

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 331

Lin Xinyan walked in with a grim expression. She patted her back and asked, "Are you okay?"

Qin Ya shook her head. "I'm fine. Perhaps it's something I ate but recently..."

She suddenly stopped. It looked as though a thought had just struck her.

Lin Xinyan had prior experience and could read between the lines. She quickly suggested to Qin Ya, "Let's get you checked out at the hospital."

The latter's hands were trembling slightly. She seemed to have difficulty processing the situation.

Lin Xinyan wrapped her arms around her friend and patted her shoulder gently, quietly showing her support.

"Ms. Lin, can you promise me one thing?" Qin Ya's voice was hoarse.

"Go ahead," Lin Xinyan replied.

"Maybe... Just maybe, if I really am pregnant, can you promise not to tell Su Zhan?"

I don't want to be with someone due to societal pressures. I know exactly what I want.

Lin Xinyan understood her friend's point of view and nodded. "I won't say a word. But if you really are pregnant, you'll eventually have to plan for your future."

It was necessary for every parent to consider the environment in which their child was going to grow up. A wholesome and complete family was imperative to a child's development.

Lin Xinyan drove Qin Ya to the hospital.

As the sun had already set, the check-up at the emergency room went by quickly. Qin Ya took an ultrasound and a urine test. The ultrasound showed that she was indeed seven weeks pregnant. The urine test corroborated the ultrasound with a positive result.

Qin Ya sat by the hospital's pond. Her eyes were trained on the test results as she wordlessly hung her head.

Lin Xinyan did not know how to comfort her friend. *If only her relationship with Su Zhan is stable. The existence of this child would be a blessing then. But it's clear that they aren't doing well.*

"I don't want it." Qin Ya had been silent since the completion of the tests.

The first words out of her mouth floored Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan did not dissuade her. *She's just emotional and impulsive at the moment. I know all too well how it feels to be a mother.*

The moment she tries to step into the operating room, she'll definitely regret it.

It's human nature.

Qin Ya expected Lin Xinyan to talk her out of it and was surprised when she did not. She looked up at Lin Xinyan and asked, "Do you think I should abort it?"

Lin Xinyan answered in an extremely serious tone, "I know you won't."

Qin Ya was momentarily speechless. *She's right. The moment I said I didn't want it, I felt something jab at my heart. What should I do now?*

"It's cold outside. Let me take you home." Lin Xinyan helped her up.

The moment she rose to her feet, Qin Ya embraced Lin Xinyan. "I'm so grateful to have you in my life."

She has always a reliable and objective voice in my life. But she never tries to interfere with the way I live. She never crosses the line yet still makes the people around her feel comfortable.

When Lin Xinyan sent Qin Ya home, she assured warmly, "Don't worry. I won't tell Su Zhan. You can just focus on resting."

Qin Ya nodded. "I'm heading in."

Lin Xinyan waved and urged her friend to take shelter from the cold.

Only when she saw Qin Ya enter the building did Lin Xinyan drive off to the office.

When the car drove into the metropolitan financial district, there was a noticeable difference even in the walking pace of the pedestrians. Every person was used to being a participant in the rat race, and they knew time was money.

Lin Xinyan parked the car in the basement carpark of the office building.

She had worked there for a few days previously. Although she was not completely familiar with its dynamics, she was still better prepared. She walked into the lift and pressed the button for the top floor.

On the sixteenth floor, someone entered the live. The person pressed a button before standing off to the side. He would leaf through the documents in hand and appeared to be doing final preparations.

When they arrived at the top floor, the lift doors glided open. It was only then that the man seemed to notice Lin Xinyan. "Which department are you from?"

Regardless of department, company employees would usually cross paths at least once. However, Lin Xinyan was a fresh face.

At this moment, Guan Jing strolled in. Lin Xinyan flashed him a smile and said, "I'm looking for him."

Realization dawned on the man. "So you're here to see Mr. Guan."

Guan Jing hastened his pace when he caught sight of Lin Xinyan.

"Hi. It's been too long," she greeted.

"I hope you're not still holding onto any grudges." Guan Jing replied, grinning.

He was referring to the matter of him going to Country A in order to investigate her.

Lin Xinyan's contemplative demeanor unsettled Guan Jing.

"You... you know I wasn't the one calling the shots. I was just following orders."

He punctuated the last two words with heightened emotion, as though to remind her he was blameless. The one to blame was the person behind all of it.

The man was a member of the upper management who was on his way to bring Zong Jinghao some documents to sign. When he came across Guan Jing, he asked, "Is this your girlfriend?"

Guan Jing held an executive position at the company. This was the first time he appeared to be intimidated by a woman.

Look at how he's squirming.

Guan Jing's expression hardened. He was taken aback by the audacity of the man and was about to explain himself, but the latter had already started knocking on the office door.

A deep voice boomed from the other side of the door, "Come in."

The man entered and handed the documents to Zong Jinghao.

The company was in the midst of buying over an electronics company that used to be a major player in the market with clients worldwide. However, due to ill management, its revenue had been declining for years. Zong Jinghao planned on breaking into the electronics industry and decided to use this company as a start.

Their previous proposal failed, so they drafted a new one.

The door of the office was left open. The man was waiting for Zong Jinghao to finish going over the proposal when he glimpsed Guan Jing talking to the woman.

Lin Xinyan knew Zong Jinghao was working. Thus, she decided not to go in.

After scanning the proposal, Zong Jinghao found himself pleased with its contents. He signed his name, lifted his head, and also saw the pair outside.

He rolled his eyes when he saw Lin Xinyan. Zong Jinghao pursed his lips. *Why didn't she just come in?*

He tossed the documents aside, causing the man to scramble in order to pick them up. The man muttered, "Mr. Guan's girlfriend sure is pretty."

Zong Jinghao's eyes narrowed. *Guan Jing's girlfriend?*

The man assumed Zong Jinghao was intrigued and pointed at Lin Xinyan. He continued, "I'm talking about her. When I was in the lift with her, she mentioned she was here to see Guan Jing. They've been talking since then."

Zong Jinghao leaned back in his chair and unbuttoned his cuffs. His expression grew stern and he murmured, "Call him in."

The man sensed that the atmosphere in the room had become cold. He walked over to the door and called out to Guan Jing, "Mr. Zong wants you to come in."

Guan Jing glanced at Lin Xinyan. "Shall we go in together?"

She saw the man carrying the documents backed out and figured that Zong Jinghao was done with his work. She nodded.

Guan Jing and Lin Xinyan strolled in. The man was not the nosy type. His comment came from a slip of the tongue.

"I'll be headed back to work, Mr. Zong," the man said.

"Stop." Zong Jinghao rose to his feet. He was dressed in a shirt with its sleeves rolled back, revealing his muscular forearms. He tugged at his tie and ordered, "Tell them what you just told me."

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The man was caught off guard. *What did I just say?*

His memory quickly returned to him and he addressed Guan Jing, “Oh. I told Mr. Zong that your girlfriend is pretty.”

Guan Jing jumped slightly, almost losing his balance. His eyes widened to the size of saucers and he barked, “Are you blind? Since when did I have a girlfriend?”

Lin Xinyan was standing next to Zong Jinghao. She caught the subtle twitches in the vein in his temple and leaned in toward him discreetly.

A stranger misunderstood because he doesn't know any better.

Is it really worth getting angry over?

The man was dumbfounded by Guan Jing's response. *What's going on?*

He looked at Guan Jing, then at Lin Xinyan.

Did I say something wrong?

Sweat pooled on the man's forehead. “I... I was...”

Lin Xinyan was well aware of Zong Jinghao's temper. *I chose not to come in because I didn't want to disturb him. I can't allow him to take his anger out on someone who formed a reasonable misunderstanding.*

She turned to the man. “I'm actually here for Mr. Zong. You can go back to work.”

The man did not dare to move on her command. He looked at Zong Jinghao, awaiting his order.

The president growled, "Didn't you hear what she said?"

The man's jaw fell open. *I think I just stumbled upon something.*

This woman...

"Why are you still here?" Guan Jing spat at him.

The man anxiously scuttled out. In his haste, he failed to notice the door and collided headfirst into it. A small bump swelled on his forehead. Guan Jing turned to face him. "If there's something wrong with your eyes, you should get it checked out at the hospital."

"I am due for an eye checkup." The man placed a hand over his bump and scrambled out.

Guan Jing erupted into sniggers. *Serve you right for making such a blunder.*

Zong Jinghao did not join him. Instead, he stared at him blankly.

His tepid reaction irritated Guan Jing, who threw a pleading expression toward Lin Xinyan.

This is my fault. Don't aggravate him.

Lin Xinyan was about to speak when Zong Jinghao beat her to it. "You want to ask me to go easy on him?"

She immediately sealed her lips.

Guan Jing appeared to be resigned to his fate.

Today's really not my day.

Lin Xinyan reached out to clasp his hand and asked, "What time do you get off work?"

Zong Jinghao was still fuming and did not reply her.

Lin Xinyan snaked her arms around his neck and whined, "I'm hungry. Can we go eat now?"

Behind Zong Jinghao's back, she gestured at Guan Jing who received her message and quietly sneaked toward the door.

Zong Jinghao lowered his gaze at her. She flashed him a wide grin. Without lifting his head, Zong Jinghao muttered, "This acquisition will be headed by you."

Guan Jing let out a sigh of relief. "Yes, Sir."

He marched out of the office quickly, shutting the door behind him.

Lin Xinyan released her grip and was about to back away when she felt Zong Jinghao wrap his arms around her waist. With one yank, she found herself pressed up against him. His lips curled up and he purred, "Trying to leave after you've used me?"

Their bodies were plastered together. Lin Xinyan hung her head and whispered, "You're too petty."

He lifted her face by her chin and planted a light kiss on her lips. "How am I petty?"

I'm extremely normal. Which man could tolerate their beloved being called someone else's girlfriend?

Men and their machismo, Lin Xinyan lamented inwardly.

Her next words came out slow and strained, “Can you call Su Zhan for me? I need to see him.”

Zong Jinghao did not respond.

“Why did you call me here?” Lin Xinyan asked.

He had been busy recently, leaving for work early and only returned late at night. It had been some time since they last sat down for a meal together. He instructed his secretary to make a reservation so he could have a private dinner with Lin Xinyuan.

Instead of answering her question, Zong Jinghao asked, “Why do you need to see Su Zhan?”

Lin Xinyan thought back to Qin Ya’s tortured expression. She let out a small sigh and raised her head to meet Zong Jinghao’s gaze. “I want to punch him.”

Her reply stunned him. His eyebrow twitched, and he massaged his temples. He did not know whether to laugh or cry.

“Call him.” Lin Xinyan snuggled deeper into his embrace and tugged on his tie. She rarely acted in such a coquettish manner around him.

Zong Jinghao tried to hide his delight by remaining quiet.

Lin Xinyan pulled him nearer to her by his tie. Their noses touched. With such close quarters, he could practically map out every detail of her face.

She put on a mock display of fierceness. “Are you going to call him or not?”

Lin Xinyan knew there would be a difference between her calling and him.

If I call and end up showing my displeasure, I'll have to handle it on my own. But if he calls, and I end up acting on my anger, I'll still be able to say that Zong Jinghao feels the same way.

He's the one who called after all.

Zong Jinghao blinked, his eyelashes getting caught in a few loose strands of her hair. He smiled ruefully and said in a defeated voice, "Whatever you want. But only on one condition."

"What condition?" Lin Xinyuan asked warily.

He narrowed his eyes and pondered for a moment. "How about you take the initiative for once?" Zong Jinghao asked hopefully.

Lin Xinyuan was speechless.

A blush bloomed on her cheeks and Zong Jinghao hugged her tighter. While keeping one hand wrapped around her waist, he used the other hand to dial on his office desk phone. He called Su Zhan and asked him out to dinner.

Su Zhan agreed cheerily.

After he hung up, Zong Jinghao turned his attention back to Lin Xinyuan. "Are you satisfied?"

She made an inaudible sound of agreement.

However, Zong Jinghao still had some work to attend to and sat Lin Xinyuan down on his lap. He kept one arm around her as he perused various documents. She did not understand most of the contents and gradually dozed off to sleep. Zong Jinghao allowed her to lean against him as she slumbered. "I'll wake you later."

In her barely awake state, she made mumbled an acknowledgment.

Zong Jinghao woke her as he carried her into the car. She asked if he was done with his work.

He grabbed her jacket and grunted in response, "Are you hungry?"

She nodded.

It was long past dinnertime. If they ate now, it could be considered supper.

The luminescent moon painted an iridescent glow across the night sky.

Zong Jinghao stopped the car in front of a fine dining restaurant.

Lin Xinyan looked out the window and caught sight of Su Zhan conversing with a woman by the side of the road.

She lowered the window, allowing a gust of chilly air to rush in. She put on her jacket and scrutinized the woman. *Is that Su Zhan's ex-girlfriend?*

Are they still in contact?

She narrowed her eyes in disapproval.

From the moment Liu Feifei left the hospital, she hired someone to follow Su Zhan. She intended to find the right opportunity to drive a wedge between them.

She knew Qin Ya had left the Su family, and the elderly lady had become mute.

This is the perfect time to get Su Zhan to come back to me.

She knew she needed to use a soft approach. This meeting was all part of her scheme. Although she did not approach Su Zhan, she put on a compelling performance of a damsel in distress who was harassed by a pervert.

Naturally, even the pervert was stationed there by her.

Since I can't speak to him of my own accord, I'll get him to come to me instead.

There's no way he could ignore seeing me being harassed. We might not be together anymore, but he used to love me.

He has to care more about me than a stranger, right?

She carefully calculated the time and just as she expected, Su Zhan rushed in to rescue her.

While grappling with the “pervert”, she accidentally sprained her ankle.

Liu Feifei intentionally thanked him without lingering. She limped away pitifully.

The last thing Su Zhan wanted was to reconnect with her, but her unstable gait forced his hand.

“Where are you going? I'll send you there.” He supported her by her arm.

Liu Feifei lowered her gaze. “Forget it. I don't want to trouble you.”

“I would help strangers in such a situation as well.”

Liu Feifei stopped objecting.

“I'm really sorry about this. I wanted you back so badly in the past, which led me to make many mistakes. I apologize for causing so much inconvenience to you

with my actions.” Liu Feifei’s sincere body language reminded him of who she used to be, who she was a long time ago.

Su Zhan was momentarily stupefied.

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Liu Feifei hung her head but peered at Su Zhan using her peripheral vision.

Although he displayed little emotion, she knew she did not abhor him. *I came on too strong in the past, which turned him off.*

I forgot to consider the fact that we were apart for too long. We drifted apart and all feelings between us dissipated.

If I want him back, I would have to start by reclaiming his heart.

I need to let him experience joy while I'm by his side. We have so much history between us and that's something Qin Ya can never replace.

She smiled faintly. "Do you hate me?"

Without waiting for Su Zhan to reply, she went on, "It's fine if you resent me. It's my fault, after all."

Su Zhan had nothing to say.

They walked over to the car, where he unlocked the door and opened it. "Get in. I'll send you home."

Liu Feifei cracked a smile. "You haven't eaten, right? I'll call a cab. There's no need to bother you."

Just when she was about to turn and leave, Su Zhan stopped her. "Your leg is injured. Let me drive you."

Liu Feifei continued to protest, “There’s really no need. You’re already married. It won’t look good if someone sees us so close together. I don’t want to repeat old mistakes.”

Liu Feifei limped to the sidewalk.

Su Zhan stood rooted to the ground as he watched her.

“If you want to go, just go. What’s with the hesitation?” A derisive voice chimed out from behind him. Su Zhan turned to see Lin Xinyan there.

He was startled by her appearance. *Did she see everything?*

He anxiously explained himself, “We met by coincidence. A pervert was after her. Was I supposed to leave her in the lurch?”

Lin Xinyan chuckled. “A knight in shining armor. You acted as any man would. You did nothing wrong. I’m the one who’s wrong. I must have been crazy to have wanted to set you and Ya up. She was right. You’re a womanizer through and through.”

Su Zhan stepped nearer to her. “This really is a misunderstanding...”

“What misunderstanding? You were so sympathetic that you absolutely had to drive her home. In what way did I misunderstand?” Lin Xinyan glowered at him.

“Her leg is injured...”

“Doesn’t she have any other friends who can help? Does it have to be you?” Lin Xinyan interrupted him.

She finally understood why Qin Ya was unwilling to keep the baby.

Does he not understand what I’m getting at?

Lin Xinyan snapped her mouth shut in an attempt to calm down. She sucked in a deep breath. "Su Zhan, if you still have feelings for your ex-girlfriend, just promise me you'll stop seeing Ya."

Su Zhan was alarmed by her words. He reached out to touch her but stopped himself after one stern look from Zong Jinghao. "Qin Ya is the one I like."

Lin Xinyan wanted to laugh but could not bring herself to in front of the ignorant Su Zhan.

"You like Ya?"

"Yes, I do."

"Have you seriously considered this though, if she loves you, why would she leave you? She was away for some time, yet you don't seem to be curious about what she was up to all that time. Don't you want to know about the people she met? The possible relationships she forged?" Lin Xinyan hissed.

As a lawyer, shouldn't he be smarter than most people?

But he seems to be even dumber than the average Homosapien right now!

He's an absolute disappointment.

It was true that Su Zhan had never thought about those questions. But Liu Feifei mentioned why she left him.

"She said she was just deadweight since she couldn't conceive. So she left."

Lin Xinyan found his response ridiculous. *If you really love a person, how could you leave them without so much as a warning?*

A love like that is just selfish.

She wasn't doing this for them. If she loved him, she wouldn't have been able to leave. If she left, it would have been excruciating for her. Su Zhan is right. She left because she felt bad about not being able to conceive.

After being gone for so long, why did she come back?

Does she not feel like a burden anymore?

Highly unlikely. This is just plain illogical!

"I now support every one of Ya's decisions. You've let me down!"

Lin Xinyuan immediately spun around and climbed into the car without speaking so much as another word to Su Zhan.

She was fraught with worry over Qin Ya and detested Su Zhan's attitude.

Zong Jinghao had his hands in his pockets as he strolled over. He solemnly reminded Su Zhan, "She rarely treats people this way. You should reflect on yourself."

His hand landed heavily on Su Zhan's shoulder. When he heard Lin Xinyuan's request to meet Su Zhan, Zong Jinghao knew something was off.

Something must have happened to Qin Ya. That's the only reason she would ask to see Su Zhan. She's definitely trying to push both of them together. But seeing him with his ex-girlfriend must have greatly disappointed and angered her. That's why she ripped into Su Zhan.

Su Zhan was dealing with his own troubles. *Qin Ya might be willing to see me now, but she's so distant. No matter what I say, she reacts in such a subdued manner.*

Even the hottest of fires burn out after being drenched repeatedly.

Matters of the heart were solely between the involved parties.

It was up to Su Zhan to comprehend its meaning.

Zong Jinghao entered the car but did not start it up. Instead, he twirled her hair with his fingers. "Let's go eat."

Lin Xinyan was still fuming over Su Zhan.

The solution to the problem couldn't be more simple. If he loves Qin Ya, he should sever all ties with his ex-girlfriend. At the very least it'll give Qin Ya a sense of security.

If he still has feelings for his ex-girlfriend, then he should just leave Qin Ya alone.

Yet he claims to love Qin Ya, while at the same time meeting with his ex-girlfriend.

She snapped her head toward Zong Jinghao and blurted, "Qin Ya is pregnant."

Zong Jinghao had guessed as much after seeing her outburst.

He smiled warmly at her. "What do you plan to do? Do you want me to hire someone to beat Su Zhan up?"

Lin Xinyan shook her head. *I can't do something so impulsive. Beating him up will just temporarily quell my frustration. It wouldn't be a long-term solution.*

"I want to investigate his ex-girlfriend. I want to know where she's been and why she's suddenly back." *If she really left Su Zhan because she couldn't conceive, it means she really loves him. I need to get Qin Ya out of the country for now.*

Whether Su Zhan gets back together with his ex-girlfriend or not is up to him.

All I can do is keep Qin Ya from getting hurt even more than she already has.

Zong Jinghao heaved a sigh. *She might be nosy, but it can't be denied that she's righteous as well.*

Lin Xinyan seemed to read his mind, and her lip curled into a bitter smile. "Ya has been with me all this time. She only returned to the country because of me. If she didn't come back, she wouldn't have met Su Zhan and landed herself in this situation."

This is my responsibility.

Zong Jinghao tried to keep himself from grinning. *If she didn't come back, what would have become of me?*

He helped her out of the car. "Let's get something in our stomachs for now."

Lin Xinyuan followed him distractedly. As Zong Jinghao made a reservation beforehand, the waiter immediately led them to a table. Once they were seated, Zong Jinghao fished out his phone to send a text to Shen Peichuan and instructed him to look into Liu Feifei. Guan Jing was going to be too busy to help.

He could only turn to Shen Peichuan, who had the resources and worked efficiently.

The waiter served the food.

Zong Jinghao preferred lighter food. This restaurant specialized in nutritious cuisine and did not serve many oily or meat forward dishes.

He spooned some soup for Lin Xinyan. The main ingredient in the soup was chicken, with an assortment of healthy ingredients. It was light, fresh and nourishing.

He remembered Lin Xinyan mentioning her body was not in the greatest condition. When he was ordering, he asked the waiter which soup was most suitable for women and was recommended this dish.

Lin Xinyan put a spoonful into her mouth. The ginseng flavor was especially salient. Every ingredient added had its purpose.

It was light but perfectly suited her palate.

Zong Jinghao still had not touched his food. He leaned back and let his gaze drift to her abdomen.

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He wondered what it would be like if she were pregnant.

Perhaps it was too pleasant even to fantasize, and the corners of his lips curved into a tiny smile.

Lin Xinyan didn't notice anything odd about Zong Jinghao while she slowly drank the soup he had scooped for her. Although it was already spring, the weather was still cold. The hot soup warmed her body gradually.

Afterward, she went to the bathroom. When she came out of the bathroom, she was stopped by a waitress in the restaurant. "Hello. Are you Ms. Lin?" the waitress asked.

Lin Xinyan didn't immediately reply. Thinking that she was very strange, she asked vigilantly, "Is anything the matter?"

The waitress took out a letter from her pocket and said, "A gentleman in a wheelchair asked me to give you this letter."

When Bai Yinning paid the waitress to deliver the letter to Lin Xinyan, he had pointed her out.

The waitress knew that she was Lin Xinyan, but she asked her for confirmation just in case she made a mistake. She didn't expect the woman to be so vigilant. Hence, she had no choice but to take out the letter.

Lin Xinyan glanced around instinctively, and the waitress said, "That man has already left."

Bai Yinning is here in B City?

She took the letter from the waitress and hesitated for a moment before opening it. There was not much content in it. There were only a few sentences: *I live in Contine Hotel, Room 608. Find me. I have something to tell you.*

Lin Xinyan frowned and thought he was strange and didn't intend to go.

She was not interested in what he had to say.

She tore up the letter, threw it into the trash can, and then walked toward the hall. Zong Jinghao was on the phone, looking very serious. Lin Xinyan sat down and waited until he hung up the call before asking, "Who is it?"

Zong Jinghao told her Li Jing and Wen Qing had a car accident and were now in the hospital. Their son was not in the country at that moment, so he had to go and check on them.

He got up and said, "Let me send you home."

Lin Xinyan suddenly tensed up. Inexplicably, she felt that this matter had something to do with Bai Yinning. She received his letter and the next moment Wen Qing had a car accident? It was too much of a coincidence.

She looked up at Zong Jinghao and said, "You should go to the hospital first. I can take a taxi and go home by myself."

Zong Jinghao's pursed his lips together, obviously worrying about her safety.

Lin Xinyan held his hand and assured him, "Don't regard me as a child. Didn't I live well before I met you? I am an adult, and I can take good care of myself."

Zong Jinghao was silent for a while before saying, "Call me when you get home."

Lin Xinyan quickly nodded her head. "Go ahead."

After Zong Jinghao left, Lin Xinyan got up and left the restaurant. She stood by the side of the road while waiting for a taxi. Although it was already February, the weather was still a bit cold, so she wrapped her coat tightly around herself.

A black car drove up and stopped in front of her. Gao Yuan got off the car, opened the door, and gestured to Lin Xinyan, "Ms. Lin, please."

Gao Yuan was Bai Yinning's personal assistant. Lin Xinyan was sure that Wen Qing's car accident was definitely related to Bai Yinning.

Otherwise, how could there be such a coincidence?

As soon as Zong Jinghao left, Bai Yinning's man came.

Now, she was interested to hear what Bai Yinning had to say.

She got into the car, and very quickly, they drove to the hotel.

The car came to a stop. and Gao Yuan got out of the car to open the door for her. He gestured for her to enter the hotel, and she glanced at him before stepping inside.

Gao Yuan led the way, crossing the lobby, and got on the elevator to the sixth floor. They walked to Room 608. Gao Yuan stood by the door and said, "Please enter, Ms. Lin. Mr. Bai is waiting for you inside."

Lin Xinyan twisted the door handle and opened the door.

The room was heated. Bai Yinning was sitting in front of the French windows with his back to the door. He seemed to be admiring the night view, waiting for someone.

She walked into the room, and without turning his head to look at her, Bai Yinning said, "You're here."

“Mr. Bai, you went to great pains to invite me. Can I not come?” Lin Xinyan stood beside him, and like him, she looked outside the windows at the beautiful night view. B City was shrouded in neon lights, rendering the night view brilliant and colorful.

“No wonder you want to return to this place so badly. It is lovely,” he said.

“No. The reason I came back is not because of the city, but because of the people living in the city,” she replied.

Bai Yinning finally turned his gaze to her.

However, Lin Xinyan didn't look at him.

“If Wen Qing did not get into an accident, would you have come?” he asked.

“No,” she answered curtly.

Bai Yinning smiled helplessly. “Aren't you afraid that I would feel hurt by your answer?”

“I presume you would have already felt hurt,” she answered.

After all, he knew about her relationship with Zong Jinghao in Baicheng, and she chose not to see him exactly because she didn't want to hurt him.

“I have been here for two weeks now,” Bai Yinning said.

Lin Xinyan turned to look at him. *He has been in B City for two weeks?*

What has he done in this period of time?

“Don't you think it's too easy to get Wen Qing into a car accident?” he suddenly asked.

Lin Xinyan was puzzled. In fact, he could have just find her instead of going to such great lengths to invite her here.

Bai Yinning didn't intend to keep anything from her and said, "I found out."

"What did you find out?" Lin Xinyan had an awful premonition.

"Wen Qing was the one who cut my adoptive father's finger." He stared at her intently and continued, "You knew everything, but you promised someone to keep it a secret, right?"

Lin Xinyan clenched her hands into fists and asked, "Are you here for revenge? Did you orchestrate Wen Qing's accident?"

Bai Yinning had convinced Cheng Yuwen to tell him the truth, and found out that the person who cut Bai Hongfei's finger was Wen Qing.

He didn't want to disclose anything more to Lin Xinyan. He had only revealed his plans to Cheng Yuwen, seeing how the latter also hated Wen Qing.

However, he could understand Cheng Yuwen's hatred for Wen Qing. After all, his sister was also imprisoned back then, and he wanted to seek justice for her hardships with his own hands.

"This is what you wanted to say to me?" Lin Xinyan knew she could not stop him from taking revenge, nor could she tell Zong Jinghao that Bai Yinning was behind Wen Qing's accident.

"I wanted to see you," Bai Yinning said and looked at her.

Lin Xinyan pretended to be calm. "I have a husband."

He lowered his head and smiled. "Can you not sprinkle salt on my wound?"

Lin Xinyan did not lead him on. Instead, she said, “This is B City, not Baicheng. It is not easy to deal with him. I know everyone has their own position. If you have made up your mind, I will not talk you out of it. I just want to say this: If revenge breeds revenge, will there ever be an end to it?”

Even if he took revenge against Wen Qing, could Bai Hongfei be resurrected?

Could he turn back time and change the fact that he was imprisoned?

He couldn't.

Revenge was but something the living does to seek solace.

“I should go,” Lin Xinyan said, then she turned and walked out.

Bai Yinning stopped her. “If it was your relative who suffered such harm, would you still be able to forgive?”

Lin Xinyan paused in her footsteps, but she did not answer. She didn't know the answer either. It seemed difficult not to resent, as she thought of how much she resented Lin Guoan.

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After the meeting, Gao Yuan sent her back. When she returned home, Zong Jinghao was not back yet. The two children had already taken a bath and were about to go to bed.

Seeing Lin Xinyan entering the door, Lin Ruixi rushed over, hugged her leg, and said, "Mommy, you're back!"

Lin Xinyan picked her up and kissed her on her cheek. "Why aren't you sleeping?" she asked.

The little girl thought for a while and said, "I'm waiting for you."

"What are you talking about? You were obviously staying up because you were drinking milk." Lin Xichen exposed her unceremoniously.

The little girl blinked and glared at him. "Xichen is so annoying!"

The boy was wearing a set of fleece pajamas. He put down his glass of milk and glanced at his sister, "I merely told the truth."

The little girl buried herself in Lin Xinyan's arms coyly while saying, "Mommy, Xichen is bullying me."

Lin Xinyan patted her on the back. "Alright now, he didn't mean to bully you."

Thinking that his sister was childish and only knew how to act like a baby, Lin Xichen went back to the room to sleep.

He slept alone now, and Lin Ruixi slept with Cheng Yuxiu.

She could not sleep alone because she was afraid.

Lin Xichen wondered what there was to be afraid of.

After washing the glasses that the two children used, Cheng Yuxiu walked over, looked at Lin Xinyan, and asked, "Did you come back alone?"

She hadn't seen Zong Jinghao.

Lin Xinyan put Lin Ruixi down. "Go and play with your brother for a while."

"I want Mommy to carry me." Lin Ruixi clung onto her arms reluctantly.

Lin Xinyan coaxed her, "Ruixi is a good girl. If you wait till the weekend, Mommy will take you and Xichen out to play."

"Really?" the little girl exclaimed excitedly.

In fact, she was easy to coax. She just needed to be given food, drinks, and playtime.

Lin Xinyan patted her head and assured her before she was willing to go to Lin Xichen.

"Do you have something to tell me?" Cheng Yuxiu asked.

She wouldn't have sent the child away otherwise.

"Let's go to the room and talk."

"Let's go to my room," Cheng Yuxiu offered. After she took over caring for Lin Ruixi, she and Zong Qifeng slept in separate rooms. There was no one in her room at that moment.

Lin Xiyang nodded.

After entering the room, Lin Xinyan closed the door. Cheng Yuxiu gestured for her to sit.

Lin Xinyan sat down near the edge of the bed. After thinking for a while, she said, "Wen Qing had a car accident."

"Is his condition serious?" Cheng Yuxiu asked.

Lin Xinyan shook her head. "I don't know. Jinghao went to check on him."

Cheng Yuxiu sighed, "Fate is unpredictable."

"This is not an accident," Lin Xinyan said as she wondered if Cheng Yuxiu hated Wen Qing.

The latter's eyes widened in disbelief. If it was not an accident, that meant it was premeditated. Who would dare to do this?

"Bai Hongfei's adopted son, Bai Yinning, came to B City. He did this to avenge Bai Hongfei."

Cheng Yuxiu lowered her eyes thoughtfully and said, "It has been so long since. Why bother?"

"No matter how much time has passed, the damage is done. Don't you feel any resentment?" Lin Xinyan asked the question that she had wondered for the longest time.

Cheng Yuxiu got up, walked to the window, and looked outside.

"How do you differentiate right from wrong? I was the one who made Wen Xian a promise, and though what happened was unexpected, I have to bear the

consequences. If I think about it carefully, what did Wen Qing do wrong? If I really ruined Wen Xian's marriage, what he did was justified," she said.

"But you did not ruin her marriage." Lin Xinyan looked at her.

"Things happened because of me, nonetheless. If I refused Wen Xian when she came to me, things wouldn't have progressed the way they did. Maybe fate was toying with us, or maybe it was predestined. I had already seen through the matter."

She felt that she was currently at the pinnacle of her life, living happily and harmoniously with her family. This was something which she didn't dare to imagine before. Even though Zong Jinghao still refused to speak to her, she was contented that she could still see him frequently.

"Please help me persuade Bai Yinning." Cheng Yuxiu knew it wouldn't be easy to get revenge on Wen Qing. Besides, Bai Yinning was Bai Hongfei's adopted son. She didn't want to see him get into trouble.

"I'm afraid no one can persuade him," Lin Xinyan knew very well that Bai Yinning was set on getting revenge.

Cheng Yuxiu sighed. The younger generation should not bear the grudges of the older generation.

"If he succeeds, would you be happy?" Lin Xinyan asked as she walked toward her.

Cheng Yuxiu shook her head. "No, I won't. Wen Qing is in the wrong, but it is true that he regards Jinghao as family."

She didn't want Zong Jinghao to know the truth because she was afraid that he would not be able to accept it. He had always respected Wen Qing, and the latter cared about him as much as he cared about his sister.

Moreover, she didn't want her son to be involved in a matter of the past.

She was satisfied enough to see him from time to time. It was fine for her, even if he would never acknowledge her as his mother in this lifetime.

"Where is Bai Yinning?" Cheng Yuxiu suddenly asked.

She couldn't just watch him get into trouble. Even if it was for Bai Hongfei's sake, she should persuade him.

Lin Xinyan told her where Bai Yinning stayed.

After visiting the Wen family once, she felt that Cheng Yuxiu's approach was right. Since the truth had been hidden for so long, and the matter had passed, it was only right not to uncover it because it would surely do more harm than good.

Amongst them, the one who would be hurt the most was Zong Jinghao. The person who he had always respected was his enemy, while the person he had always treated indifferently and even hated was his biological mother. How could he accept this turn of events?

How could he face it?

She was worried that Bai Yinning would break the current peace.

"Alright, rest early," Cheng Yuxiu said.

Lin Xinyan responded softly in agreement, then turned around and walked out of the room.

However, as soon as she walked out, Zong Jinghao came in through the front door. His eyes flickered when he saw her coming out of Cheng Yuxiu's room.

With his coat in her hand, she asked, "Is it serious?"

“It’s not life threatening, but he has a broken arm and needs to recuperate.” Zong Jinghao finished and went upstairs to the second floor, while Lin Xinyan hung his coat before following him upstairs.

Lin Xinyan entered the room, and Zong Jinghao was unbuttoning his shirt by the side of the bed. With his back to Lin Xinyan, he asked, “What were you doing in her room?”

Lin Xinyan closed the room door, saying, “Ruixi is sleeping with her. I went in to check on my child. Can’t I do that?”

Zong Jinghao didn’t answer her. He undressed and went straight into the bathroom.

Soon, the sound of running water came from the bathroom.

Lin Xinyan knew there was still a barrier between him and Cheng Yuxiu.

She couldn’t help but sigh. It was a pressure to have too much knowledge, and she would rather not have known too much.

That way, she could think from his perspective without feeling troubled over Bai Yinning’s affairs.

On the one hand, she couldn’t decide whether to tell him, but on the other hand, she was afraid that Bai Yinning would resort to other methods if she didn’t.

Based on Zong Jinghao’s smarts, he would definitely connect with time.

She was so absorbed in her thoughts that she didn’t realize the sound of running water from the bathroom had stopped.

“What are you thinking about?”

She looked up.

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He only had a white bath towel wrapped around his lower body. She had an unobstructed view of his firm muscles. Drops of water slid down the curves of his abdomen and hips.

That look, matched with his cool and handsome-looking face, succeeded in him exuding a strong hormonal scent.

Lin Xinyan swallowed subconsciously and turned her head aside as she asked, "How did he get into the accident?"

She wanted to know if Wen Qing had found anything amiss.

If Bai Yinning orchestrated the accident without leaving behind any trace, then she would hold the truth from him for the time being. If Cheng Yuxiu could persuade Bai Yinning to put aside his grievances and leave B City, then she could treat the matter as if it had never happened.

Zong Jinghao narrowed his eyes. "It was not an accident."

"It was an intentional act?" Lin Xinyan raised her voice suddenly. She tried to compose herself with a smile and said, "I was just worried."

Zong Jinghao fell silent and faintly stared at her.

Not daring to look at him, Lin Xinyan lowered her head. "I'm going to take a bath."

As soon as she made her way to the bathroom, Zong Jinghao grabbed her wrist and commanded, "Look at me."

Lin Xinyan kept her head lowered as she tried to break free from his hold. "You're hurting me," she said.

"Look at me," he repeated. He didn't raise his voice, but it was intimidating.

Lin Xinyan panicked for a moment, then slowly raised her head as if it were very heavy. Every second that she met his eyes was pure torture.

His gaze and his voice became deeper. "Why are you so nervous?"

"I'm not." Lin Xinyan pretended to be calm.

Zong Jinghao pushed on. "You seem to be very concerned about whether the nature of the accident. Perhaps you know it was not an accident?"

"No, I don't know," Lin Xinyan answered.

A look of disappointment flashed across his eyes, but Lin Xinyan didn't catch it.

"I don't like you hiding things from me. It means you do not trust me."

He let go of her hand, hoping that she could be honest with him instead of him forcing her to do so.

As soon as Zong Jinghao turned around, she spoke, "I saw Bai Yinning today."

He turned around with narrowed eyes. Very quickly, he grasped the situation. Bai Yinning had said before that he would find out who imprisoned Bai Hongfei and avenge him.

After he came to B City, Wen Qing had a car accident.

In other words, he found out that it was Wen Qing who imprisoned Bai Hongfei back then, so he came to B City and premeditated the car accident.

Lin Xinyan hugged him and pressed her face against his chest. "Taking into account that Uncle is not in a life-threatening condition this time, let's not pursue it. Give me some time. I will persuade him to leave."

Zong Jinghao frowned. He didn't like Lin Xinyan pleading for that man.

"When did you meet him?" he asked with clenched his teeth.

"When you went to the hospital," Lin Xinyan told him honestly. Her relationship with Zong Jinghao was not stable now, and she didn't want to create any distance between them by lying.

Zong Jinghao recalled the situation in the day. She had taken the initiative to leave, not to get him to the hospital as soon as possible, but because she was going to see Bai Yinning.

"Where?" he asked.

"At a hotel."

"What did he talk about?" he asked again.

Feeling a little hurt by his interrogation, Lin Xinyan lifted her head to look at him. "He just said he found out who caused his adoptive father's death and that he came to B City for revenge."

With that, she let go of him. She felt he did not trust her too.

Lowering her gaze, she blinked profusely and asked, "Do you not trust me?"

Zong Jinghao pulled her into his arms again, pinching her chin, saying, "I do. I just don't like him pestering you, and I don't like you meeting him."

He locked his lips with hers. As he bit down on her lips, he said, "From now on, you are not allowed to see him."

"But..." She had wanted to speak, but he suddenly increased his strength, causing her to frown in pain.

As he pressed her onto the bed, Lin Xinyan struggled. "I haven't taken a shower yet."

"I do not disdain you for that."

When Lin Xinyan woke up, the room was still dark, but there was no one around. She grabbed the phone on the table. It was already 11.25 a.m.. she abruptly sat up. *It is almost noon?*

Maybe she moved too fast because she felt pain all over her body, especially on her waist and her lady parts.

It was obviously deliberate of him for what happened last night.

Lin Xinyan got out of bed. She put on clothes, pulled open the heavy blackout curtains, and the sunshine entered the room instantaneously. The weather was perfect.

After washing up, she went downstairs. There was no one at home. The two children went to kindergarten while Zong Qifeng went to see an old friend, and Cheng Yuxiu went to the hotel.

When Bai Yinning saw Cheng Yuxiu at his door, he was surprised. He didn't expect that she would take the initiative to look for him, but thought it was good timing since he also wanted to speak with her.

"I hope you don't mind that I took the liberty to look for you," Cheng Yuxiu said.

Bai Yinning smiled. "Don't worry. You are family to me. Come on in."

Holding on to her bag across her shoulder, Cheng Yuxiu walked into the room.

Bai Yinning ordered Gao Yuan to stand guard at the door. "No one is allowed to disturb us."

Gao Yuan bowed in response to his acknowledgement.

Bai Yinning rolled his wheelchair into the room, closed the door, and said, "Please sit down."

Cheng Yuxiu sat down on the sofa. "I won't beat around the bush. I don't want you to seek revenge on Wen Qing for what happened in the past."

Surprised, he couldn't understand why she would ask him of this.

"You are very important to my adoptive father. Naturally, I also respect you very much, but I cannot accept what you just said. Back then, he imprisoned you and my adoptive father. Both of you were once in love, and I think you know very well that he had his finger chopped off. I don't understand why you are trying to stop me now that I want to avenge him."

Cheng Yuxiu clenched her hands tightly, causing her nails to dig into her palms. However, she did not feel the pain at all.

She will never forget how Wen Qing forced her to call Zong Qifeng. Bai Hongfei was pressed on the table by two strong men. If she didn't make the call, he threatened to cut off Bai Hongfei's finger.

Forced into a corner, she had no choice but to do as he said.

"Did you care about my adoptive father?" Bai Yinning asked. He wanted to know if she ever loved Bai Hongfei.

However, Bai Hongfei had been dead for many years, and Cheng Yuxiu was not young anymore, so he refrained from asking her.

“I did care about him. That’s why I came to see you today. If he were still alive, I’m sure he wouldn’t want you to put yourself in danger. Let it go.”

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Bai Yinning was stumped. There was reason in her words.

“But I’m his son. How can I be indifferent to his suffering?” He was so obsessed with avenging Bai Hongfei. The man raised him and gave everything belonging to the Bai family to him when he was not related to him by blood.

Bai Yinning was grateful yet also heartbroken that such a devoted man lost his lover and was tortured. More than anything, he felt unfair on his behalf.

Even though he knew that B City was not his territory, he still wanted to reclaim justice for Bai Hongfei!

Cheng Yuxiu fixed her gaze on Bai Yinning for a long time. She had to admit that what he said made sense too. If the latter was indifferent to the suffering of someone he cared about, then he must be cold-blooded.

“I have said everything I came here to say, and I cannot stop you if you insist. However, this is B City, not Baicheng. They are out in the open while you are in the dark. You may have the upper hand this time, but I’m afraid it might not end well.”

Bai Yinning came to B City and premeditated the car accident without Wen Qing’s and Zong Jinghao’s knowledge. He understood that once any of them found out his identity, it would be difficult for him to make a move again.

“I can’t leave any regrets.”

Cheng Yuxiu could tell that Bai Yinning had made up his mind, and she couldn’t persuade him further. She could only let him be.

The least she could do for Bai Hongfei was to watch over him.

She stood up.. “I should go now.”

However, Bai Yinning did not give any response.

As Cheng Yuxiu twisted the door handle and was about to open the door, Bai Yinning stopped her. “My adoptive father said he hoped I would marry your daughter.”

Cheng Yuxiu paused and looked back at him while Bai Yinning turned her wheelchair to face her.

“You have given birth to a child. I really want to know where your child is now. If it is a girl, I would like to follow my adoptive father’s wish and marry her.”

Cheng Yuxiu tightened her fingers around the door handle and said, “I have never given birth to a child.”

“That’s impossible!” Bai Yinning replied with force and conviction. If Cheng Yuxiu had never given birth to a child, why would Bai Hongfei’s last wish be for him to marry her daughter?

There was only one possibility. Bai Hongfei knew Cheng Yuxiu was pregnant, but he didn’t know whether she was carrying a boy or a girl. He might have wanted it to be a girl so that Bai Yinning could marry her.

Cheng Yuxiu was flustered for a moment, but she quickly calmed down. “I married into the Zong family afterward. Everyone knows that I have never had a baby in my life.”

Bai Yinning looked at her with a sharp gaze and guessed, “Your child is Zong Jinghao.”

Cheng Yuxiu's heart sank. "Do you have evidence?"

"I don't. I have no way of finding out what happened back then. However, some things could not be disputed. For example, why did my adoptive father give up on you and stayed single throughout his life for you? The reason was simple. You had a child with another man; he had no choice but to let you go. Even if he were reluctant, even if his heart ached, he could only let you go. He knows how important a child is to a mother. Maybe you didn't really love the person who impregnated you, but you would stay for the sake of the child..."

Cheng Yuxiu cut him off and said, "I don't want to hear your wild guesses anymore! Go back to Baicheng."

"Forgive me for being rude," Bai Yinning apologized. "Since I am here now, I won't leave that easily. Even if I have to leave, I will do so after achieving my goal."

Seeing how she avoided the topic, he could affirm his guess. What he lacked now was evidence.

If he could find proof that Cheng Yuxiu gave birth to Zong Jinghao, it would be easier for him to deal with Wen Qing. Maybe he would have another helping hand.

After all, Cheng Yuxiu was also imprisoned for six years.

Cheng Yuxiu stared at Bai Yinning. For Bai Hongfei's sake, she wanted very much for him to leave B City safe and sound. Even if he insisted on his ways, she would not simply sit by and watch him get into trouble.

Above all, she would allow no one to uncover her secret. She knew very well who would hurt the most if the truth were revealed.

“Don’t blame me for not warning you. Even if you are Bai Hongfei’s adopted son, I will not let you off if I find out that you are looking into the past.” With that, Cheng Yuxiu opened the door and left.

Since she came to see Bai Hongfei without telling anyone, she had taken a taxi to the hotel instead of taking the family car. At the hotel entrance, she hailed for a taxi and returned home.

Zong Jinghao had asked Aunt Yu to prepare nutritious foods for Lin Xinyan to replenish her health. Lin Xinyan was currently eating what she had prepared for her.

Aunt Yu had stewed sea cucumber soup for her, but she didn’t add many ingredients, so it tasted very bland.

Furthermore, the sea cucumber was left whole in the soup, and it looked creepy.

Aunt Yu scooped several sea cucumbers into her bowl. “Sea cucumbers contain iron, vitamin B, and folic acid, which have the effect of nourishing blood.” She then leaned closer to her and said with a smile, “It is said that eating sea cucumbers can also beautify your face.”

Although Lin Xinyan was very beautiful, looks had to be maintained.

Lin Xinyan scooped around her bowl with a spoon. “I can’t finish this much.”

“You must. Mr. Zong said that you are in poor health and asked me to prepare it for you,” Aunt Yu said.

The sea cucumbers were wild-caught, which had matured for at least eight years with a long growth period. Specialized fishers only caught those that had matured for five to nine years. If they caught one that matured for less than five years, they would throw it back to the sea and let it continue to grow.

On the other hand, farmed sea cucumbers were sold once they mature after a year. The effects would vary accordingly.

Moreover, wild sea cucumbers grew naturally on the seafloor. They fed on algae and aquatic animals rich in nutrients, and accumulated the nutrients in their bodies for a long time. In contrast, farmed sea cucumbers fed on artificial feed, which accelerated their growth but was harmful to the human body.

Because of the high price sea cucumbers could fetch, wild ones were caught in large quantities. There were few left in the sea. Currently, most of the sea cucumbers on the market were farmed.

Needless to say, wild sea cucumbers that had such a long growth period were very few.

How could Lin Xinyan refuse the kind thought?

Even though it was unpalatable, she bit the bullet and ate it.

Cheng Yuxiu overheard Aunt Yu as soon as she walked into the house. She lowered her eyes as she hung up her coat.

She should be happy that Zong Jinghao treated Lin Xinyan so well, but she felt a tiny bit of envy and jealousy.

She had never had that kind of treatment.

She walked into the kitchen and asked, "Why are you only eating now?"

She had left early in the morning and had no idea that Lin Xinyan woke up late.

Lin Xinyan lowered her head as she answered, "I was drawing a design last night so I got up a bit late today."

Cheng Yuxiu didn't think much about it, as she was preoccupied with her own matters. Then, she looked at Aunt Yu and asked her to go ahead with her work.

The housekeeper understood her intentions. "There is no more food at home. I'll go on a supermarket run."

She took off her apron and left the room.

Another maid was outside the house, overseeing workers pruning the plants and the lawns. That happened monthly because the flowers and plants would grow out of shape without pruning.

Lin Xinyan put down the spoon in her hand. "Have you met Bai Yinning?"

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Cheng Yuxiu replied in the affirmative with a faint hum.

“Then is he willing to stop?” Lin Xinyan asked eagerly.

Cheng Yuxiu took a deep breath and shook her head. “No. He seems to be aware of Jinghao’s identity, but I will not let him continue to investigate.”

Before Lin Xinyan could tell her that Zong Jinghao found out about Bai Yinning, her phone vibrated on the dining table.

It showed Shen Peichuan’s number.

Lin Xinyan looked at Cheng Yuxiu and said, “Excuse me while I answer the call.”

She walked to the window and pressed the answer button. “Hello?”

“It’s me. I investigated what Jinghao asked me to.”

Lin Xinyan’s nerves tensed, and she straightened her back. “Go ahead,” she prompted.

“It might not be clear over the phone. Let’s talk about it when we meet.”

Lin Xinyan thought for a while and said, “Okay.”

After hanging up the call, she put her phone in her pocket and walked back to the dining room. Seeing that Cheng Yuxiu was looking at the sea cucumber in her bowl, she smiled and said, “Mom, you must be hungry too.”

She took a bowl from the kitchen and transferred some sea cucumbers from her bowl. "Please don't mind it. I haven't touched it yet."

Cheng Yuxiu grabbed her hand to stop her. "I'm not hungry. Look how thin you are. You should eat more. And don't get involved with Bai Yinning. He is trouble personified."

Lin Xinyan agreed to her request.

Knowing Zong Jinghao's temper, she didn't want to be involved with Bai Yinning, anyway.

Cheng Yuxiu returned to her room, and Lin Xinyan forced herself to finish the sea cucumbers. After downing the last of it with a mouthful of water, she put on her clothes and went out.

She drove to meet Shen Peichuan at the designated location.

They were meeting at a bar, and because it was daytime, there weren't many people. Shen Peichuan was sitting in a booth, drinking.

Lin Xinyan entered the bar, and he asked, "What would you like to drink?"

"Just give me juice. She sat down.

Shen Peichuan asked the bartender to pour a glass of juice. Lin Xinyan glanced at him and asked, "Why did you choose this place?"

"It's quiet and I want to have a drink," he said and took a sip of alcohol.

He put down the glass on the table, but continued to fiddle with it. "The words 'despicable' and 'shameless' cannot describe humans' nasty and insidious nature."

Lin Xinyan asked cautiously, "Did something upset you?"

He wouldn't have been so emotional otherwise.

Without replying to her, Shen Peichuan handed Lin Xinyan the file he had placed on the table. "See for yourself."

Lin Xinyan had a rough idea of what was in the file.

Seeing how Shen Peichuan was behaving, she had a bad feeling about it.

Nevertheless, she opened the file with curiosity and unease.

It contained more than a dozen pages of information about Liu Feifei's past, as well as a few photos. There were photos of Liu Feifei alone and her with a man appearing at high-end venues.

Lin Xinyan put down the photos and read the pages of information, but her heart sank deeper as she read page after page.

Su Zhan shared that Liu Feifei told him she left him in the past because she couldn't give birth and didn't want to hurt him. But she went to the hospital for numerous abortions in these years?

"How can she be so shameless? Is she still a woman?" Shen Peichuan grimaced. If it weren't for his remaining sense of logic telling him not to fight a woman, he would have gone to beat up Liu Feifei.

She had left for a rich man and was even willing to be his mistress!

The more he thought about it, the angrier he became.

He wasn't angry about the things Liu Feifei did. He was angry that she returned to look for Su Zhan after doing those things. *How could she?*

Why should Su Zhan be the scrap picker?

After reading the last page, Lin Xinyan threw the documents on the table. She knew why Liu Feifei was back. The latter was aging, and her beauty was declining. Moreover, the man had a new wife. Seeing that there was no hope of staying with him, she returned for Su Zhan.

Shen Peichuan packed up the documents. "I have to look for Su Zhan lest he is deceived."

"Wait." Lin Xinyan stopped him.

"It won't hurt as much if you tell him about it!" Lin Xinyan squinted her eyes in thought. The man in the photos must be rich. Otherwise, he won't be able to keep a mistress for such a long time. It takes a lot of money to keep a woman on the side.

Zong Jinghao is acquainted with some rich people, and he might be acquaintances with that man.

She quickly thought up a countermeasure. "I'm leaving now."

Shen Peichuan called out, "Don't forget to call me!"

He also wanted to see how Su Zhan would look when he finds out about Liu Feifei's true colors.

Lin Xinyan nodded and left.

She was back inside her car/ Instead of going back to the store, she went to find Zong Jinghao.

He was in a meeting, so she went to his office to wait for him.

His office was spacious and well-lit, which made people feel comfortable. She walked to the French windows and looked outside. It was the city's most bustling area, and it was still as brilliant in the daytime even without the neon lights that lit up at night.

The sun started to set outside. Lin Xinyan reached out to catch the last rays of sunshine. Unfortunately, no one could catch ever catch it.

Zong Jinghao ended his meeting and returned to his office. As he pushed open the door to his office, he saw her standing in a halo of light. Her slender silhouette resembled a heroine in a comic.

He approached with light footsteps, encircled her waist from behind, and rested his chin on her shoulders. "Miss me?" he asked.

Without moving, she ignored his question and instead asked, "Do you know someone named Lu Yuan?"

Zong Jinghao didn't know Lu Yuan personally, but he knew the man was acquainted with his dad.

He buried his face in her hair and asked in a dull voice, "Why are you asking me about him?"

Lin Xinyan turned to look at him very seriously. "I want him to meet Liu Feifei."

They had been together for a long time. Naturally, he understood her intentions.

If Su Zhan saw them with his own eyes, it would be more convincing than any other evidence.

"Did Peichuan finish his investigation?"

Lin Xinyan responded affirmatively and recounted what Shen Peichuan had found out. After Lin Xinyan finished, Zong Jinghao didn't have any change in his expression. He simply said, "I'll arrange it."

He didn't like to deal with such matters, but it concerned Lin Xinyan's friend and his buddy, so he had to intervene.

Lin Xinyan trusted he would make the arrangements and thanked him earnestly.

Zong Jinghao put his hand into her clothes and gently squeezed the flesh on her waist. He said hoarsely, "How do you want to thank me?"

Lin Xinyan felt ticklish and shifted her body uncomfortably. She reminded him in a serious tone, "This is your company, your office. What if someone sees us?"

Zong Jinghao smirked, "No one will enter casually. Are you willing to do it with me here?"

Lin Xinyan was speechless.

How could he be so thick-skinned?

She pushed him away. "You have no shame, but I have it."

Zong Jinghao deliberately bit down on her neck with force, causing Lin Xinyan to scream, "Ah!"

Very quickly, she closed her mouth, clenched her fists, and pounded on the chest. Zong Jinghao stood still like a mountain and did not budge. Suddenly, he caught both her hands, raised them over the top of her head, and pressed her against the French windows. As if he was possessed, he kissed her passionately.

When Lin Xinyan struggled, he bit her with force, causing her to moan in pain.

He laughed. "Wail all you want."

She glared at him, knowing that it was deliberate on his part.

Zong Jinghao kissed her eyelids and licked them, leaving wet trails around them.

Meanwhile, Qin Ya had a severe bout of nausea. She vomited almost everything that she ate and threw up gastric juice when she had nothing left in her stomach. Left with no strength, she had no choice but to go to the hospital and ask the doctor for a prescription.

The doctor prescribed her vitamin B6 and anti-nausea medication. When she was heading to the pharmacy to collect the medicine, she saw Su Zhan helping Liu Feifei walk out of the orthopedics clinic.

The corridor was empty, and there was no place for her to hide or avoid them.

"Does it still hurt?" Su Zhan asked in concern.

Liu Feifei shook her head. "Sorry to trouble you..." She paused when she saw Qin Ya and held more tightly onto Su Zhan's arm.

Su Zhan saw that she was looking ahead and raised his head to find Qin Ya standing there.

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Su Zhan's body tensed. He didn't expect to meet Qin Ya so suddenly. Almost instinctively, he wanted to let go of Liu Feifei. However, as soon as he let her go, Liu Feifei held onto him, pretending that her feet were hurting, as though she would fall.

He didn't push her away. At that moment, he also wanted to see if Qin Ya would be angry at the sight of him and Liu Feifei together.

Although Qin Ya occasionally went to visit Grandma, her indifference toward him made him feel that she had no feelings for him.

Now that Liu Feifei was by his side, he wanted to take this opportunity to test her. If Qin Ya were angry, it would prove that she cared about him.

Liu Feifei glanced at Su Zhan secretly. She didn't expect that he didn't push herself away. She was delighted but pretended to look sad. "Ms. Qin, don't get me wrong. I hurt my leg, and I can't walk, so Su Zhan accompanied me to the hospital."

"There is no misunderstanding," Qin Ya said as she clenched her fist, crumpling the prescription. Her nails pierced through the paper and sunk into the flesh of her palm. She could only stay sane by inflicting pain on herself.

She smiled lightly and said, "We... I mean, Su Zhan and I, we are not in a relationship. It's his freedom to be with whoever he wants to be with."

Su Zhan's pressed his lips tightly together, and his muscles were also tense. He couldn't accept how calm Qin Ya was.

The calmer she was, the more it showed that she didn't care about him.

On the other hand, Liu Feifei was elated, but she didn't dare to express it on the surface. After all, she was still unsure if Su Zhan had given up on Qin Ya.

This time, she must capture his heart.

Su Zhan suppressed the hurt he felt, put his arms around Liu Feifei's waist, and simply said, "Let's go."

When he passed by Qin Ya, whether intentionally or unintentionally, he bumped into her shoulder.

Qin Ya vomited so severely that she had no energy left and almost fell over due to the impact. Fortunately, she supported herself against a window.

Slowly, she knelt as she clasped her hands to her chest, trying to suppress the overflowing pain. His action cut her deeply.

She wondered if she would die from the pain.

Maybe she had been too agitated, as she felt a violent roll in her stomach. Immediately, she covered her mouth and ran to the bathroom.

Outside the hospital, Su Zhan put Liu Feifei in a taxi and sent her back without him.

Liu Feifei wanted to hold on to him, but she didn't dare to. She was afraid her eagerness would turn Su Zhan off, ruining her efforts of building herself a good impression in front of him.

"Do you still have some other matters to tend to?" Liu Feifei took another approach.

Su Zhan hummed in response and didn't say more. As he shut the car door, Liu Feifei panicked. It was obvious that he wanted to go back to find Qin Ya.

She immediately lowered the window and asked, "Are you going back to explain to Ms. Qin? Do you want me to make it clear to her? After all, there is really nothing between us."

Su Zhan grew impatient. "No need."

With that, he sent Lin Feifei on her way.

He turned and walked into the hospital lobby back to the corridor where he met Qin Ya earlier, but she was nowhere to be found. He frowned and went to the lobby while looking for her in the crowd to no avail. He couldn't help but be disappointed.

Just as he was about to give up, he saw Qin Ya coming out of the bathroom. She was clasping her abdomen, looking very sick.

He quickly walked over to her and held her. "What happened to you?"

Qin Ya raised her head to look at the person in front of her, but her sight was fuzzy. Soon, she got a clearer sight. After seeing that it was Su Zhan, her throat suddenly tightened, and she was on the verge of tears. She lowered her head. "Why are you back? Are you here to see what a joke I've become?"

Su Zhan was also stubborn. He replied to her in the affirmative, instead of telling her honestly that he was worried she was sick since she came to the hospital.

Qin Ya laughed until tears escaped from the corners of her eyes. "Aren't you afraid that your ex-girlfriend... No, your current girlfriend, who you got back with, would be angry that you came to look for me?"

"She's not that petty," he replied.

Is he implying that I am? Qin Ya scorned, then laughed bitterly. Was I wrong to care and get angry? Am I supposed to be generous and tolerating to show my love for him?

Haha.

She felt that her values were being dissolved by Su Zhan.

“Go. I don’t need you,” Qin Ya said and broke away from his grip.

However, Su Zhan didn’t let go. “Are you sick? What did the doctor say? What is the problem? What is the treatment?”

After being bombarded by a series of questions, Qin Ya froze for a moment before recovering her senses. She looked up at Su Zhan and suddenly laughed. “The doctor said I was injured here. Do you know how it was hurt?” she asked, clutching her heart.

Su Zhan looked at her and asked, “Is it because of me?”

Qin Ya stopped laughing and said, “No, it’s because of myself. I used to think that I was not stupid, but after meeting you, I found that I was stupid indeed. I believed your honey words and trusted you to love me forever. Haha... You are good. You successfully deceived me.”

Su Zhan shook his head and said, “They weren’t lies. I really love you...”

“Save that for your girlfriend,” Qin Ya cut him off. She was really hurt by Su Zhan and didn’t want to have anything to do with him anymore.

She pushed him away, but he was unwilling to let her go like this and grabbed her wrist, saying, “But I want to say it to you.”

“Let me go!” Qin Ya tried to shake his hand away, but he firmly grasped it. She didn’t have the strength too, and she was obviously struggling in vain.

Su Zhan grabbed the prescription from her hand and pushed her into a chair. “Sit here and wait for me,” he said.

He was afraid she would leave without saying anything and warned, "If you dare to leave, I will go to the store to pester you."

Qin Ya didn't even have the strength to get angry. "Su Zhan, when will you grow up? Don't you find yourself childish?"

Su Zhan smiled. Indeed, he was the most relaxed in front of this woman, and he could be himself in front of her. Even when he was with Liu Feifei in the past, he did not feel as relaxed as when he was with Qin Ya.

"Wait for me," he repeated before taking the prescription to the pharmacy for the medicine.

After collecting her medication, Su Zhan looked at it and asked the pharmacist, "Excuse me, what are these for?"

There were too many people in the hospital, and the pharmacist did not hear him.

He raised his voice and asked again, "Excuse me, what are these for?"

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This time, the pharmacist heard him. Before attending to Su Zhan, she tended to another patient. Then she took the medicine from his hand. After examining it, she told him it was for nausea.

For nausea?

Su Zhan frowned and wanted to ask what illness caused nausea, but the pharmacist walked away to attend to the other patients, so he also walked away with the medicine. He already had a guess. After all, he was already an adult. Even if he hadn't experienced it, he had heard about it.

He approached Qin Ya with each step and his eyes swept across her abdomen as he asked solemnly, "Are you pregnant?"

Qin Ya's heart skipped a beat. "What are you talking about?"

Su Zhan handed the medicine to her with no haste, saying, "This is for nausea. Isn't it because of morning sickness?"

She pretended to be calm. "Su Zhan, do you still think that I will give birth to your child? Even if I have your child, I will not want it." She grabbed the medicine from his hand and continued, "I had nausea only because I contracted stomach flu. That's why I came to the hospital to get medicine. Have you seen pregnant women taking antiemetics?"

Su Zhan wasn't sure about that. He only knew pregnant women shouldn't take medicine casually.

"But..." he started.

Qin Ya interrupted him, leaving no room for him to speak at all, "But what? Su Zhan, we are separated now, and I have so many years in front of me. Even if I am pregnant, do you think I will want the child?"

He clenched his hands into fists and said, "Do you hate me so much?"

"Yes, I hate you." Qin Ya finished and left.

Just when Su Zhan wanted to follow her, the phone in his pocket suddenly rang. He took out his phone and saw that Zong Jinghao was calling. Under normal circumstances, Zong Jinghao would not contact him on his own. He pressed the answer button and heard him say, "Go to Lijiang Palace."

With that, Zong Jinghao ended the call.

Su Zhan looked at the phone for a while, then at Qin Ya, who was walking away. Finally, he sighed. He wanted to get Qin Ya back, but he knew it wouldn't be easy. He kept his phone and walked out of the hospital, not to chase after Qin Ya, but to head to Lijiang Palace.

When he arrived, a waiter walked over and asked, "Are you Mr. Su?"

Su Zhan nodded. "I'm looking for Zong Jinghao."

"Please follow me." The waiter said and led Su Zhan to a VIP room.

In the large private room, Shen Peichuan and Zong Jinghao sat around a large round table.

He pulled a chair and sat down as he asked with a smile, "What occasion is it today?"

Usually, they would gather only when he organized it. Zong Jinghao rarely asked them out because of his busy schedule, and Shen Peichuan also had a lot of work. He had more free time compared to them.

Shen Peichuan twitched his lips before saying, "It's too early for you to laugh. You might cry soon."

Su Zhan laughed at him. "What can trouble me more than how I feel now?"

What troubled him at the moment was Qin Ya.

Grandma's condition was getting better, but Qin Ya was still very cold towards him, and there was nothing he could do to change that since she did not respond to the carrot or the stick.

"Peichuan, drink with me. I'm in a bad mood." Su Zhan waved for the waiter, but Shen Peichuan stopped him and asked the waiter to leave. "We are not ordering at the moment. Please go out for now. We will call you when we want to order."

Su Zhan stared at Shen Peichuan and said drily, "Are you planning to watch a movie instead of eating at a restaurant?"

"Yes, I'm here for a movie."

"Are you kidding me..."

But before he could finish speaking, he saw the display screen hanging on the wall suddenly light up, and he asked in surprise, "We're really watching a movie?"

However, he realized it was not a movie because the screen was showing the surveillance footage of another room.

There was a man in a floral shirt sitting in the room. Su Zhan took a closer look. "Isn't this Feifei's college mate?" he asked.

Su Zhan and Liu Feifei were also college mates, but they were not in the same class. That man in a floral shirt, also a rich second-generation, was in the same class as her.

Seeing him, Su Zhan recalled many things from the past., “Do you remember him, Peichuan?”

Su Zhan pointed to the person on the screen and continued, “He drove a Maserati to school. It was awesome. Why isn’t he bankrupt yet?”

Meanwhile, Shen Peichuan watched him silently.

Su Zhan quickly discovered that something was amiss. He looked at Shen Peichuan and then at Zong Jinghao. “What’s up? Why did you ask me to come to the restaurant but stop me from eating to look at a rich playboy?”

Shen Peichuan was afraid that he could not accept the truth, so he said tactfully, “Have you ever thought about what Liu Feifei has been doing all these years?”

The gears in his head turned, and Su Zhan quickly grasped the situation. “Does it have something to do with this guy?”

Shen Peichuan remained silent.

Suddenly, Su Zhan stood up and said, “I’ll ask him.”

Shen Peichuan held him back and said, “When did you become so impulsive?”

“What’s wrong with me asking him?”

Shen Peichuan let go of him and said, “Just wait. You will have an answer soon.”

Su Zhan began to understand what was happening, and he looked at both of them again. “Have you done an investigation on Feifei?”

As soon as Shen Peichuan heard her name, his heart trembled with anger.

He glanced at Su Zhan from the corner of his eyes, but he said nothing in the end.

Finally, there was a movement on the screen. The door opened and Liu Feifei stepped in. She looked different from her usual innocent appearance in front of Su Zhan. Naturally, she dressed with care to meet her old lover.

She wore a black sling dress which ended at her calves, a fur shawl that rested on her shoulders, and finished her look with a pair of red high heels. Matched with her exquisite makeup, she looked very enchanting.

She thought that Lu Yuan finally missed her since he took the initiative to ask her out. If Lu Yuan would divorce his wife and marry her, she would also be willing to marry him.

After all, it took too much effort to salvage her relationship with Su Zhan.

Su Zhan's eyes widened. That was the first time he saw Liu Feifei dress that way.

He had only seen her dress in a pure, cheery, and youthful look.

"Did you miss me?" Liu Feifei gracefully twisted her slender waist as she walked over and sat on Lu Yuan's thigh, which seemed to be a natural habit of hers.

Glancing at the camera lens above, he put his arms around Liu Feifei's waist. "I missed you, so I looked for you. Don't you miss me after being separated from me for so long?"

Mr. Lu, Lu Yuan's father, had always wanted to cooperate with Zong Jinghao on a project. The latter had never agreed to it. Zong Jinghao agreed to cooperate with him finally, but there was one condition, and that was how Lu Yuan appeared in the private room.

Liu Feifei pushed him away. "So what if I missed you? You have a wife, and I'm nothing to you."

Lu Yuan walked over to her and said, "I have no feelings for her."

"Then will you marry me?" Liu Feifei looked at him eagerly. At her age, she desperately yearned for a home.

"Feifei, you know very well that my wife comes from a very good background..."

"But I have been with you for ten years. Back then, I left everything and followed you. All these years, how many children did I abort for you? In the end, your wife hired someone to beat me up, and I couldn't get pregnant anymore as a result," As she spoke of her sore spot, she became agitated. She grabbed Lu Yuan's collar and said, "How are you going to compensate me for my lost youth?"

He looked at her quietly. "It was consensual. Didn't you abandon that poor boy and follow me because of my money?"

Liu Feifei fell silent.

It was true that she was interested in his money. She thought she would definitely marry into his wealthy family with her beauty and wits, but it was not as easy as she thought.

Lu Yuan hugged her from behind and said, "We can still be together like this. Would you like to come back to me?"