xingzhi knew what Jiang Yao wanted to ask. Chen Xuyao was the only one that had the answer.

The kidnappers were no longer alive.

And the reason for his kidnapping was because of his father, who was in the military.

That was why Lu Xingzhi was petrified learning that Jiang Yao was followed by some unknown people. Nobody could imagine what an actual criminal could do.

He thought a lot after leaving the police station.

"I'll teach you how to shoot before you return to Nanjiang City. Once you go back, I'll get you a gun too. Carry it with you, just in case."

The car stopped right in front of the hot pot restaurant.

Before Jiang Yao became aware of her surroundings, Lu Xingzhi bent over and unbuckled her seat belt, smooching her in the process.

It was a small but cozy restaurant and seemed to have good business. It really was a wise choice to have hot pot in this weather.

Liang Yueze and Luo Ruoran arrived right after they ordered their food. Upon sitting down, Luo Ruoran spoke, "The Dus and the Zhous are busy looking for ways to have Mrs. Zhou freed. Old Man Du has been confined to the hospital these past few days since he's not feeling well, the Dus dared not tell Old Man Du what happened."

She reveled in their misfortunes. "This woman is wonky in the head! Coming up with the idea to kidnap Weiqi to blackmail Xingzhi? Damn! She sure is a good aunt! Too bad she will be kicked out of the Zhou family if she's convicted."

Mr. Zhou would not want a wife who was a criminal, he did not want to embarrass himself.

"Nah, the actual reason she wanted to kidnap me was jealousy; she could not bear seeing my wonderful future lying in wait." Zhou Weiqi knew better. "Anyway, tonight's a celebration for my promotion at work! Luo Ruoran, let's have a drink off!"

Chapter 506: Occasional Fondness

Zhou Weiqi's drinking battle invitation was heartily accepted by Luo Ruoran. Jiang Yao then spent the whole night looking at the duo's non-stop drinking.

The funny thing was that Liang Yueze kept refilling Luo Ruoran's glass with more liquor, with a smile on his face too.

Jiang Yao could not wrap her head around the couple's interaction.

She looked at her glass of soda, before quietly turning her gaze toward Lu Xingzhi, who was busy talking to Chen Xuyao.

He ordered the soda for Jiang Yao. When it arrived, he immediately set it in front of her.

Even though he was in a conversation with Chen Xuyao, his eyes never really left Jiang Yao. He instinctively looked at her bowl, seeing that she was looking quite intently at him, he then set his glass down and put two deshelled shrimps in her bowl. "Anything else you want to eat?"

Jiang Yao shook her head. "I can get what I want, back to the conversation you go!"

The dinner ended around nine at night. Luo Ruoran, blacked-out drunk, was carried by Liang Yueze into the car.

As Lu Xingzhi drank, Jiang Yao was the one driving them home.

She was not sure how much he drank nor how drunk he was. As they got into the car, he did not even bother to buckle up. He extended his hand out and gently played with Jiang Yao's hair silently, his gaze never moving away from her, until they arrived at their destination.

He seemed to be very sober though, as he walked with a steady pace and unlocked the door with no trouble at all.

Jiang Yao changed into a pair of indoor slippers only for her to see Lu Xingzhi pouncing at her suddenly, pressing her against the door.

She was startled by his sudden actions. His face got closer, she braced for the kiss, but it never came. He chuckled. "Brother Liang likes Ruoran when she's drunk, like a clawless tabby cat."

"Huh?" Jiang Yao was surprised.

"Didn't you want to ask me why Brother Liang kept refilling Ruoran's shot glass during the dinner? This is the answer you're looking for." Lu Xingzhi's lips curled into a smile. "Just like how I like it too when you drink."

Jiang Yao blushed. She kicked him in the shins.

He did know why she was looking at him during dinner, but pretended not to know?

She had to admit that her husband understood her very well.

"Well, we need to get up early in the morning tomorrow, that's why I didn't let you drink." He then sealed her lips with his.

It was a gentle kiss.

He took his time savoring her taste, before prying open the lips with his tongue.

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Chapter 508: Training Instructor

Lin Wei, Colonel Lin's son, answered the door. He looked at Jiang Yao with a sweet smile on his face and greeted them, "Uncle Lu, Auntie Lu!"

"What a good boy!" Jiang Yao rubbed his head. He was recently given a haircut by a barber his grandmother knew. It seemed like the barber was out of touch as he almost gave Lin Wei a bald head. The kid was upset and grumbled about the incident to his mother, adamant to not go for a haircut with his grandmother anymore.

Even though he did have a hobby of collecting weird specimens, he was a boy with a very pleasant temper, rarely irritated and always friendly. Jiang Yao was quite fond of him.

“Ah, you’re here! Come on in and have a seat! Sorry if my cooking is not that good, but Colonel Lin’s the one giving me the instructions. So, if the taste is bad, blame him.” Mrs. Lin was busy setting up the table as she greeted her guests.

Colonel Lin was not happy to hear his wife shifting the blame onto him.

“Don’t listen to her babbling! I gave good instructions, she was the one that could not follow them with sugar becoming salt, and soy sauce becoming vinegar!” Colonel Lin was on a roll. “I don’t know how she teaches kids at school when she can’t even identify the most basic cooking ingredients!”

Mrs. Lin was not upset; it was already known that her cooking skills were considerably lacking. However, she knew Jiang Yao was alright with her cooking as it was the intention that mattered.

Even though Colonel Lin kept belittling Mrs. Lin’s cooking, the food was actually pretty decent. Mrs. Lin knew that Jiang Yao preferred her food to be a little lighter in flavor, so she prepared it accordingly.

“The notice for the training program has been posted on the bulletin board. Your wife will be our training instructor,” Colonel Lin said, “The higher-ups see this training program as something essential and have arranged it as a part of the daily training for a few different platoons. Each of these platoons has a couple of doctors and professors from various major medical institutions as their instructor.”

“That was quick!” Jiang Yao remarked. “No wonder the soldiers in the platoon were so friendly toward me.”

However...

“The other platoons had instructors from hospitals and medical schools, I’m just a first-year medical student, aren’t there any objections?” Jiang Yao asked.

“Of course, but the higher-ups wanted you to be the one, what else can the others say? You know your stuff very well and are very capable, show them what you know tomorrow, and they will take back their doubt and objections.” Colonel Lin continued, “These brats are lucky to have the legendary Divine Doctor as their instructor, what else do they want?”

Indeed, putting Jiang Yao as the instructor for the platoon was a decision that brought massive tension between the superiors, but with a strong backing, the doubters could do nothing.

Colonel Lin did not mention it, but the people who were backing Jiang Yao had high hopes on her, they were counting on her to educate and train the soldiers well.

He foresaw that the first training tomorrow would not be a calm one as plenty would be waiting for Jiang Yao to make a mistake.

Chapter 509: Decent

Jiang Yao started preparing for the contents of the training program after dinner. The soldiers’ daily training were not affected as the training program was set to be held at half past seven at the

auditorium, with it going for two hours. The platoon did not specify how long the program should last; everything was at Jiang Yao's discretion.

Thinking that she had at least a few days until a decision was made, she did not realize that the military had already made all necessary arrangements, and a fast one at that. She had to pick up her pace.

While she was busy working in the study, Lu Xingzhi sat beside her with a book in his hand. On occasions he looked at her, Jiang Yao was entirely focused on her task at hand, with her pen scribbling furiously across the notepad on the table. She was not aware of his attention and seemed to have forgotten that she was not alone in the study.

This was the first time Lu Xingzhi had ever seen Jiang Yao so focused at work. She gently pursed her lips, with a fastidious expression on her face as her watery eyes were fixated on the notepad in front of her.

She sat properly postured, without any signs of hunching over. Her parents, evidently, had been really strict with the way she carried herself.

Jiang Yao was not brought up with plenty of arts, dance and music lessons, unlike the other daughters of more affluent families in the city. But the way she carried herself was as graceful and elegant as her wealthier peers.

She would mutter something under her breath for a few seconds, before turning her attention back to the task at hand without any more noise.

As she just showered, her hair was a mess, and it kept interfering with her work by covering up her face whenever she stooped her head.

Seeing this, Lu Xingzhi stood up and walked out of the study before returning with a hair clip taken from the dressing table in the bedroom.

"Hmm?"

Feeling a sudden touch on her hair, she jumped out of her chair abruptly.

"You scared me! Weren't you sitting right over there?" Patting her chest as if to calm herself down, she complained.

"I went and got you this hair clip. Don't move, let me put it on." Lu Xingzhi fastened the hair clip on her hair and made sure that it was firmly in place. "That's it, you may continue."

"I'm almost done, actually. I've already arranged everything I needed and can teach on a timetable." Jiang Yao handed the notepad over to Lu Xingzhi. "I'll teach basic first-aid for the first couple of days, before moving on to recognizing and utilizing some common plants and herbs. I was wondering if I can find some plant specimens or pictures in Jin City."

"That's easy. Give Haoyu a call. He has some friends in the botany field, you should be able to get some help from them." Lu Xingzhi gently rubbed Jiang Yao's head. "It's been two hours since you started, look, your hair's already dry."

Jiang Yao chuckled. She placed her arms around Lu Xingzhi's waist and nuzzled her head against his abdomen. "That's alright."

He almost melted seeing the soft and fluffy being in his arms.

It felt pretty good.

Chapter 510: Not Lending

“If anyone gives you trouble tomorrow, don’t be shy and call them out. Go after them.” Lu Xingzhi was very sure that the people who doubted Jiang Yao’s selection as the instructor would make things hard for her tomorrow.

He was also quite worried that Jiang Yao did not have the necessary experience to deal with heckles and taunts. Even if someone were to cross the line, she might still be forgiving and gentle.

Lu Xingzhi did not want her to reserve her kindness and gentleness to people who were out to harass her.

Yes, he would be present tomorrow, but he could not publicly reprimand anyone. He hoped that she could do it herself instead.

“Keep the good temper for people close to you. I don’t care if others see you as a fierce and unreasonable woman. Call people out if you don’t like them, don’t hold back.” He patted her head.
“Understood?”

“Yes.” Jiang Yao nodded. She knew that Lu Xingzhi was concerned that her good nature would allow people to take advantage of her. With a big crowd present tomorrow, she did not have to worry about her status as a spouse of an officer if someone were to harass her first.

“Once you’re on the stage, you’re an instructor, designated by the Jin City platoon, and not my spouse.”

Jiang Yao understood his suggestion, or more accurately, she read between his lines.

What he meant was for her to go all out against anyone that was trying to make her life difficult. Be aggressive and show no mercy. That was his message.

Jiang Yao grinned. It seemed like her man was reluctant for her to go through any misery.

The next day, Lu Xingzhi left to attend some unknown business after breakfast. Jiang Yao had Mrs. Lin bring her to the Medical Officer’s office.

She wanted to borrow some common medical equipment.

Jiang Yao and Mrs. Lin quickly stated their purpose of visit as soon as they arrived. Initially, the army doctor was quite pleased to see them. He was a little over thirty years old and seemed to be a friendly fellow.

Once Jiang Yao made it known she was here to borrow some equipment, the doctor’s expression changed.

“What do you want it for?” Lin Shunhe, the army doctor, scrutinized his visitors as he asked, “You are Jiang Yao, the instructor for the training program?”

“Yes.” She nodded. On her way here, she saw the notice posted on the bulletin board, but it only had her name on it.

With so many soldiers who were able to recognize her, she was not surprised that the army doctor could as well.

Lin Shunhe’s face darkened hearing Jiang Yao’s reply. “I’m not lending it to you! Medical equipment are not to be fooled around with, especially by people like you!”

“People like me?”

Jiang Yao was quite bothered by his remark. “What kind of a person do you think I am?”

So, what was the army doctor getting at?