

I Want a Lifetime with You

Chapter 296

An infant?

Zhou Zheng was shocked by Fu Chengyan's instruction. He had told him to fabricate some pictures of a baby for Song Huaiyan to see. "Mr. Fu, what do you mean?"

Zhou Zheng suddenly came to a realization. "I'll get to it at once. As for the matter at the Fu residence, I have sent someone to clean it up."

Fu Chengyan waved his hand as Shi Nuan pushed open the door to enter. When she saw that Fu Chengyan and Zhou Zheng had finished their discussion, she said, "Yan, I've made some desserts. Do both of you want some?"

Shi Nuan turned towards Zhou Zheng as she spoke, "Mr. Zhou, are the two of you done discussing?"

"Yes, we're done. I still have something to do so I'll pass on the dessert." Zhou Zheng avoided eye contact as he spoke and quickly left with all the documents he had brought.

That was his cue to leave and he took it immediately. He didn't want to wait for Fu Chengyan to glare at him fiercely.

Anyone could see that Fu Chengyan's recent actions were all due to his concern for Shi Nuan. How would he as a subordinate dare to eat something that the lady boss had prepared herself? The rule was that only the boss could eat what was prepared by his wife.

When Shi Nuan saw how fast Zhou Zheng fled, she couldn't help but find it hilarious. "Do I look that frightening?" Shi Nuan wondered why Zhou Zheng always had a strange expression on when he saw her, it was as if he had seen a ghost.

Fu Chengyan chuckled and waved at her. "Come over!"

Shi Nuan frowned and didn't walk to him. Instead, she turned away and said, "I've already made dessert. You should come down if you want some!"

Fu Chengyan couldn't help but shake his head. He kept all the documents on his desk before following Shi Nuan downstairs.

Once Zhou Zheng left Wutong Residence, he called Liang Lin immediately. He requested Liang Lin for help in investigating the matter relating to Song Jingyu, and added, "By the way, aren't you really good with the computer? Find me some pictures of infants and edit them so that no one can see that they're fake. Send them to my phone once you're done!"

In the hotel, Lin Shuyuan was examining Song Jingyu. When he was done, he gave her another sedative before removing his mask. He looked at Song Huaiyan and shook his head. "It was likely triggered by what she was doing before it happened."

In other words, Lin Shuyuan didn't really know what caused it. "I hypnotized her just now, and discovered that she is subconsciously frightened of children. Did she... have a child before?"

"That's impossible!" Song Huaiyan quickly denied, "Jingyu has never had a boyfriend before, how would she even have a child!"

Lin Shuyuan didn't question Song Huaiyan any further given how worked up he was. He changed the subject instead. "The medication that I gave you is the most advanced for her condition. It should have been of help to her. Did you give it to her?"

Lin Shuyuan couldn't discount that possibility given how uncooperative Song Jingyu was with him. "You must know that if she doesn't take this suppressant and is exposed to constant provocation, her emotions and mental state will easily collapse. She and Ruan... No, her condition is even worse than that of Ruan's!"

What Lin Shuyuan said was the truth; he wasn't trying to be an alarmist.

Song Huaiyan could feel it himself given what he saw at the hospital just now. He knew that Song Jingyu's condition was a lot worse than he had expected.

As Song Huaiyan remained silent, Lin Shuyuan further explained with a wry smile, "Huaiyan, I'm not going to sugarcoat it. But if you and Ms. Song don't work with me, I won't be able to cure her no matter how good I am!"

Song Huaiyan sighed. "Do you think that I don't want her cured? Ruan was tortured by this sickness so badly that she was unrecognizable. It remained so until she died. If not for the fact that I selfishly abandoned her, she would not have fallen into that state. Jingyu is her daughter, so I hope I can give her the best. But you yourself have seen her character: she refuses to admit that she's sick. She has been doing fine for the last few years, so I assumed..."

"There's nothing to assume. Her sickness is a hereditary mental disease: she was born with it. The chances of her not being affected by it are minuscule, so you can forget about hoping she will fully recover." Lin Shuyuan didn't want to dwell on this issue with Song Huaiyan.

"The child – you should try and think harder about what it means. She won't bring it up unless it is in her memory! Also, didn't you tell me that she came to look for Fu Chengyan? Perhaps he is the key!"

"It's useless!" Song Huaiyan said in frustration.

If Fu Chengyan was really the key and he was willing to marry Song Jingyu, none of this would have happened. "Fu Chengyan... couldn't wait for something bad to happen to Jingyu!"

“Then you should just think harder!” Lin Shuyuan knew that Song Huaiyan needed time to consider. “I’ll be next door, so call me when you have made your decision. You don’t have to worry about Ms. Song for now. I have given her a sedative and hypnotized her. She will have a good sleep and forget her troubles.”

“You altered her memory?” Song Huaiyan asked in shock. “Why did you do that?” He wanted to wait for Song Jingyu to wake up so that she can tell him what happened that night.

When Lin Shuyuan saw how anxious Song Huaiyan was, he couldn’t help but ask in curiosity, “What’s wrong? Haven’t I always been doing this? You said so yourself that the painful memories shouldn’t be left lingering in her mind!”

Song Huaiyan didn’t know how to react and frown instead. “It doesn’t matter. You should go rest now while I need some space to calm down!”

“Alright!”

After Lin Shuyuan had left, Song Huaiyan called Song Zhenyan immediately. The restrictions on her had been lifted. “Huaiyan.”

“Zhenyan, are you alright? Damn that Yan, you’re his mother. How could he lock you up like that?” Song Zhenyan was silent despite Song Huaiyan’s complaints about Fu Chengyan. She said, “It wasn’t Yan who locked me up.”

“No?” Song Huaiyan was surprised. “How can that be? I flew into Jiang City the next day after I heard about the incident. However, the hospital was really strict and didn’t allow me to see either of you.”

“Is that so?” Song Zhenyan was stunned. She added, “No one locked me up, I was hurt. So I just stayed there until I recovered, so... how’s Jingyu doing?”

Song Zhenyan recalled what had happened. She was in a daze over the last few days as her wound recovered slowly, hence she did not have any time to think

about Song Jingyu's condition. Only when Song Huaiyan called did she remember it. "How is she now? That day..."

"What happened that day?" Song Huaiyan interrupted Song Zhenyan impatiently, "I mean, what happened the other day with you and Jingyu?"

"I..." Song Zhenyan didn't understand why Song Huaiyan was angry. "It was nothing. She had a mental breakdown as if it was triggered by something. She... she cut me and Fu Sheng with a knife. So...I'm afraid she won't be able to return to the Fu residence. Granddad was there too. If not for the fact that Fu Sheng was holding her down, she might have cut him, too. It would have been a disaster if that happened. I've talked to Fu Sheng about this and asked him not to make a fuss. So no reporters or anyone else in the media knows!"

Song Huaiyan was a little relieved when he heard that. At least Song Zhenyan was still thinking clearly and knew how to use Fu Sheng to keep the matter under wraps. "I understand. I'll be taking Jingyu home with me, as for you... You have to stay with the Fu clan. You're Fu Sheng's wife and a daughter-in-law of theirs. The Fu clan of Jiang City is your family!"

Song Zhenyan's face went pale when she heard him. "Huaiyan, what do you mean?" Is the Song family disavowing me? Are they abandoning me? "Is this your decision or Father's?"

"Does it matter?" Song Huaiyan said. "As a member of the Song family, our lives are not our own. When you came of age, I'm sure father told you that. Zhenyan, we cannot live just for ourselves. We have to think about the greater good of the Song family."

"Is that so?" Song Zhenyan sneered as she felt her heart harden. "I understand. I'll remain with the Fu clan. Is there anything else?"

"Tell me in detail what happened that day!"

Although Song Zhenyan felt that Song Huaiyan was acting a little strange, she still recounted the night's events to him. "Do you mean that Jingyu's mental breakdown started after she saw a bunch of photos?"

"That should be it." When Song Zhenyan recalled how Song Jingyu reacted on that day, it still struck fear into her heart.

Song Zhenyan had seen a similar scene once when she was younger. It was the first time Song Huaiyan brought his girlfriend home. They planned to discuss their wedding with the family. However, his girlfriend, Ruan, had a similar breakdown that day and hurt some of their family members.

That was how the Song family immediately knew that she was sick. As they were considered a prominent family in the capital, their grandfather, who was still alive then, vehemently objected to the marriage. Their father didn't approve of it, either.

In the end, Song Huaiyan broke up with her to safeguard his status and future.

Song Zhenyan was still young when she saw for herself how bad it could be when a mental patient had a breakdown. It was so terrifying that she was traumatized. She knew that it wasn't Ruan's fault but no ordinary family would be able to accept such a person. Song Zhenyan understood her family's decision, but Song Huaiyan held a grudge against them until today.

Although Song Huaiyan married Song Jingyao's mother later on and she gave birth to Song Jingyao, he still longed for Ruan. When he got to know that Ruan injured her husband and subsequently committed suicide, he felt bad for Song Jingyu and brought her home from the orphanage.

When Song Zhenyan thought about what happened then and connected it to the scene where Song Jingyu became delirious, her face went pale. "Huaiyan, Jingyu... is not compatible with Yan!"

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Not compatible?

Song Huaiyan took a deep breath as he couldn't accept his sister's sudden change in opinion. She had been supportive of his efforts all this while and only changed her mind just now given what had happened.

"What's wrong? Huaiyan?" Song Zhenyan didn't hear any response from Song Huaiyan. She asked again curiously, "Are you alright?"

"You were the one who brought her up. You know how she feels about Yan. Are you giving up on her now?" Song Huaiyan continued as he took another deep breath, "Zhenyan, Jingyu..."

"Huaiyan, since Yan is unwilling, you shouldn't keep forcing him. Both you and I know that Yan has no feelings for Jingyu, though I have to admit that we did agree on their marriage previously. I am the one who brought Jingyu up and naturally know her best. I also want my son to have a beautiful wife. However, you must realize that Jingyu's sickness... isn't Ruan a good enough example? She killed her husband and committed suicide. Do you want Yan to suffer the same fate as Ruan's husband?"

"That's different!" Song Huaiyan couldn't help but counter, "Jingyu is different from Ruan, and Yan is also different from Ruan's husband!"

"How are they different? You were not there on New Year's Eve. You don't understand." Song Huaiyan wasn't aware of what happened then while Song Zhenyan saw it with her own eyes. Compared to Ruan, Song Jingyu's condition was actually worse.

“Yan is my son, I can’t put him in danger. Why do you think I’m in the hospital? It was Jingyu who injured me. My wound hasn’t even fully recovered yet. Huaiyan, I can no longer approve of the union between Jingyu and Yan.”

“You...”

Without Song Zhenyan’s support, it would now be harder for Song Huaiyan to deal with Fu Chengyan. Fu Chengyan might still have cared for Song Zhenyan as she was his mother, but he definitely had no such affinity towards his uncle given how ruthless he had been.

“What do you plan to do with Jingyu? She will die without Yan.”

“No one is going to die. Have you forgotten? Both I and Heng are still doing fine without each other,” Song Zhenyan brought up Fu Heng as she spoke.

Song Huaiyan became silent after hearing what Song Zhenyan said. “There was never any love between the two of you!”

“Why wasn’t there? We were planning to get married then. If not for you and Fu Sheng, we...”

“Enough. That’s already in the past. Jiayu and Yan are now adults. No matter what, you’re Fu Sheng’s wife now and Fu Heng’s sister-in-law. Don’t forget that!”

“I don’t need you to remind me,” Song Zhenyan sneered. “That’s all I have to say. You should stop your obsession of trying to get Yan to marry Song Jingyu. Even with my agreement, it would still be useless if Yan refused. Don’t forget you still need to get through the Fu brothers and their father, Fu Zhengyun. Do you think Song Jingyu would be approved by all of them?” Song Zhenyan felt that Song Huaiyan was living in his own fantasy. “Enough. I’m tired and need to rest!”

“Zhenyan!” Song Huaiyan called out at her. “I’m leaving in two days, you... I’ll come and see you. Are you still at the hospital?”

“Yes, at the Su family’s hospital!”

Song Huaiyan remained silent in thought. In the end, he was still her brother so there would always be room for compromise. After all, if she was forced to leave the Fu clan, she would still have a place in the capital.

Song Huaiyan ended the call and quietly lit a cigarette. He then watched Song Jingyu who was sound asleep. After that, he got himself changed and made a call. “Let’s meet at the usual place in a while!”

The place that Song Huaiyan mentioned was a restaurant, seemingly nondescript. However, the more inconspicuous a place is, the better a meeting place it is.

The person who came to see Song Huaiyan had been keeping tabs on Fu Chengyan. For the past few months, he had been outside Wutong Residence, Shengyuan building, and even the Fu residence. He had used their network to conduct surveillance on the Fu clan.

“Is there anything different with Ms. Song recently?”

“Different? What do you mean?” The man who answered Song Huaiyan was the leader responsible for following Fu Chengyan. His name was Lin Hao.

“I meant her mood.”

“There wasn’t anything that stood out. Ms. Song was fine under normal circumstances, except...”

“Except what?” Song Huaiyan looked at Lin Hao anxiously.

“Whenever Ms. Song sees Fu Chengyan, she feels very excited although this doesn’t mean much. However, when Fu Chengyan gets close to another woman, her mood would become very volatile!” Lin Hao thought a little more before he said, “Other than that, there’s nothing more.”

“Did you give Jingyu any pictures?”

“Pictures? What pictures?” Lin Hao inquired. “We didn’t give her any pictures!”

“Jingyu started to become hysterical after she saw some photos, don’t you know that?” Song Huaiyan knew that there was something in the pictures that triggered the mental breakdown. However, Lin Hao firmly denied the knowledge of any photos. “Other than following Fu Chengyan, we did not do anything else. Fu Chengyan himself didn’t do anything suspicious...” Lin Hao hesitated before saying, “Wait, on New Year’s Eve... it seems that Fu Chengyan brought someone back home!”

“Seems?”

“Yes, because we’re not sure. We always have difficulty following Fu Chengyan. He would lose us for a while before we manage to find him again. That night, we were following him as usual and lost him. However, when we went back to Wutong Residence, it was as if he was meeting someone there.”

“Don’t you know who it is?”

Lin Hao shook his head. “Fu Chengyan is extremely aware of his surroundings so we didn’t dare to go any nearer.”

Song Huaiyan raised his eyebrows. He was surprised at how good Fu Chengyan was in avoiding detection. Was all this a show that Fu Chengyan put on for me to watch?

“Jingyu really did see some photos; you should investigate...” Before Song Huaiyan could finish, he received a few photos on his phone. They were sent by Zhou Zheng. After that, Zhou Zheng followed up with another message: Mr. Song, Mr. Fu told me to send these photos to you as gifts!

When Song Huaiyan clicked on the photos, his face went pale at the sight of them. He was so shocked that he threw aside his phone.

Lin Hao, who was sitting opposite, was intrigued by Song Huaiyan's reaction.

He walked over to pick up Song Huaiyan's phone and was stunned to see the photos. "Baby pictures? What's this?"

"Delete them. Now!" Song Huaiyan yelled at Lin Hao impulsively.

It was the first time Lin Hao saw his boss in such a panic. Song Huaiyan was always a calm and shrewd man; however, he had lost all composure at that moment.

Nevertheless, Lin Hao deleted the photos obediently and passed the phone back to Song Huaiyan. "Sir, what's are those?"

"Remove them!"

As Song Huaiyan spoke, he received another message from Zhou Zheng: These are the results of our investigations. Someone sent Ms. Song these photos on New Year's Eve. After she saw them, she became hysterical and attacked Fu Sheng and his wife."

Song Huaiyan pursed his lips as his eyebrows squeezed intensely together. He glared at the content of the message and started trembling.

The child! Its face!

"Sir?" Lin Hao saw that Song Huaiyan was perturbed. "Are you alright?"

"Don't worry, you should continue to watch Fu Chengyan. I'll be leaving tomorrow. If anything crops up let me know."

Song Huaiyan kept up his phone and left in a hurry.

Lin Hao watched as Song Huaiyan walked away. After a while, Lin Hao took out his phone and made a call. “Mr. Zhou.”

“How did it go?”

“It’s as you expected. Song Huaiyan was terrified when he saw the pictures. It appears there’s more to the child than meets the eye!” Lin Hao stared at the drink that was splattered on the table as he spoke. He furrowed his brows and said, “What do we do next?”

“Alright, I understand. Since he is really interested in keeping tabs on Mr. Fu, you should just throw him some crumbs once in a while.”

Zhou Zheng smirked as he ended the call. He turned to look at Fu Chengyan. “Mr. Fu, Lin Hao said that Song Huaiyan had a dramatic reaction when he saw the pictures.”

“Oh?” Fu Chengyan put down his pen as he studied the investment proposal in front of him. He was racking his brains on something else as he replied half-heartedly, “What kind of pictures?”

Zhou Zheng smiled as he brought up the photos on his phone and passed it to Fu Chengyan. “Mr. Fu, you can see the photos for yourself. I asked Liang Lin to make baby pictures based on Song Jingyu and Song Huaiyan’s features. Do they look authentic to you?”

Fu Chengyan squinted his eyes as he stared at the pictures. Zhou Zheng then continued, “Liang Lin’s skills are indeed outstanding to be able to make it look so real. It really looks like... like...” Zhou Zheng was at a loss as to how to end his sentence.

Both their gazes fell upon the same photo. Zhou Zheng took another glance and gulped before looking back up at Fu Chengyan.

Fu Chengyan's beady eyes were still fixated on the photos. After a while, he finally threw the phone back to Zhou Zheng. He smiled smugly, putting one hand on his chin while tapping on the table with his other hand. He asked in a casual manner, "Like who? Why did you stop?"

Zhou Zheng laughed wryly, "Erm, please don't punish me for saying it."

Fu Chengyan smirked, "Say it!"

Zhou Zheng gathered his courage and said, "It resembles Song Jingyu, but it looks even more like Song Huaiyan." Indeed, the baby in the photos looked like Song Jingyu, but its resemblance to Song Huaiyan was even more striking.

Fu Chengyan grinned, "Your eyes are certainly sharp."

Zhou Zheng's eyes sparkled when he heard the praise. "Thank you for the compliment!"

Fu Chengyan snorted gently. "You said so yourself that these pictures are the result of a combination, based on the individual pictures of Song Jingyu and Song Huaiyan. Of course, it will look like them." He continued to tap on the table in an irregular rhythm. As if he was deep in thought. "However..."

"It's still strange for him to have such a dramatic reaction to the photo. It was as if he saw a ghost. Unless... that baby did exist?"

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Song Huaiyan went to see Song Zhenyan as promised. Song Zhenyan was indeed recuperating at the hospital. From her expression, he could see that her injuries were quite serious. She wasn't in a good mood, hence she only wanted a short meeting. "Are you here today because of the same matter? I've made myself clear. I won't help you with Yan and Jingyu anymore."

Song Huaiyan was infuriated by what she said. "Have we as siblings, reached the stage where we have nothing else to say?" He didn't expect that to be the first thing she said.

Song Zhenyan asked, "Then tell me, what else can we talk about?"

"You... Fine, I admit that it's about yesterday's matter. That..." Song Huaiyan hesitated for a while. "I'm just here to ask you about one thing!"

"Fine, go ahead!" Song Zhenyan calmed her breathing as she leaned back on the bed. She then looked at Song Huaiyan and said, "As long as it's something that's within my power, I won't refuse!"

Song Huaiyan hesitated for a moment and said, "When Jingyu was hysterical, did she mention anything about a child?"

"Child?" Song Zhenyan was shocked as she didn't expect Song Huaiyan to ask such a question. "What child?" She did not hear anything about a child, however, there was something in Song Huaiyan's expression. "When did Jingyu..." She held her tongue suddenly.

"What is it?"

Song Zhenyan shook her said and asked, "Why are we discussing a child?"

"I've asked someone to look into what happened. The photos that Jingyu saw were of a child. It's a picture of a baby. Is that what happened?"

"This..." Song Zhenyan shook her head. "I am not sure either!"

"How can you not be sure? You were there that night. How can you not know what was in that picture she saw?"

"I really don't know. My attention was on Jingyu the whole time; where would I still find time for that? She was indeed holding a photo, but I didn't see it clearly. They were cut into pieces by Jingyu. Besides, I was too distracted by her episode to notice anything... By the way, she did mention Shen Qianan. I initially thought that she was triggered by something related to Shen Qianan!"

"Shen Qianan?" Song Huaiyan's pupils dilated a little and his face darkened. He pinched the bridge of his nose and said, "Alright, I understand now. You should rest well! I've been in Jiang City long enough, and Jingyu's condition needs immediate treatment. I'll take her back to the capital with me, as for you... You're a member of the Fu clan so it's natural for you to continue staying there!"

"Huaiyan," Song Zhenyan called out to him. "What does Jingyu's breakdown have anything to do with Shen Qianan and the child? What are you hiding from me?"

Song Huaiyan froze as he shook his head immediately. "What is there to hide from you? Didn't I tell you everything I know already? Alright, my flight is in the afternoon. I need to go back and pack. Jingyu is waiting at the hotel for me!"

Song Huaiyan left without even looking back, while Song Zhenyan didn't feel any better despite what he told her. In fact, she felt even more unsettled. Song Zhenyan had the feeling that her brother was hiding something from her. However, she had no clue as to what it was.

Unknown to them, their conversation was repeated verbatim for Fu Chengyan to hear. He fell into a momentary silence after hearing everything that was discussed between Song Huaiyan and Song Zhenyan.

“Did you hear that just now?” Fu Chengyan looked up at Zhou Zheng who stood at attention in response. “Yes, Mr. Fu!”

“What do you think?”

“It appears your mother doesn’t know anything about this. However, as for Shen Qianan’s matter, I’m sure she knows some of it. Your uncle, though, is definitely hiding something from her. It is likely something that has to do with Song Jingyu. As for the child... I think it certainly does exist. He...”

Fu Chengyan raised his hand. “Go now and investigate further. Do we still have our contacts at the capital from three years ago?”

“Yes, we do!” Zhou Zheng laughed as he knew Fu Chengyan was doing this for real now.

As long as there was some room for doubt, Fu Chengyan would not act relentlessly. Prior to this, he did not take any action on the account of his mother. However, now that the Song family had offered one of their own heads on the chopping block, it would be too enticing for him to refuse.

“I will gather them and put them into action at the capital. What about your mother?” Zhou Zheng was still concerned about Song Zhenyan as she was also a member of the Song family.

Fu Chengyan smiled wryly in response. “Just go ahead, you don’t have to worry about her.” Since Song Huaiyan had chosen to leave Song Zhenyan with the Fu clan, he no longer had to worry about her.

“I’ll proceed as instructed.”

Fu Chengyan motioned Zhou Zheng to leave. He then made a call to the Fu residence.

It was the old butler who picked up. Fu Chengyan asked about Ning Xin and got to know that Song Zhenyan had not troubled her recently, so she was able to have some peace. Also, with Fu Heng's care and attention, it seemed that Ning Xin's condition had gradually improved.

When Fu Chengyan ended the call, he remained silent for a period of time before going downstairs.

Shi Nuan was watching TV in the living room. It was a comedy and Shi Nuan was rolling all over the sofa laughing. She laughed so hard that even her tears came out.

As Fu Chengyan came down the stairs, he put his hand on the railing. He then tapped his fingers and smiled as he watched Shi Nuan laughing happily like a child. It was a rare sight indeed.

When Shi Nuan felt that she was being watched from behind, she turned and saw Fu Chengyan at the corner of her eye. He was smiling as he leaned against the railing.

"Yan!" Shi Nuan sat up quickly. She then adjusted her hair bashfully and straightened her posture. "Are you done with your work? I just saw Mr. Zhou leave."

Fu Chengyan nodded. He then strode towards Shi Nuan and sat down beside her. After that, he reached out his hand to hold hers as he asked, "What are you watching?"

"Oh, nothing much. Just channel surfing. It's a comedy; do you want to watch it with me?"

“Sure!” Fu Chengyan gave her forehead a kiss and the two of them leaned back on the sofa. Shi Nuan put her head on his arm and continued watching the show.

Fu Chengyan kept looking at her. He felt relaxed as he watched her occasional laugh. After a while, he finally said, “Can you call Aunt Ning and invite her over?”

Shi Nuan was stunned as she turned to look at Fu Chengyan. “Aunt Ning? Alone?”

Fu Chengyan grinned, as he pinched Shi Nuan’s nose. “You’re really smart!”

Shi Nuan dropped her jaws. “Is Pei going to see Aunt Ning?”

Fu Chengyan shook his head. “No, it’s not Pei.”

“Then who?” Shi Nuan was surprised. Other than Pei Jingxiu, she couldn’t think of anyone else who would want to see Ning Xin through Fu Chengyan.

Fu Chengyan grinned and said, “Li Heng.”

It suddenly dawned upon Shi Nuan. “Is it because of Pei Huan?” How could I have forgotten about it?

As Li Heng wanted Pei Huan to return, the only way for him to achieve that was to seek Ning Xin’s help. Ning Xin was Pei Huan mother. As long as she was willing to ask her daughter to return, Pei Huan wouldn’t dare disobey given how filial she was.

This method would make use of Pei Huan’s weakness, and was the easiest way to get her to comply. However, Shi Nuan didn’t understand one thing. “If Aunt Ning could have always gotten Pei Huan to come back, then why didn’t Li Heng look for her earlier? He needn’t have waited three years!”

“Time can heal everything. Pei Huan’s resolve was very strong then, and no one could have stopped her, including Uncle and Aunt. Even if they stayed together, it would still be difficult to mend the relationship given the many problems they had. Not to mention that Uncle disapproved of Li Heng then. Even until today, he would still object to the idea of Li Heng meeting Aunt Ning.”

“Hence, when I invite Aunt Ning over, I can’t let Uncle know, right?” Shi Nuan finally understood. “That’s why I’m the one that’s calling her instead of you – because Uncle would never suspect me.” Shi Nuan glared at Fu Chengyan. “You’re asking me to be the bad guy here. If Uncle finds out, wouldn’t I be the one to suffer the consequences?”

“You won’t. He doesn’t beat women!” Fu Chengyan kissed Shi Nuan on her cheeks. “Besides, you’re just an accomplice, while I’m the mastermind!”

“Fine, fine!” Shi Nuan pushed Fu Chengyan aside. “Let me give her a call right now!”

“Sure!”

Shi Nuan stood up to look for her phone, and made the call. Ning Xin was both happy and surprised to hear Shi Nuan’s voice, and even more so when Shi Nuan invited her to go out together. Ning Xin agreed immediately.

Shi Nuan was worried that Fu Heng would object, so she asked to check, “Is Uncle fine with it?”

Ning Xin laughed in response. “He has left me alone the whole time, and I’m already bored to death. Besides, he’s so busy lately that he doesn’t have time to bother about me.”

“Alright, Aunt Ning, let’s go hang out today since all the New Year decorations are still up. By the way, shall I get Yan to pick you up? We’ll let him be our driver today; that way, Uncle wouldn’t have to worry about your condition.”

Ning Xin agreed as she felt that Shi Nuan's idea was a good one, and Fu Heng wouldn't object to it.

Shi Nuan ended the call. "Aunt Ning is very happy that I asked her out," she added, "However, when she sees Li Heng later, I wonder if she will be angry with me!" Shi Nuan felt guilty to have invited Ning Xin out under false pretenses.

"Don't worry, Aunt Ning doesn't have a temper because she's very good natured. Even if she is angry later, it will only be with me. Anyway, it's time to get changed as we need to pick her up!"

"Alright!" Shi Nuan went upstairs to get changed while Fu Chengyan gave Li Heng a call. "Let's go. We'll meet at Ruyi Tea House. It's more discreet there given May owns the place."

When Li Heng heard that Fu Chengyan had come through on his promise, he broke the cigarette he was holding in surprise. He remained silent for a moment, before he added, "Alright, thank you!"

Fu Chengyan grinned as he ended the call. He could see that Shi Nuan had changed and was ready. She was wearing a brown coat outside and a thin cotton top inside. She paired them with a winter skirt. The outfit gave her the vibe of a young artist.

Fu Chengyan squinted when he saw her carrying another coat that looked like his. It was a light brown coat and it seemed to match her own.

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“Why are you spaced out?”

Shi Nuan walked over and passed Fu Chengyan his coat. “Put it on! I know you’re strong, but the weather has been very cold lately. So, it’s better to put on a few more layers to prevent yourself from falling sick during the New Year. It would be unfortunate if that happens.”

Shi Nuan had a lot to say today as she kept chattering on and on beside Fu Chengyan. She seemed like a magpie that chirped non-stop. Fu Chengyan didn’t find it annoying. Rather, he found it quite soothing.

When Shi Nuan saw Fu Chengyan spacing out, she couldn’t help but laugh. She opened up his coat and put it over his shoulders. Fu Chengyan reached out and held her hand while smiling at her lovingly. He patted her hands and said, “May, do we look like we’re wearing couple outfit?”

Couple outfit?

Shi Nuan hesitated a moment before looking at Fu Chengyan’s coat and then back at hers. She couldn’t help but burst out in laughter. “It appears so!”

“Let’s go!” Fu Chengyan’s tone grew gentler. He held Shi Nuan’s hand and they walked out together.

They went to pick up Ning Xin at the Fu residence. It was a lot more peaceful now without Song Jingyu around. Shi Nuan waited in the car for Fu Chengyan as he entered the house to pick Ning Xin up.

Ning Xin was all dressed up and waiting for them. When she heard a car turn in, she walked towards the entrance and saw Fu Chengyan coming in. "I heard a car and guessed that it was you."

"Aunt Ning." Fu Chengyan helped to support her. She said, "I hope it's not too much trouble for you to accompany us two ladies out!"

"Of course not!" Fu Chengyan laughed. "I've not been very busy and was at home with May anyway. She must have been bored staying with me the whole day, that's why she invited you out!"

"Oh, you're such a sweetheart!" Ning Xin couldn't help but shake her head. "Don't think that I don't know you." She knew he was just being nice. It was obvious to her that they were very much in love with each other. Shi Nuan was definitely not feeling bored. "I think she is more worried about me being bored at home!" Ning Xin added.

Fu Chengyan just smiled. "Aunt Ning, mind the steps!"

As Shi Nuan was waiting in the car, she chatted with Su Yian and Song Rongrong within their group chat to pass the time. In a short while, she saw Fu Chengyan and Ning Xin come out. She opened the door and greeted, "Aunt Ning!"

"Oh! Nuan, you child, get in quick!"

Ning Xin didn't forget that Shi Nuan and Fu Chengyan's relationship was still a secret. She was worried that Shi Nuan would be seen by one of the servants, as they were still at the Fu residence.

Shi Nuan laughed instead, and retreated into the car. "Aunt Ning, I hope I'm not disturbing you by asking you out!"

“How could you think that? I can’t be happier when you invited me out! Your uncle has been busy recently. Why don’t I go to Wutong Residence for the next two days? I hope I won’t be in the way!”

“Of course not!”

Fu Chengyan helped Ning Xin into the back seat. Shi Nuan was worried that Ning Xin would be bored, so she volunteered to sit at the back with her.

They chatted happily along the journey. They talked about how both of them were doing and also about Song Jingyu’s incident. “It was a huge drama that night, and it made everyone nervous.”

Ning Xin looked towards Fu Chengyan as she spoke. “It seems better this way. I heard from your uncle that Song Jingyu has left, so no one stands between the two of you now.”

Fu Chengyan grinned and replied, “What you say is true.”

Fu Chengyan drove up the highway and headed towards Ruyi Tea House.

Shi Nuan had noticed it and asked, “This is the way to...”

“Ruyi Tea House.”

Shi Nuan nodded and glanced at Ning Xin. “Aunt Ning, I’m sure you’re not yet aware, but Ruyi Tea House is owned by me and a good friend of mine. Are you interested to take a look?”

“Sure!” Ning Xin nodded. “A teahouse, huh? What made you think about running one?”

“Interest. When I was young, my grandpa taught me how to make tea while my friend loves good tea.”

They arrived at Ruyi Tea House as they spoke. Shi Nuan helped Ning Xin out, as Fu Chengyan followed closely behind.

Su Yian, who had just been chatting with Shi Nuan, saw them appear at the teahouse suddenly and was pleasantly surprised. She turned to look at the middle-aged woman beside Shi Nuan and raised her eyebrows. “Nuan, this is...?”

“Aunt Ning,” Shi Nuan replied, “Yan’s aunt.”

“Hello, Aunt Ning!” Su Yian greeted Ning Xin politely and said, “Please come in!”

Ning Xin laughed and nodded in cheerfully. “Nuan, this must be the good friend of yours that you mentioned just now!”

“You’re right, her name is Su Yian.”

Ning Xin laughed as the three of them went in. Su Yian asked, “Nuan, just the two of you?”

“No, Yan is parking and would be here soon!” Just as she spoke, Fu Chengyan walked in and nodded at Su Yian. “Ms. Su.”

Su Yian smiled. “Please head to the private room first. It’s the room right at the back which is solely reserved for Nuan. Nuan, you know the way!”

Shi Nuan nodded. “Of course.”

“In that case, I’ll go get my staff to be prepared!” Su Yian then left.

Shi Nuan looked back and smiled. She then led Ning Xin and Fu Chengyan to the discreet private room.

Shi Nuan and Su Yian started the teahouse purely out of interest; they never expected it to turn into a full-fledged business. Every month or two, Shi Nuan would meet Su Yian to go through the accounts of the teahouse. This was what was agreed by them when they started.

Although they were friends, Su Yian treated the partnership professionally. She felt that Shi Nuan had to always be kept updated on the business. Shi Nuan felt that there was no need for Su Yian to be so rigid about informing her; however, Su Yian insisted that they operate this way.

As the three of them entered the room, it was love at first sight for Ning Xin. She couldn't stop praising it. "Nuan, did you do up the place yourselves?"

Shi Nuan nodded and replied, "Yes, we did." She then explained the decor to Ning Xin while Fu Chengyan sat by the side quietly. The only thing he did was make a call midway.

After some time, Su Yian entered the room carrying the tea set. "We just procured this tea set right before the New Year. Shi Nuan herself chose it. However, she wasn't at Jiang City during that time. By the time she sent it to me, I had no chance to use it. Now that you're here, I think it's a wonderful opportunity to try it out!"

"This is..." Ning Xin's gaze fell upon the tea set as her eyes beamed with admiration. "The craftsmanship is exquisite, so it must have been made by a very skilled master!"

Shi Nuan laughed and said, "I had forgotten about it. Looks like it was with you all this while." Shi Nuan sat down next to Fu Chengyan and picked up the tea set for a closer look. "To be honest, I don't really know much about these things. However, my grandpa loves them, so I asked for his opinion and purchased this set based on his comments."

Ning Xin nodded and replied, "Your Grandpa has a good eye." Although Ning Xin had not met Jiang Shizheng before, she had heard of him many times. It was

because he was Fu Chengyan's teacher and had made a big impression on the latter.

Ning Xin then glanced at Fu Chengyan who raised his eyebrow and smiled. He took over the tea set from Shi Nuan's hands and started washing them. He said, "Grandpa always has a good eye."

Shi Nuan laughed and teased, "Why do I get the feeling someone is trying to flatter himself?"

Fu Chengyan chuckled in return. "You're always right!"

Ning Xin and Su Yian both laughed when they heard their banter.

Suddenly, they heard footsteps approaching in their direction.

Shi Nuan thought it strange when she heard the footsteps stopping at their door, and it was followed by a knock. She looked at Fu Chengyan in surprise but saw him stand up casually and opened the door instead.

An elegant man stood by the door and looked like he had rushed here. However, he was in a state of calm. His usually hostile vibe was nowhere to be felt today.

Shi Nuan wasn't surprised to see Li Heng. The ones who were surprised instead were Ning Xin and Su Yian.

Su Yian had not expected Li Heng to come, but after some thought, it wasn't strange to her at all since Shi Nuan and Fu Chengyan were here. They must have invited him. She then gave Shi Nuan a tacit glance and left.

Ning Xin, on the other hand, was surprised to see Li Heng suddenly appearing right in front of them, especially in a place like this.

When she saw Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan's expressions, she immediately understood what it was all about. This meeting must have been arranged by Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan. Are they doing this for Li Heng?

Or does Li Heng want to see me? It is likely about Huan.

Ning Xin's expression was ambivalent as she didn't really have anything against Li Heng. When Li Heng and Pei Huan got together, she approved of their relationship and was optimistic about them. However, the reality was that they were incompatible with each other. A lot had happened when they were together. Pei Huan had bruises all over her body, and Ning Xin came to realize that they were not suited to each other.

That was the reason for her not stopping Pei Huan from leaving.

She felt that there was no real need for them to meet.

For the past three years, Ning Xin didn't purposely try to avoid Li Heng, but since he and Pei Huan didn't work out, there was just no point for them to keep in touch.

Fu Chengyan glanced at Shi Nuan who immediately said, "Aunt Ning, Li Heng has something to discuss with you. However... since it was Yan and I who invited you, we can ask him to leave if you don't want to see him."

They placed the decision in Ning Xin's hands. Although Li Heng was a powerful and ruthless man outside, he wasn't going to use the same approach against Ning Xin.

Li Heng remained at the door and waited for a response from Ning Xin. If he didn't have her permission, he would not enter.

When Shi Nuan didn't hear an answer from Ning Xin, she started to worry. However, she knew she couldn't blame Ning Xin as they were the ones at fault for jumping the gun. "I'm sorry, Aunt Ning. Perhaps we didn't think this through

properly. It's just that Li Heng... Never mind. I'll ask him to leave if you don't want to see him!"

Fu Chengyan, too, squinted as his gaze fell on Ning Xin. After a long while, he turned to look at Li Heng and said, "I'm sorry, but Aunt Ning still can't accept it now. Perhaps next time..."

"There's no need. Let him come in!"

I Want a Lifetime with You

Chapter 300

Fu Chengyan reached out his hand and patted Li Heng who immediately came in.

Li Heng then found a seat and sat down. He greeted, "Mother."

"Why don't you call me Aunt Ning instead!" Ning Xin felt uncomfortable when she heard him address her as "Mother". However, her upbringing prevented her from saying something rude to him. She added, "Since you managed to persuade Yan, I imagine it must be something really important. So, go ahead and tell me what is it that you wanted to discuss?"

Li Heng nodded as he received a cup of tea Shi Nuan had served him. With a slight nod, he greeted, "Aunt Ning!"

"I'm here to talk to you about Huan."

When Ning Xin heard the name, her fingers twitched. She pursed her lips.

She glared at Li Heng with displeasure. "I remember your relationship with Huan ended three years ago when you divorced."

"No, we didn't divorce!" Li Heng replied abruptly. However, due to Ning Xin's status, his tone was still relatively gentle. It did not contain his usual frostiness at all.

His words not only surprised Ning Xin, but even Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan were shocked, too.

Li Heng pursed his lips and put down his tea cup. “The truth is that we never did divorce.”

“That’s impossible. When she left... she...” Ning Xin’s face was pale as a sheet as she likely recalled Pei Huan’s depressed look. She immediately took a deep breath and said, “Even if you didn’t divorce her, she has already left for three years. The fact that both of you have been living separately is enough reason for her to file for a divorce. Besides, I’m sure you’re well aware of what happened then. Li Heng, since Huan chose to leave, it means she is unwilling to go back to the past. She has gotten over it; why can’t you let go, too?”

“How can I let go?” Li Heng replied softly as his tone carried with it his pain. He frowned as he looked at Ning Xin and said, “How can I let go of Huan?”

“This is your personal matter. You are a ruthless and decisive man in the business world, so why come to an old lady like me for relationship advice?” Ning Xin said, “No matter what you want to discuss with me today, I cannot help you if it relates to Huan. Huan is...” Ning Xin looked towards Fu Chengyan, who nodded immediately and gestured Shi Nuan to get up. “May needs to go through the accounts with her friend. I’ll go and help them, too. Li Heng, you stay and chat with Aunt Ning.”

Fu Chengyan shot Li Heng a glare as a warning before leaving with Shi Nuan in tow.

Shi Nuan was still worried and turned to look back. She said in a concerned tone, “Why did you drag me out, too? Aunt Ning is obviously not going to forgive Li Heng. Li Heng is... Besides, Aunt Ning isn’t in great health.”

“If we stayed there, it would be awkward for Li Heng to say what he wanted. Let’s go and take a walk!”

Fu Chengyan didn’t feel that their departure was a bad thing as he knew Ning Xin very well. He was well aware that she was someone who is sensible. Nothing

untoward would happen. While Li Heng is ruthless, he would definitely not treat Ning Xin that way.

There was nothing Shi Nuan could do other than nod. "Let's go chat with Yian!"

After Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan left, the two people in the room felt more relaxed. Li Heng poured a cup of tea for Ning Xin and said, "There was a misunderstanding between Huan and me. When the incident happened, I admit that I didn't make it there in time. However, it wasn't because I didn't care or no longer wanted her. I wanted to explain to her. But she was already gone by the time I arrived. Mother, it never crossed my mind to break up with Huan."

Throughout his whole life he was used to being alone. But ever since he met Pei Huan, he had never thought of separating from her. It would be impossible for him to leave Pei Huan.

Ning Xin raised her eyebrows and asked, "So the reason you're here is to have me ask Huan to come back?"

Ning Xin was extremely smart. No daughter of the Ning family would ever be incompetent.

Li Heng nodded and explained, "Three years have passed, and I have never stopped looking for her during these three years. However, she doesn't want to see me. Even with all my networks and resources, I still couldn't find her. You are her mother, I think..."

"Hasn't it crossed your mind that the reason Huan didn't allow you to find her was that she didn't want to see you?"

Li Heng's hand twitched as his gaze froze.

For the first time in this proud and arrogant man's life, he did not know the answer, and was at a loss as to what to do.

In the thirty years of his life, he had always gotten what he wanted through hard work. He had never thought there would be things which he could not get.

Ning Xin hesitated when she saw Li Heng's expression. "You should give up. You have survived three years without her. It just shows that you don't necessarily need Huan."

"I have never thought that she no longer wanted me," Li Heng muttered softly and frowned. "I definitely won't give up. If I must wait, I shall do so for her. Because other than Huan, I don't have anyone else. Even if she doesn't return, I would still wait!"

After Li Heng finished speaking, he noticed that Ning Xin remained silent. That was when he realized that she didn't approve of him anymore. Which parent would not want the best for their children? To those who didn't know the details then, it did look as if he was the one who hurt Pei Huan.

Li Heng stood up and bowed politely. "Since you do not know where she is, I shall not bother you any longer. I'll take my leave first!"

"Oh, Li Heng!" Ning Xin suddenly sighed. "Why must it be Huan? You have a bright future and can have anyone you want. Why..."

"There's no one else, and never will there be." He stood there for a long while, then continued, "She's the only one. I can't wait for anyone else while I'm waiting for her."

Ning Xin held her hands together and watched as Li Heng left.

The room was filled with steam from the pot that had been boiling continuously. It added a sense of warmth to the cold winter air.

Ning Xin put down her teacup and lifted the pot's cover with tongs. She then stared at the boiling water inside for a while before recovering her focus.

When Fu Chengyan and Shi Nuan returned, they saw Ning Xin quietly enjoying a cup of tea but Li Heng was nowhere to be seen.

Shi Nuan shot Fu Chengyan a quizzical glance; she wanted to know what happened. Fu Chengyan pursed his lips and felt a little disappointed. He proceeded to push open the door and enter. "Aunt Ning!"

"You're back?"

Ning Xin reached out her hands and motioned for them to sit. She then served them some tea and said, "It appears that shopping was just an excuse to get me out!"

Shi Nuan felt awkward and blushed. "I'm sorry, Aunt Ning!"

Ning Xin shook her head and took a sip of tea. "I know it isn't your idea, so it must be Yan who put you up to it! He's been full of sneaky ideas since young. He knows that his uncle would be suspicious if he was the one who invited me. However, if the invitation came from you, Fu Heng wouldn't have bothered."

"Aunt Ning, your deduction capabilities are amazing!" Fu Chengyan chuckled. "How did the talk with Li Heng go?"

Ning Xin shook her head and replied, "It's not easy trying to find Huan now, given that three years have passed. What if she has a new life now? One cannot always live in the past. I don't know what happened between them then. However, it's undeniable that Huan was hurt because of him, physically and emotionally. Yan, I know Li Heng is your friend, but Huan is your sister, too."

"I understand." Fu Chengyan nodded. "I have considered all these factors. Since when do I do things haphazardly?"

Ning Xin nodded and said, "But, what about your uncle..."

“As long as you consent to it, Uncle will not object. The key lies in whether you are willing to do so.” Fu Chengyan wasn’t in a hurry to look for Pei Huan now. “Li Heng... He is a good friend of mine. I’m sure you’re aware of that as I don’t have many friends. So, if I’m willing to help him, it means that he is alright. Aunt Ning, I do know a thing or two about what happened then. There really is something else at play. Besides, it isn’t just Li Heng who has been looking for Pei Huan; even I have been searching for her.”

“What?” Ning Xin was surprised. “You’re looking for Huan, too?”

Fu Chengyan nodded as he turned to Shi Nuan. Shi Nuan was stunned and said, “What is it?”

“Where are the documents that I gave you earlier before we left the house?”

Shi Nuan had a sudden realization and replied, “They’re here. Wait a moment!”

Shi Nuan scrambled to bring her bag over from another chair to look for the documents Fu Chengyan had given her earlier. She passed them to him and asked, “What is this?”

“Aunt Ning, have you thought about why Li Heng and I still can’t find Huan despite our combined network?” Fu Chengyan gently pursed his lips. “Li Heng has waited for three years and doesn’t mind waiting for a few more. But, Huan... Aunt Ning, the situation at the Li family is a lot more complex than we thought. Li Heng’s uncle is back.”

Ning Xin’s hand trembled as she asked, “Are you saying that Huan may be in danger?”

Ning Xin trusted what Fu Chengyan said, as he had no reason to lie to her. It was indeed impossible that the combined efforts of Fu Chengyan and Li Heng failed to locate Huan – unless someone was deliberately throwing them off.

Ning Xin recalled what happened three years ago. Pei Huan had repeatedly gotten in trouble and all the incidents occurred when Li Heng wasn't around. These events now appeared to her to be too much of a coincidence. "Why is Huan still a target? She no longer has any connection to Li Heng."

"Aunt Ning, that's only from your perspective. However, do Li Heng's enemies see it the same way?" Fu Chengyan explained calmly, "As long as Li Heng still cares about Huan, she would always be his weakness."

Ning Xin's face went pale. "What do you want me to do?"

"Huan is in danger no matter where she is. So isn't it safer for her to be by Li Heng's side? At least he is there to protect her. Besides, it's already been so long. I'm sure even you miss Huan. Both you and Uncle have waited so long to find your biological daughter. For her to continue staying away..."

Ning Xin sighed. "You think I don't want Huan to come home? It's just that I'd rather she not return if it makes her unhappy. However, given the current situation..." It was no longer her decision to make.

Ning Xin took a deep breath and said, "Let me think about it first. Actually, approaching me might not help you much because... I really don't have any way of contacting Huan!"