

I Want a Lifetime with You

Chapter 406

Shen Shixiu stood straight and nodded at Shi Nuan before flashing her a smile. “I guessed you wouldn’t take too long, so I decided to come down first and wait for you.”

Shi Nuan’s lip twitched. He is really unpredictable and seems to have more secrets than Fu Chengyan. Maybe it is because I don’t know him well enough, but he always seems to emit a mysterious aura.

“Ms. Shi?”

Seeing that Shi Nuan did not reply to him, Shen Shixiu smiled. “I won’t force you to show me around the city if you are busy. But it’s such a pity!”

At that, Shi Nuan could not help but smile. “Mr. Shen, please get into the car!”

Shen Shixiu opened the car door immediately and got in. Shi Nuan got into the car as well. “Mr. Shen, aren’t you curious to know what your sister has told me?”

“Do you want to share it with me?” Shen Shixiu turned to look at Shi Nuan quizzically after putting on his seat belt.

Shi Nuan fell silent before saying, “We merely talked about the different ways of life. I won’t bully your sister since you have absolute faith in me.”

Shen Shixiu smiled faintly. “You’re right, Ms. Shi. I’m not from Jiang City, so I will have to trouble you to show me around.”

“You mentioned that you would like to visit Jing University just now, right? Let us head over there now!” With that, Shi Nuan started driving in the direction of Jing University.

It was almost after-work hours, but Shen Shixiu was still immersed in his work and kept absolutely quiet as if he had forgotten that Shi Nuan was in the car with him. During the journey, Shi Nuan could not shake off the feeling that she was his chauffeur, although it was apparent that he did not feel the same way.

Around half an hour later, Shi Nuan parked the car in Jing University’s car park. She said nothing as Shen Shixiu was on a call.

At that moment, Fu Chengyan sent her a text message asking Shi Nuan about their whereabouts. Shi Nuan’s mind flew back to the conversation that she had eavesdropped on in the hotel, which had actually left a great impact on her.

Contrary to what she had told Shen Qianan, there were times when her mind wandered and doubted Fu Chengyan’s words that he had never treated her as Shen Qianan’s substitute. Only now did she realize that Shen Qianan was her substitute.

Smiling gleefully at that thought, she replied to Fu Chengyan’s message immediately: What would you like to eat tonight? Shall I cook for you?

Fu Chengyan had just ended his meeting when Shi Nuan’s message came in. Fu Chengyan stopped in his tracks and raised his head to look at Zhou Zheng and Mai Qi. “You guys go and get the stuff done now!” Fu Chengyan passed the document in his hand to Zhou Zheng.

“Yes!”

After Zhou Zheng and Mai Qi left, Fu Chengyan gave Shi Nuan a call. “Where are you now?”

Shi Nuan darted a sideward glance at Shen Shixiu and whispered as the latter was still on the phone, "I'm with Mr. Shen at Jing University."

"You are still at Jing University?"

"Yes, we just arrived. Do you want to make a guess where we went just now?" Shi Nuan asked gleefully.

Fu Chengyan narrowed his eyes. "You seem very happy?"

"I am!" How can I not be happy to learn that I'm not her substitute? Indeed, Shi Nuan was over the moon after learning the truth. Thus, she did not detect the displeasure in Fu Chengyan's voice and continued happily, "Are you still working? What do you want to eat? Shall I buy dinner for you?"

"No need. Hurry up and come home!"

"Okay!" Shi Nuan hung up the phone and turned around to look at Shen Shixiu, who had ended the call and was looking at her intently.

His stare made Shi Nuan's hair stand on end. She kept her phone hurriedly and said, "Mr. Shen, are you done with your work?"

"I'm sorry!" Shen Shixiu looked at Shi Nuan apologetically. "Ms. Shi, you seem very happy."

"Yes!" Shi Nuan grinned, released her seat belt, and alighted from the car. "Mr. Shen, do you want to come out and take a walk? Jing University is right in front. I can show you around the university if you like!"

"That will be great!"

Shen Shixiu's response caught Shi Nuan off-guard as she had only made the offer half-heartedly. Smiling, she started to lead the way.

Being a dutiful “tour guide”, she explained the history of Jing University to Shen Shixiu. After all, she had graduated from Jing University and was very familiar with its history.

Unbeknown to her, the eyes of Shen Shixiu, who was behind her, had lit up with amusement as he took in her lively eyes and animated expressions.

When they reached a boulevard, Shi Nuan was surprised to see her old professor playing chess under a tree.

The professor recognized Shi Nuan and waved at her. “Shi Nuan, right?”

“Yes. It has been such a long time!” Shi Nuan greeted her old professor smilingly.

“Is he your boyfriend?” Professor Liu adjusted his glasses as he scrutinized Shen Shixiu before nodding in satisfaction. “Not bad. He’s not bad. Shi Nuan, you have chosen well. Your boyfriend is handsome with a compelling presence!”

“He’s not my boyfriend!”

“No?” Embarrassment crossed Professor Liu’s face. “Then who is this?”

“He’s my company’s customer who seldom comes to Jiang City. So I’m showing him around the university, the most cultural spot in Jiang City!”

“It’s no wonder that you’re Old Master Jiang’s granddaughter. You’re such a sweet talker!”

“Thank you for your compliments, Professor Liu!” Shi Nuan then left with Shen Shixiu in tow after a short chat with Professor Liu and smiled as she overheard Professor Liu lamenting that it was a pity the good-looking man with her was not her boyfriend.

“Please don’t mind him. Professor Liu was my teacher during my university days, and he has a tendency to nag.”

Shen Shixiu smiled and nodded. “I can tell that he is very fond of you. You must have excelled in school last time?”

“Not exactly!” Shi Nuan smiled humbly. “Maybe I was too obedient, and that’s why the teachers here are fond of me?” Shi Nuan pointed at a row of ginkgo trees. “I remember from my university days that students like to gather together and strolled under the trees! Oh yes, do you want to take a look at the school library? It’s right in front!”

Something flashed across Shen Shixiu’s eyes as he replied, “Sure!”

Shi Nuan brought Shen Shixiu around the university and was about to leave the campus when they ran into Jiang Shizheng, Shi Nuan’s grandpa.

Jiang Shizheng spotted Shi Nuan first and frowned as he approached them. “Why are you here?” His question was directed at Shen Shixiu instead of Shi Nuan.

Shocked, Shi Nuan looked at Jiang Shizheng and Shen Shixiu suspiciously. “Grandpa, you... you know Mr. Shen?”

Suddenly, Shi Nuan realized what was going on and quickly clarified, “Grandpa, this is Mr. Shen. He’s not Uncle Yu, although they share a strong resemblance!” Shi Nuan turned to Shen Shixiu and said, “Mr. Shen, this is my grandpa. My grandpa used to be a professor at Jing University.”

“Hello, Old Master Jiang!” Shen Shixiu extended his hand to shake Jiang Shizheng’s hand. “I’m Shen Shixiu!”

Jiang Shizheng scrutinized Shen Shixiu carefully. After a long while, he finally let go of Shen Shixiu’s hand. “Hello, Mr. Shen.”

“Grandpa, Mr. Shen has just arrived at Jiang City and is collaborating with Shengyuan for a project. I’m showing Mr. Shen around now!”

Jiang Shizheng nodded. “You really look like Shi Yu, but your characters are really poles apart.” Despite saying that, he kept his gaze fixed on Shen Shixiu.

Shen Shixiu pursed his lips, but his smile remained polite yet distant.

However, Shi Nuan did not sense the tension between them and asked out of curiosity, “Grandpa, why are you in Jing University today?” Jiang Shizheng had retired two years ago, and he seldom appeared in the university as he had picked up new hobbies such as planting flowers at home.

“I have come to the university to settle some matters. I’m done now. Where are you and Mr. Shen heading to?”

“Nowhere. I have made plans with Yan to prepare dinner for him.” Shi Nuan looked at Shen Shixiu. “Mr. Shen, you must have been tired out after a long day!”

Shen Shixiu lifted a brow. “That’s true.”

“Shall I send you back?”

“It’s okay. I should not take up any more of your time since you have something on later.”

He’s such a considerate person. “Grandpa, shall I send you home?”

“It’s alright. You should go home earlier if Yan is waiting for you! What is a girl like you doing outside at this hour? I’ll take a stroll on the campus and go home myself afterward.”

Shi Nuan looked at Jiang Shizheng then at Shen Shixiu before nodding her head. “Okay. Then grandpa, take care of yourself. Yan and I will visit you soon!” Shi

Nuan turned to Shen Shixiu. “Mr. Shen, do you really not need me to send you home?”

“I shall not trouble you anymore.”

Shi Nuan nodded and left Jing University.

After Shi Nuan left, Jiang Shizheng turned to look at Shen Shixiu sharply. “Mr. Shen, why do you return now when you decided to lead your own life and disappear from Nuan’s life back then?”

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Shen Shixiu narrowed his eyes, which were filled with undecipherable emotions. He only moved his lips after a long time. “Grandpa.”

“Oh, don’t call me that. I have nothing to do with the Shen family anymore, so there’s no need for you to greet me that way, Mr. Shen.”

Shen Shixiu frowned at his prickly reply. “Do you think you can hide this any longer?” He pursed his lips at Jiang Shizheng’s unwillingness to talk to him. “Nuan has grown up, and she has every right to know this. Do you think she won’t find out about it, considering how smart she is?”

“Enough!” Jiang Shizheng cut off his words. “I’m saying this one last time – Nuan is my granddaughter. She has nothing to do with the Shen family, so there’s no need for you to forcefully relate yourself to her. Even Shen Feng has no comments about this. What difference will it make for you to do this?”

Shen Shixiu paused momentarily before replying, “My dad...”

“I have no interest in your affairs. You know very clearly that Nuan is not a Shen. I don’t care what you’re trying to do right now, but let me make this clear. As long as I am still alive, all of you shall not harm Nuan in any way. Stay clear from her!”

“Grandpa!”

“I said don’t call me that anymore! Don’t you think I have no idea what has been happening recently? Fu Chengyan is Nuan’s husband and not the son-in-law of the Shen family. Bear that in mind!”

Shen Shixiu's brows scrunched deeper at the older man's words. However, since Jiang Shizheng was adamant to not discuss the topic any further, Shen Shixiu could do nothing about it. "Please consider it. I'll be in Jiang City for the time being. Believe me when I say that I will not bring any harm to Nuan. Since I was able to protect her last time, I shall do the same now. I will never abandon her."

"How nice of you. I have no confidence in whether you will fulfill it or not, though."

Jiang Shizheng greatly disliked the Shen family. Refusing to talk with him any longer, Jiang Shizheng promptly left after finishing his words.

Shen Shixiu stared at his departing figure for a long time before fishing out his phone. "Dad, it's me."

Shi Nuan had felt that something was wrong ever since she left Jing University, but she couldn't quite put a finger on what felt off. She only noticed that her grandpa's attitude towards Shen Shixiu was strange.

Could it be because Shen Shixiu looks too much like Shi Yu, hence he diverted all his prejudice towards Shi Yu to Shen Shixiu instead? But that doesn't sound right either. Grandpa is not a man who can't tell right from wrong. In fact, Shen Shixiu's attitude also turned weird when he met Grandpa.

Shi Nuan frowned her brows in confusion. "Maybe I'm thinking too much."

After giving it some thought, she decided to ignore the incident and stop pondering over it. She took a trip to the supermarket to get some food and made a call to Fu Chengyan on her way back. "Yan, when will you be coming back?"

"Not now." Fu Chengyan's deep voice sounded from the other side.

Shi Nuan's smile stiffened upon hearing her answer. Before she could react, Fu Chengyan added, "I have something to do in the office, so you don't have to cook for me."

After that, he swiftly cut off the call. Shi Nuan was so stunned by his actions that she only returned to her senses after quite a while. Emotions of disappointment suddenly filled her heart.

On the other hand, Fu Chengyan ended the call and kept his phone while eyeing the man across him with narrowed eyes. "Alright. What's the problem?"

Su Shaoqing pursed his lips while looking at Fu Chengyan. "Wow, you rejected Nuan's dinner invitation for me? What a good friend you are, Chengyan."

Fu Chengyan merely hummed in reply. "If you have nothing else to tell me, please get lost!"

"Hey, don't be like that!" Su Shaoqing immediately raised his arms in surrender. "I need your help on something." He got up and sat on Fu Chengyan's table while knocking his finger on the surface. "Your company has some collaborations with Qin Group, right?"

"Which Qin Group?" Fu Chengyan raised his brows. "Hmm?"

"What other Qin Group can there be? Of course, I mean Qin Yanzhi! Don't tell me you don't know who the father to Ling's child is!" Su Shaoqing sighed tiredly as he spoke. "You should know that Bai is suffering from leukemia by now. He needs the bone marrow from his parents if he wants to be cured. You know... Ling told me that Qin Yanzhi is Bai's biological father."

"Then what about you? Do you think he's the father?" Fu Chengyan stood up from his place. It was rare for him to see Su Shaoqing looking so tired and dejected.

Su Shaoqing's lips quivered, and he uttered with a mocking grin. "What do you think?" Of course, he wished that Qin Yanzhi were not the father. But this was Bai's health and life they were talking about, and he knew that Fu Ling would never use her son's life to mess with him, which was why he was sure Bai was not his. Plus, he had been there when Fu Ling had the abortion. The sight of Fu

Ling covered in her own blood was a traumatic sight he would never forget for life.

“You are fine with it?”

“You’ve asked me that before,” Su Shaoqing replied impatiently. “Just tell me if you’re going to help me! I don’t have many connections in the business realm, but you sure do. Of course, I’ll have no problems asking Bancheng for help if you don’t want to help me.”

Fu Chengyan eyed him calmly. “Between Su Bancheng and I, you chose to come to me instead of going to him. That can only mean you didn’t want him, or rather anyone from your family to know about this,” he commented in a definite tone.

Su Shaoqing wanted to retaliate, but what Fu Chengyan said had actually hit the bullseye. He had no way of denying that statement.

“I will help you with this. But this child... do you really think it’s Ling’s?”

“What do you mean by that?” Su Shaoqing lifted his head, only to see Fu Chengyan curling his lips into a smirk. “You’re a doctor yourself. Don’t tell me you don’t know what I mean.”

Su Shaoqing narrowed his eyes in deep thought. Although they didn’t speak anything out loud, he actually understood what Fu Chengyan was trying to tell him. “Maybe,” he replied with a faint smile.

After all, he had witnessed Fu Ling’s abortion himself. He knew that she definitely couldn’t get pregnant within such a short time. But the child’s age didn’t match the period for safe pregnancy either, so the only possibility would be that Bai wasn’t even Fu Ling’s child, to begin with.

If Bai is Qin Yanzhi’s child, who’s the mother? What’s the mother’s relationship with Fu Ling? Why would she end up as Bai’s mother now?

“Please help me investigate this matter too.” Su Shaoqing extended his arms and patted Fu Chengyan’s shoulder. “I’ve got to go now.”

Fu Chengyan twirled his pen as he waved him off. Once Su Shaoqing left, Zhou Zheng immediately entered. “Mr. Fu, Shen Shixiu and Mrs. Fu ran into Mr. Jiang at Jing University today.”

“Grandpa?” Fu Chengyan narrowed his eyes. “What happened then?”

“Before this, Mrs. Fu and Mr. Shen went to a hotel.” Zhou Zheng carefully observed Fu Chengyan’s expression as he reported. He only relaxed when Fu Chengyan didn’t show any expression of displeasure and continued, “Shen Shixiu went up first, and Mrs. Fu only went up half an hour later. But not long after she went up, Shen Shixiu came down first and waited for her downstairs. Mrs. Fu stayed upstairs for quite a long time before departing for Jing University with Shen Shixiu.”

Fu Chengyan’s hand paused in his actions. “Did you say Shen Shixiu came down first?”

“Yes.” Zhou Zheng nodded. “I asked Liang Lin to hack into the hotel’s CCTV’s and found out that Mrs. Fu met up with Shen Qianan. Prior to their meetup, Shen Shixiu seemed to have had a row with Shen Qianan.”

With pursed lips, Fu Chengyan stood up from his place. “Investigate this incident. Find out why Shen Qianan and Shen Shixiu quarreled in the hotel and why May met up with Shen Qianan.”

“Noted.” Zhou Zheng nodded. “It’s getting late, Mr. Fu. So...”

“I’m going home. I’ll let you handle the remaining work. Do keep an eye on Shen Qianan and Shen Shixiu.”

Fu Chengyan then took his coat and left Shengyuan.

Meanwhile, Shi Nuan was lazing around in the living room after finishing up her grocery shopping. Fu Chengyan's reply had made her lose any motivation to cook, so she ended up plopping herself on the sofa and flipping through the TV channels. However, nothing was interesting to watch. Poor Shi Nuan lay down on her sofa in dejection and whipped out her phone instead. She then took a selfie and uploaded it on WeChat Moments with the caption: Gloomy and bored to death!

Fu Chengyan was about to send her a message through WeChat when he saw her upload that post.

Shi Nuan was the only person he followed on WeChat Moments; that was why he would receive notifications on all her new posts.

After reading her caption, Fu Chengyan raised his brows in amusement before keeping his phone aside. He then sped out of the car park.

After uploading the post, Shi Nuan put down her phone and started rolling around the sofa lazily. Whilst rolling around, she heard the notification of someone commenting on her post; it was Song Rongrong and Su Yian. Both of them replied almost at the same time with the same sad-face emoji.

Shi Nuan replied to their comments almost immediately. The moment she recalled how Fu Chengyan had hung up on her call, she bit her lip, wanting to message him. After tapping into their chatroom, however, she realized that she didn't know how she should bring up the topic. She didn't know what she wanted to say to him either. Hence, she exited their chatroom.

Just as Shi Nuan was busy contemplating how to message Fu Chengyan, she suddenly heard the sounds of a car engine, making her jump up like a spring from her sofa. She swiftly slipped into her slippers with her phone in hand and sprinted towards the door while adjusting her shirt.

The moment the door opened, Shi Nuan threw herself into Fu Chengyan's arms. "Yan!"

Surprised by the impact of her weight, Fu Chengyan staggered backward but swiftly stabilized himself. He placed one hand on the door frame, while his other wrapped around Shi Nuan's waist to stop her from falling.

Her scent wafted into his nose the moment she crashed into his arms. Fu Chengyan's eyes curved into a crescent the moment he inhaled Shi Nuan's scent. She successfully calmed his restless emotions.

Still holding onto her waist, Fu Chengyan could feel Shi Nuan rubbing her head against his chest before lightly knocking his chest with her head. "I'm unhappy, Yan."

"Hmm? Why are you unhappy? Which idiot made you angry this time?"

Shi Nuan pouted her lips and hit him with her fist. "Who else other than you? Idiot."

"Hmm?" Fu Chengyan raised his brows. "Me? An idiot?"

Shi Nuan harrumphed. "Yan!"

"Yes?"

"I didn't know you have fallen for me at such a young age!" Shi Nuan uttered as her heart blossomed in happiness. Fu Chengyan was stunned by her words while Shi Nuan continued, "I wasn't even legal yet then. You were crushing on a minor, you know!"

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Crushing on a minor, huh?

Fu Chengyan curved his lips into a smile when he looked at Shi Nuan. She was looking at him with a smug face. “Hmm? What are you trying to say?”

His eyes were sparkling with joy as he grinned happily.

Shi Nuan, too, curved her lips into a smile as she looked at him. “I thought it’s you who has something to say?”

“You’ve known about everything, right?” Fu Chengyan replied with a smile and pulled her back into his arms. “In a gloomy mood today?”

Shi Nuan pursed her lips and pushed Fu Chengyan away. “I thought you said you’re not coming back early today?”

Fu Chengyan raised his arms and stroked her hair. He then took her hand and dragged her to the sofa. “Are you mad at me?” He pulled Shi Nuan into his lap after sitting down.

“Of course not. Do you think I’m that petty?” Shi Nuan pouted. “Have you taken your dinner?”

Fu Chengyan shook his head. Seeing that, Shi Nuan pushed him away and got up. “Ok, I’ve bought some groceries. I’ll make dinner now.”

“Ok!”

Fu Chengyan got up as well. Upon seeing that she was really not mad at him, he smirked in amusement and followed Shi Nuan into the kitchen. His heart grew warm when he saw her busying herself in the kitchen.

Shi Nuan couldn't stop the grin from forming on her face as she washed the vegetables. "Yan, you really have nothing to tell me?"

"Tell you what?" Fu Chengyan leaned on the door frame leisurely. He seemed to be in an excellent mood. "Don't you know everything already? Is it necessary for me to repeat it?"

"That's what others say. I want to hear it from you." Shi Nuan put down her dishes and turned to Fu Chengyan with sparkling eyes.

The same sparkle was also evident in Fu Chengyan's eyes. "Come here."

Shi Nuan hopped over to him as she looked at him in anticipation. Fu Chengyan smiled while stroking her face endearingly. "I've always liked you."

Shi Nuan grinned.

"And I will always love you!"

Shi Nuan's grin widened at his confession.

"I've been in love with you since ages ago." Fu Chengyan chuckled. "Since those days when you didn't even know me."

Shi Nuan's eyes curved into a crescent when she heard that.

"In days when you may forget about me, I will remain in love with you." Fu Chengyan sighed. "Happy with my confession?"

Shi Nuan's eyes crinkled with her wide grin. "So, you've really fallen for me since ages ago?" She was still in disbelief even after hearing him confess that to her himself.

Fu Chengyan fixed his eyes on Shi Nuan and stared into her eyes in firm determination. "Yes. Happy now?"

Shi Nuan laughed and trailed her fingers across Fu Chengyan's face like how he did to her. She was stroking him as though he was the most precious treasure in her possession. Shi Nuan was enveloped in warmth as she rubbed Fu Chengyan's face affectionately. "Yan, I'm so happy!" I'm so happy that you fell for me a long time ago, and I'm so happy that I'm not a replacement for another woman.

"How did you find out about that?"

Shi Nuan grinned. "Didn't I tell you that I was supposed to accompany Shen Shixiu to Jing University? Something happened to Shen Qianan before we headed there, so I had to drive him to the hotel. Since he was riding in my car, I couldn't just dump him there. I heard his conversation with Shen Qianan then."

If she hadn't overheard their conversation, Shi Nuan would still have her head in clouds. She would still think that she was a replacement for Shen Qianan.

Although Shi Nuan never seemed to mind it, she was actually only keeping her displeasure within herself.

Shi Nuan was a sensible woman. Shen Qianan really did look like her – that was a fact she couldn't deny. The fact that Fu Chengyan had almost married Shen Qianan in the past was also something Shi Nuan could not deny. However, since these were matters of the past, Shi Nuan had to remind herself time and time again to not mind it. What mattered most was what she had now. It was Fu Chengyan's sincere confession that had miraculously dissolve all her pent-up emotions and made her extremely happy.

“You mean Shen Shixiu and Shen Qianan talked about this?” Fu Chengyan now had an idea of what had happened in the hotel, and he nodded in understanding. “Since you’re clear of my feelings now, you shouldn’t overthink stuff and doubt my love anymore, ok?”

“Oh, I never doubted your love at all,” Shi Nuan denied. “I just don’t like the feeling of being lied to. I told you before that you can lie to me, but don’t let me discover your lies and find out the truth on my own.”

“Silly girl.” Fu Chengyan stroked her head. “You must tell me when you’re in doubt. You must voice your concerns instead of keeping everything to yourself. I’m not a mind reader, so I won’t know what you’re thinking if you don’t tell me, understand?”

“Ok, I know that now.” Shi Nuan buried her head in his chest affectionately. “So, when did you actually fall in love with me? Why didn’t I notice it?”

“You heartless little girl.” Fu Chengyan sighed at her dense character. “Alright, get out of the kitchen. Let me do the cooking.”

“Sure!” Shi Nuan laughed and removed her apron. After helping him wear it, she pushed Fu Chengyan into the kitchen. “I’ve bought a lot of groceries, so feel free to show off your culinary skills with it. I want to eat braised pork tonight!”

“You want such a heavy meal?” Fu Chengyan raised his brows at her heavy taste but complied nonetheless. Halfway through slicing the pork, he suddenly paused as he remembered something. “Shen Shixiu... Is he close with you?”

Shi Nuan’s smile stiffened at his words before she laughed out loud. “Yan, are you jealous?” Oh, he refused to come back because I said I was going to Jing University with Shen Shixiu?

Fu Chengyan did not deny her accusations. He turned to look at her with a serious gaze. “Yes, I’m jealous.” Fu Chengyan knew no man could threaten his status in Shi Nuan’s heart. To him, they were not worthy to compete for her

affection. Shen Shixiu, however, was a whole different story. His arrival had caught Shi Nuan's eyes almost immediately. This made the usually confident Fu Chengyan feel dangerously threatened by him.

Shi Nuan pouted. "Why are you jealous of him? He's not even a threat to you! But anyway, I'm still happy that you're jealous because of me."

She then looked at him with a sincere gaze. "I'm just friends with Shen Shixiu, and you know why I'm close to him. I think he looks very similar to my uncle. That's why I feel a sense of familiarity whenever I'm with him. Also, I think his character differs much from Shen Qianan. From what I see, he's not on Shen Qianan's side at all. Plus, isn't he working with Shengyuan now? I developed my friendship with him because of you. If it isn't for Shen Qianan, I wouldn't even acquaint him in the first place. Isn't that the case?"

"Since when were you so eloquent, huh?" Fu Chengyan brushed his finger against her nose. "Alright, go out and chat with your friends while I prepare dinner. It'll be ready soon."

"Ok!" Shi Nuan tip-toed and kissed Fu Chengyan on his forehead before hopping out of the kitchen.

Fu Chengyan's gaze was full of affection as he watched her scurry away.

It was already pretty late then, so Fu Chengyan only cooked three dishes – braised pork, spicy sour potato shreds, and a vegetable dish that contained brinjals.

Once he was done, Fu Chengyan came out from the kitchen in his apron. Shi Nuan was chatting with Song Rongrong and Su Yian on the phone, and she could smell the scent of his cooking from the living room. "You're done?"

"Yes, come here." Fu Chengyan waved her over. "It's chow time!"

Shi Nuan dashed towards the kitchen excitedly. The moment she smelled the braised pork, however, her expression suddenly changed, and she covered her mouth in discomfort. A nauseating feeling suddenly rose in her throat, making her make a run to the sink. She tried to vomit out the nauseating substance stuck in her throat, yet nothing came out of her mouth. Her face turned green as she battled her sudden nausea.

Seeing how terrible she looked, Fu Chengyan came over in worry. “Why? What happened?” He checked her face and noticed how green she was. “You’re not feeling well? Or is your stomach feeling upset?”

“I...” Shi Nuan was about to speak when nausea hit her again. She pushed Fu Chengyan away and started vomiting into the dustbin. But since she has hardly eaten anything for the whole day, all that she could get out of her system was just the bitter gastric juice.

While Shi Nuan was puking her lungs out, Fu Chengyan stood beside her, his gaze turning cold at the sight. Then, his eyes lit up at Shi Nuan’s condition.

After vomiting for some time, Shi Nuan finally recovered from her discomfort. She straightened herself and noticed Fu Chengyan’s brooding gaze on her. “Why are you looking at me like that? I’m fine. Maybe my stomach is acting up at the smell of braised pork because I have hardly eaten anything today. Don’t worry about me. I’m very healthy!”

However, Fu Chengyan simply stared at her as his brooding eyes gleamed with joy.

Shi Nuan freaked out upon noticing his odd gaze. “Yan, you...”

“Have you had your period this month?”

“Err...” Shi Nuan’s face reddened in embarrassment. “Why are you asking about this... My period...” she suddenly paused in her words and widened her eyes. She then turned to Fu Chengyan. “Do you mean... I’m pregnant?” Shi Nuan’s jaw

dropped at the realization. Indeed, her period did not arrive on time for this month. Her period hadn't come as well for the last month! "I..."

"I know your period comes on the 28th of every month. Today is already the 30th. It still hasn't arrived?" Fu Chengyan took the calendar from the living room and checked with pursed lips. "Hmm?"

"My... My period didn't come last month either!"

She might have been married to Fu Chengyan for a long time, but Shi Nuan never expected him to remember small little details like this about her. She suddenly felt as if she was being wrapped in inexplicable warmth. She was so touched by his caring and concerned gesture that her eyes reddened slightly.

Feeling excited but also lost at the sudden realization, Fu Chengyan held his hands together in panic. "Right. You stay put here. Don't move around. I'm going out to get something for you. Don't eat the food if you don't feel like eating yet."

Fu Chengyan turned around at a loss while looking around for his car key. He then fumbled with his pocket and returned to get his purse before departing from Wutong Residence in a hurry.

Shi Nuan looked on with the same lost expression when she saw Fu Chengyan looking so nervous. This was the first time she had actually seen him looking so lost and vigilant. It was like he was going into a tough battle. Usually, no matter how grave was the problem he faced in his business, Fu Chengyan could solve it almost immediately.

To Shi Nuan, Fu Chengyan was a superman who could do anything. That was why she was rendered speechless when she saw him panic.

Half an hour later, Fu Chengyan returned to Wutong Residence. Shi Nuan's jaw dropped at how fast he returned.

But Fu Chengyan didn't notice her agape expression as he rushed in without taking off his shoes. "Here... There's a user manual inside. The pharmacist has explained how to use it to me as well, so if you cannot understand the manual, I can explain it to you." He handed the pregnancy test kit to Shi Nuan.

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Fu Chengyan passed the whole stack of pregnancy test kits to Shi Nuan while rambling on the way to use it. Poor Shi Nuan was so embarrassed by the situation, yet Fu Chengyan didn't seem to notice it. "I was worried that the one the pharmacist recommended me is not good, so I bought every brand available. You should test with each of them."

"Yan!" Shi Nuan took a deep breath and put on an awkward smile. "Don't panic, okay? I'll take two first."

She then took two pregnancy kits from him and headed to the toilet. Judging from Fu Chengyan's behavior, he must be excited to have a child of his own. He seems to favor children very much.

Well, if I'm not pregnant this time, I'll work hard to get one next time. If I'm really pregnant now, then I shall protect my baby with all my might and give birth to him. Shi Nuan's hands tightened around the test kit, and she started to feel nervous.

She looked at herself in the mirror to brace herself before testing with the first kit. It was just a matter of seconds, yet Shi Nuan felt as if she had waited an eternity for the result to show. The moment the line split into two on the test kit, Shi Nuan was so happy that she jumped up in elation. Just to be sure, Shi Nuan tested with the other kit too. The results were the same – she was really pregnant.

The excitement was evident on her face, and Shi Nuan had to bite her lip to calm herself.

While Shi Nuan was freaking out inside, Fu Chengyan was not any better than her either. He paced around the room restlessly while waiting. He had imagined various scenes of his child with Shi Nuan in his brain. If Shi Nuan really is pregnant, I shall give the baby the best I can offer and make sure the child grows up showered with the love of us as parents.

If it's a boy, I must make him know of his mother's sacrifice and make sure he treats his mother well. If it's a girl, I'll spoil her like a princess and ward off any sufferings that would befall her.

The moment Shi Nuan opened the door, Fu Chengyan dashed over and held her hand tightly. "So? Are you pregnant?"

Shi Nuan had on a down expression as she pouted her lips in disappointment. Her lips quivered for some time, yet no words came out.

Fu Chengyan was taken aback by her sad expression, but he patted her shoulders comfortingly before pulling Shi Nuan into a hug. "Oh, it's fine. We're still young, and we've only been married for half a year. We will have children sooner or later. Actually, having a child later sounds good as well. We can plan to have one after we're done with the honeymoon."

Fu Chengyan could feel Shi Nuan gasping in his arms, and his heart ached for his wife. "Please don't cry, okay?"

"Hahaha!" Shi Nuan finally couldn't hold her laughter in and pushed Fu Chengyan away. She laughed so hard that tears began flowing out of her eyes. Fu Chengyan narrowed his eyes before landing his gaze on the pregnancy test kit. With a bright smile, Shi Nuan waved the test kit in front of his face. "There are two lines! Yan, I'm pregnant! I'm really pregnant!"

"Hey, how dare you fool me!" Fu Chengyan's face burst into a wide grin as he lifted her in his arms.

Shi Nuan yelled in surprise before wrapping her arms around Fu Chengyan's neck in panic. "Hey, don't! Be careful of the baby!"

"Don't worry; I know what I'm doing." Fu Chengyan refused to let go of his wife. She was the most precious treasure in the world. He then kissed Shi Nuan's forehead in satisfaction. "You're really pregnant, right? Do you need to use a few more test kits to confirm it? I bought plenty anyway."

"Oh, goodness! What do you think pregnancy test kits are for? To test around for fun?" Shi Nuan glared at him in annoyance before packing away the test kits. "I've tested it twice, so I'm sure I'm pregnant. If you're really unsure, we can go for a checkup at the hospital tomorrow."

Shi Nuan's gaze was gentle when she mentioned doing a pregnancy checkup.

This was such an extraordinary experience for her. Just a moment ago, she didn't know if she was pregnant yet, so she didn't feel anything in her tummy. But now that she knew she was pregnant, Shi Nuan could somehow feel the fetus' presence in her womb.

She reached out for her tummy instinctively, and a gentle and loving smile appeared on her face.

Her gentleness was contagious; Fu Chengyan instantly felt at ease when being near her.

"Ok. Let me make a call to Shaoqing and ask him to arrange for the best doctor to check on your tummy," Fu Chengyan uttered while dialing Su Shaoqing's number.

After only a few hours since they parted ways, Su Shaoqing received Fu Chengyan's call yet again. "What's up now?"

"Arrange an appointment with the best gynecologist tomorrow!"

Fu Chengyan's voice sounded from the other side. Su Shaoqing had just reached home and was talking to Fu Ling when he received the call. He accidentally tapped on the loudspeaker icon while answering the call, so Fu Ling also heard his excited voice through the phone.

Su Shaoqing frowned and turned to Fu Ling instinctively, only to find her listening curiously as well. Su Shaoqing cleared his throat and pretended to be confused. "Gynae? Who wants to see the gynae?"

"May! May might be pregnant! She just tested using pregnancy test kits and it showed two lines! But just to be sure, we want to do a full checkup to confirm her pregnancy. Please arrange an appointment with the doctor for her. I'll bring May over tomorrow morning!"

Su Shaoqing raised his brows at the news. His lips curved into a smile when he heard Fu Chengyan reminding him in an excited tone. "Remember to get the best doctor to check on her. It would be best to get the top expert for her."

"For goodness sake, Chengyan. Hold your excitement. Don't be too much." Su Shaoqing couldn't stand his friend freaking out like a madman. It's just his wife getting pregnant! Any doctor can do the job, and here he wants the best doctor in the hospital. "I'll arrange everything for you tomorrow, ok? Anything else?"

Fu Chengyan nagged for a while longer before finally ending the call.

Su Shaoqing turned to Fu Ling after ending the call and noticed her staring at the phone. "It's Shi Nuan, Chengyan's wife. You know her."

Fu Ling nodded in understanding. "She's pregnant?" She could remember Shi Nuan well because of her similar appearance with Shen Qianan. Other than slight surprise over her pregnancy, Fu Ling couldn't feel anything else but excruciating pain. She hid it well, though; it didn't show on her face.

Su Shaoqing nodded. "Well, it's about time for them to get a child now. They have been married for half a year. Although Chengyan hardly expresses it, he

does love children very much. Just not long ago, Pei Huan has returned with Bao, and Shi Nuan could barely get her hands off the little boy. Chengyan spoiled him so much whenever they were together.”

Fu Ling curled her lips, and her eyes darkened in sadness. “He has indeed changed a lot.”

Feeling something was off, Su Shaoqing lifted his head and looked at her. “Ling, you...”

“I always thought he’s the type who lacks compassion and love. I always thought he’s a heartless man who’s devoid of all emotions. He was just as cold when he was with Shen Qianan. But now, it seems like he’s not like that. He simply didn’t meet the right woman back then!” Fu Ling smiled bitterly. “Children... I didn’t expect such a cold-blooded person like him to actually love children so much!”

“Ling, what happened to your child is all my fault! Chengyan-”

“Enough. I don’t want to talk about the past right now. Back to our topic; do you really agree to help me?” Not wanting to talk about her abortion, Fu Ling diverted the topic of conversation immediately. Her eyes were distant as she looked at Su Shaoqing. “Qin Yanzhi... When can he do the transplant for Bai? My son cannot wait any longer now.”

“Ling, you cannot rush this matter. Even if Qin Yanzhi agrees to help, we still need to wait for the test results. What if Qin Yanzhi turns out to be not Bai’s biological father, or that his bone marrow doesn’t match with Bai’s? All of these are problems we have to solve before we can save Bai!”

“How can Bai not be Qin Yanzhi’s son! He is Qin Yanzhi’s son with...” Fu Ling caught herself before blurting out the truth. “With me. Do you think I don’t know who’s the father of my own son?” She pursed her lips guiltily. “You just don’t want to help me, right?”

Su Shaoqing frowned his brows at her reaction. He realized Fu Ling had changed a lot after a few years of not seeing her. Judging from her reaction, it was obvious that she was refusing to trust him now.

“You know what sort of person I am. Since I’ve promised to help you, I won’t frame you behind your back. I will handle Qin Yanzhi for sure, so don’t worry!”

“Good.” After getting the answer she wanted, Fu Ling refused to stay any longer with Su Shaoqing. Her emotions were getting unstable after knowing that Shi Nuan might be pregnant with Fu Chengyan’s child.

She got up from her place right then. “It’s getting late. I’m going upstairs now.”

“Ling!” Su Shaoqing stood up and grabbed her hand.

Fu Ling couldn’t help but shudder at the electrifying sensation of his hand on hers. She tried to fling his hand off her, but Su Shaoqing’s grip was tight and unyielding.

With pursed lips, Fu Ling scolded, “Let go of me!”

“Ling, please give me a chance!”

“Chance? What chance?” Fu Ling’s tone was sarcastic as she spoke. “Did we even have one in the first place?”

Su Shaoqing pinched his nose bridge helplessly. “Ling, please. Can’t we start all over again? Let me be the one to woo you this time. You can do whatever you want to me. You can demand anything from me, as long as you give me a chance.”

“I want you to stop coming after me. Will you fulfill my wish?”

The air around them seemed to freeze all of a sudden. Su Shaoqing's face turned ugly at her reply. His smile was gone now, and his mien was replaced by an imposing vibe that frightened Fu Ling subconsciously.

Her hand was still in Su Shaoqing's, and her body was rigid in the tense situation. Fu Ling tried to retract her hand, but Su Shaoqing's grip was as firm as iron. "Let go of me!"

"Ling, I've said that I will not give up on you. I will try to win you over, just like how you tried to capture my heart last time. Please don't reject me, okay?" Su Shaoqing pulled Fu Ling into his arms and stroked her face endearingly.

Fu Ling was stunned by the gesture and only stared at him blankly. The words he uttered were the ones she had hoped to hear from him for so many years. But now...

Fu Ling jerked back to her senses, and a hateful glint flashed across her eyes. She pushed him away heartlessly with a face as cold as an iceberg. "You didn't give me a chance last time, yet now you expect me to give you one? There's never been any chance between us, be it last time or now!"

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Su Shaoqing glared at Fu Ling with a gaze so murderous he looked like a beast in the night. His hostility struck fear within Fu Ling.

The woman instinctively gulped and took a few steps back, pursing her lips at the thought of what had happened three years ago.

Su Shaoqing closed in on her and grabbed her hand. Unable to respond in time, Fu Ling felt a hint of warmth on her lips as a minty scent from the man engulfed her senses.

She wanted to push Su Shaoqing away, but it was impossible. The difference in their strength was too vast.

He kissed her eagerly – it was slightly overwhelming.

Fu Ling tried to break free, but Su Shaoqing held her by her wrist and pulled her into a tight embrace, placing one hand on her waist.

With his eyes closed, Su Shaoqing explored her lips with his. Fu Ling's eyes flew open as she tried to push Su Shaoqing away, but the man had no intention of letting her have her way. In a brief moment where their lips separated, he lifted Fu Ling's chin with his slender fingers to raise her head.

The two panted slightly, and Fu Ling staggered backward as her legs turned jelly-like. Fortunately, Su Shaoqing caught her right before she fell. Fu Ling felt her body go numb wherever Su Shaoqing touched her. Finally, she shoved him aside and leaned against the side of the couch, staring at him with a pair of misty yet stubborn eyes.

Then, she violently wiped her lips while her eyes flashed with contempt.

Su Shaoqing's gaze darkened slightly when he saw the disdain in the woman's eyes. Taking a deep breath, he composed himself and loosened his grip on her. "Sorry, Ling. I—"

"Remember this, Su Shaoqing. I'm not the Fu Ling you once knew. I'm no longer someone who will love you until I lose myself. I used to do whatever you asked, but that's all in the past now. You were my entire world when I loved you, but now that I don't feel that way for you anymore, you mean nothing to me. This is the first and last time ever. I hope you'll remember what you said to me back then."

With that, Fu Ling rushed upstairs, her heart pounding so hard that she couldn't control her emotions at all.

She couldn't believe that she still had feelings for this man even after three years. I was so determined to leave back then. I cut off all my feelings for him. What's wrong with me now?

Fu Ling clutched her chest as she leaned against the door, looking ahead in a daze.

No. I can't go on like this. I've learned my lesson back then. It doesn't matter if he likes me; I'm not as brave as I once was to be near him anymore.

Su Shaoqing stood in the living room downstairs, his gaze darkening as he touched his own lips long after Fu Ling had left.

...

Shen Shixiu arrived somewhere as agreed upon and quickly spotted the Shi family's butler. "Mr. Yang!"

Mr. Yang immediately walked over upon seeing Shen Shixiu. "You made it, Master Shixiu! Master Yunsheng is waiting for you inside." Mr. Yang seemed rather pleased to see the other man.

Shen Shixiu nodded and handed a gift box to Mr. Yang before walking into a courtyard.

Shi Yunsheng happened to be brewing some tea there. Next to him was a cage containing a crested myna. "Master Shixiu is here," the bird called out, mimicking human voices.

Shi Yunsheng looked up and saw Shen Shixiu striding toward him confidently. Still, that didn't distract him from brewing his tea. The old man pointed to a seat nearby. "Have a seat over there."

"Hi, Dad," Shen Shixiu greeted Shi Yunsheng respectfully and sat across him before receiving a cup of tea. "Thanks!"

"No problem." Shi Yunsheng waved a hand, his gaze falling on Shen Shixiu. After a long while, the elderly man smiled faintly. "I thought you'd never come back."

Shen Shixiu's eyes looked inexplicable, but he let out a light chuckle anyway. "How could I not? You and Nuan are still here, after all!"

"You should call me Granddad instead. That way, you wouldn't be considered senior to Nuan." Shi Yunsheng put down his teacup and sighed. "How long have you been back?"

"A few days. It's been a while since I last saw you. Are you doing okay, Granddad?"

Since Shi Yunsheng didn't mind being addressed this way, Shen Shixiu naturally didn't either. The younger man took the teapot and served Shi Yunsheng more tea. "I didn't come back for a while because things were busy in the capital, but I believe you know why I've returned this time."

Shi Yunsheng's gaze darkened. "Had I known about this, I wouldn't have approved of Nuan's and Yan's marriage so easily." He couldn't help but shake his head as he stared at Shen Shixiu. "What on earth is going on with that child of Yan's and Shen Qianan's?"

"Don't worry, Granddad. That's why I'm here. I'll take Qianan away and make sure she doesn't pose any threat to Nuan." A contented smile appeared on Shen Shixiu's face as he thought about how well Fu Chengyan treated Shi Nuan. "Honestly, you shouldn't fret, Granddad. Fu Chengyan is a very reliable man."

Upon hearing that, Shi Yunsheng nodded and smiled. Indeed, he was very satisfied with Fu Chengyan. "You're right," he replied while receiving the tea Shen Shixiu served him. "Yan is quite reliable, and he treats Nuan very well."

Then, he paused. "But the Fu clan..."

Shen Shixiu's eyes gleamed. "You should believe in Nuan, Granddad. She'll do perfectly fine."

"You're right." Shi Yunsheng pondered as he looked at the man before him. "Does Nuan know that you—"

"She doesn't." Shen Shixiu shook his head as he cut Shi Yunsheng off. "Don't let her find out, if possible."

"Why not?" Shi Yunsheng frowned. "You know how Nuan has always depended on you ever since she was young. She's even nicer to you than she is to me. She... She hasn't seen you all these years. I'm sure she misses you."

"Granddad, about Nuan's origins... She—"

"You don't have to bring that up. Nuan is my granddaughter. This is a fact no one can ever change," Shi Yunsheng declared sternly. Hearing that, Shen Shixiu lowered his gaze slightly before nodding. "I'll do my best, but I'm sure you know how smart Nuan is. She'll figure things out sooner or later."

“Then we’ll talk about it when she finds out.” Shi Yunsheng clearly didn’t want to dwell on this matter. “How long are you here for this time?”

“About a month. I’ll be leaving in a few days.” While speaking, Shen Shixiu noticed Mr. Yang enter. “You have a phone call from Ms. Nuan, Master.”

“Hmm? Nuan?” Shi Yunsheng took the phone from Mr. Yang. “Hello? Nuan!”

“It’s me, Granddad!” Shi Nuan sounded cheery – it was clear that she was in a good mood.

Shi Yunsheng was delighted too. “It’s this late already, Nuan! What can I do for you?” As he glanced at Shen Shixiu, the latter nodded and headed into the courtyard.

Then, Shi Yunsheng began speaking to Shi Nuan. “How have you been?”

“I’ve been great!” Shi Nuan couldn’t sleep at the thought of getting a check-up the next day. After much pondering, she figured that the first people she had to talk to were Shi Yunsheng and Jiang Shizheng. Hence, she had immediately dialed Shi Yunsheng’s number. “Granddad, I... I have some good news to tell you.”

“Hmm? What could it be? Did Yan give you something?” Shi Yunsheng asked with a chuckle. Then, Shi Nuan responded, “I might be pregnant, Granddad. You’re going to be a great-grandpa!”

“What? Really?” Shi Yunsheng’s eyes shone as he suddenly stood up, knocking his teacup over and causing it to shatter.

Hearing that, Mr. Yang and Shen Shixiu immediately turned their heads. “Are you okay?”

“I’m fine. I’m fine!” Shi Yunsheng was so elated that he couldn’t feel the pain. “Are you really pregnant, Nuan? Have you gotten yourself checked?”

“I’m not a hundred percent sure yet, but Yan says he’ll take me to the hospital tomorrow. I’m so happy that I just had to talk to you about this!”

“That’s wonderful! I’m so glad.”

Yet, Shi Nuan seemed rather skeptical. “Who were you talking to earlier, Granddad?” It wasn’t loud, but Shi Nuan had clearly heard another voice, and it sounded especially familiar. But despite pondering over this familiar voice for a long time, Shi Nuan didn’t make any assumptions on who it could have been.

“Are you still having guests at such an hour?”

“Uhh... Haha! I’m not home right now. I’m at an old friend’s place!” Shi Yunsheng hastily brushed this matter aside with a random answer. “Be extra careful with the child. Tell Yan not to go to work tomorrow. He should be taking you straight to the hospital.”

“I know that!” Shi Nuan giggled. “Okay, Granddad, I’ll be hanging up. I still have to talk to Grandpa!”

Shi Nuan beamed as she hung up. Then, she caught sight of Fu Chengyan walking out of the bathroom. He had a towel wrapped around his waist as he dried his hair with another cloth.

The man smirked when he saw how thrilled Shi Nuan looked while holding her phone. “What are you smiling about?”

With a grin, Shi Nuan put her phone down and took the towel from Fu Chengyan to dry his hair for him. “I just told Granddad I’m pregnant. He’s really happy.”

Fu Chengyan raised an eyebrow and grunted in assent.

He sat on the edge of the bed while Shi Nuan knelt behind him, gently towel-drying his hair with her nimble fingers. “Am I getting too excited, Yan? What if I’m not actually pregnant? Won’t Granddad be really upset?”

“That’s impossible.” Fu Chengyan turned slightly and held Shi Nuan’s hand before giving it a light pat. “I’m sure you are. But if you’re not, we’ll keep trying!”