

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 501

“Do you know the person on the invitation card or are you just interested in her?” she casually asked out of curiosity when Zong Jinghao had stopped beside her on his way to the meeting. The PR Department Head bent down to pick up the documents she accidentally dropped. Among the documents was an invitation card from her friend which she had forgotten to take out.

After picking up her documents, she looked at the invitation card for a short moment before handing it to Zong Jinghao. “Since I’m already married, I don’t need another wedding gown. If I see one that is prettier, I may be tempted to marry a new husband. So, why don’t you have it instead?”

As the PR Department Head dealt with all sorts of sensitive matters on a daily basis, she was adept at observing one’s reactions.

Even if Zong Jinghao didn’t show any desire, it was obvious to her that he was interested in the person on the card. Or else, he wouldn’t have stopped in his tracks.

Zong Jinghao accepted it without hesitation. “Thank you.”

The PR Department Head was a middle-aged woman of around forty years of age. Her hair was cropped short and she was dressed in professional office attire. Following Zong Jinghao into the office, she asked in a nosy manner, “Do you know the lady in the picture?”

Has he changed companions again? The lady in the picture didn’t look like the one which he declared in the office to be his wife.

“Do my personal matters interest you so much?” Zong Jinghao gave her an expressionless glance.

The PR Department Head smiled and answered savvily, “Women are born nosy so I am no different. This is despite the fact that you have always treated me like a man at work.”

Just as she spoke, she went to take her seat. Zong Jinghao only valued one’s capabilities and never cared about one’s gender.

When he looked down at the lady wearing a red Cheongsam on the invitation card, his gaze darkened.

After Qin Ya’s plastic surgery was completed, the doctor had sent him a photo. Hence, he knew how Qin Ya looked like now. Even though she no longer looked the same, he could still easily recognize her from the photo.

She had disappeared after she left the hospital. Hence, he surmised that she should be together with Lin Xinyan. Although there was no indication of Lin Xinyan’s presence on the invitation card, he somehow felt that she was definitely connected.

He got Guan Jing to put the invitation card back in his office before sitting down to start the meeting.

Hundreds of high-level employees were sitting in attention. To them, every meeting felt like torture.

They were worried about saying the wrong thing or that the boss was dissatisfied with their performance. Even worse was if the meeting went on for hours endlessly causing them to get hemorrhoids from sitting too long.

All this while, Zong Jinghao was stingy with his smile. His frosty look always gave them the impression they had done something wrong.

In fact, even when they did their job perfectly, they were still unable to elicit a smile from him.

However, they didn't mind it as he did praise them, which was already an improvement. Previously, they got nothing for completing their work. However, when they didn't finish or if it weren't up to his standards, he would admonish them in public without a care for their pride. Nowadays, that seldom happened anymore.

Therefore, they were now content with how things were. Nevertheless, they still prayed that such a situation would quickly pass, as they were worried about being dragged in as collateral damage.

This time, the meeting didn't go on for too long and ended in a little more than two hours.

Zong Jinghao was the first to leave the meeting room followed by Guan Jing, who reported, "You have a meeting with Mr. Tang at the Moonlight Restaurant at two. At three, you have a discussion with Mr. Zhong about the merger. At eight, there is the charity cocktail party. Do you need me to get you a companion?"

Usually, the guests attending such events would turn up in pairs. Some would bring their secretaries while others would take their wives along. Despite being a charity event in name, it was still a form of networking. Those that were invited were usually of some importance. Hence, many used the opportunity to meet new people and talk about business.

Zong Jinghao's body was thin yet ripped. With a hand in his pocket, he unbuttoned his collar with the other. "You will attend the charity cocktail party on my behalf."

As long as the donation was made, no one would be asking any questions.

Guan Jing nodded. At that moment, they had arrived at Zong Jinghao's office. He stopped in his tracks as he had finished his report. As Zong Jinghao pushed open his office door, he saw Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan were already waiting for him inside. Shen Peichuan was always serious while Su Zhan was more unpredictable. Leaning against the desk, he held the invitation card in his hands

and was looking at the woman on its cover. Qin Ya was wearing a red Cheongsam which had traditional-styled embroidery on it. Her wavy black hair flowed behind her head as she exhibited her curvaceous figure. With her soft and dainty complexion, she brought out the essence of the Cheongsam from Country Z. Although her thighs were exposed by the slit, it didn't feel indecent at all. Her eyes were lowered and she had a gentle smile, exuding a sense of calming beauty.

On the left side of the invitation card were large, gilded words written in traditional calligraphy. Despite the messy handwriting, there was a certain charm to it. *Dreaming of the encounter, it was unforgettable. What does it matter when all the beautiful clothes stay unknown?*

The poem was both profound and mysterious, and couldn't help but invoke the reader's desire to find out more.

Even the invitation card was meticulously designed, conforming with its theme.

Su Zhan squinted his eyes at Zong Jinghao. *Why is there such a thing on his office desk?*

"Who is this? Why is she on your desk?" he asked tactfully. What he really meant was if Zong Jinghao had taken a liking to someone else.

However, Zong Jinghao simply gave him the side-eye and ignored him.

Su Zhan smacked his lips and he returned his gaze to the invitation card. He continued to scrutinize the person on it closely before concluding, "She's extremely charming and mesmerizing, but..."

"Su Zhan, can you have some self-respect? Don't just let your heart go fluttering just because you have seen another woman." Shen Peichuan had just finished a meeting at the police station before he was dragged there by Su Zhan. He was still in his police uniform and he looked dashing in it.

Wherever he sat, he was a sight to behold. His hardy demeanor coupled with his uniform gave him a commanding presence.

Su Zhan raised his gaze slowly and sneered at Shen Peichuan, “Who is the one that needs to show some self-respect? I was just giving my honest opinion while you let your imagination run wild and accused me of having dirty thoughts. Objectively speaking, the lady is really beautiful. However, she lacks warmth and simply gave out a cold vibe. Unlike Qin Ya who is always affectionate.”

Putting the invitation card back on the table, he walked over and stood beside the sofa. He then placed his hands on Shen Peichuan’s shoulder. “I am true to myself and don’t hide my emotions. Unlike you, who has a vicious heart but pretends to be noble.”

Buzz... Buzz...

At that moment, Shen Peichuan’s phone rang in his pocket. He had wanted to counter Su Zhan’s words but decided against it. When he checked his phone, he saw an unknown number which he had not seen before.

Su Zhan took a glance before sitting on the sofa opposite. “Maybe it’s a prank call?”

Shen Peichuan glared at him. “Can’t you just shut up?”

Su Zhan frowned. *Fine, I’ll keep my mouth shut. You don’t have to be so fierce just because you are stronger than me.*

He muttered, “What a barbarian.”

Shen Peichuan ignored him as he answered the call. He heard a crisp female voice from the other end. “Is this Captain Shen?”

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Shen Peichuan furrowed his eyebrows slightly as the voice sounded familiar. However, he just couldn't remember who it belonged to.

When the lady at the other end realized Shen Peichuan didn't recognize her, she felt disappointed and identified herself, "It's me, Sang Yu."

Shen Peichuan immediately remembered her. "Oh, is there anything I can help you with?"

"Yes, are you free? I have a break in the afternoon. Can you please come and see me?" Sang Yu asked.

Shen Peichuan glanced at the clock on the wall and replied, "Sure."

"I'll wait for you at the school entrance."

"Alright."

Sang Yu frowned slightly. Her knotted eyebrows would cause anyone who saw her to sympathize with her. *Is it such a waste of his time to say a few more words?*

"I'm hanging up now," Sang Yu concluded.

"Mmm."

Looking at her phone, Sang Yu smiled to herself thinking that Shen Peichuan was a really interesting guy.

Actually, she did have a phone. The last time when Shen Peichuan asked her for it, she didn't take it out because she still didn't trust him. Despite not having any family, she was tough and could rely on herself to survive.

The handphone wasn't expensive but it was more than enough for her usage. As her grades were good, she managed to get a scholarship. Coupled with her earning from a part-time job, it wasn't hard for her to make a living.

She figured that when she graduated in two years and had a steady job, her life would become more stable.

Shen Peichuan arrived in front of Huaqing University's entrance in his black SUV. Lowering the car windows, he saw Sang Yu standing there. She was wearing a white T-shirt and a pair of light-colored straight-cut jeans. The jeans' high waist made her legs look very long. Furthermore, she wore a pair of white sneakers and carried a black backpack. Having tied a ponytail, she looked young and energetic. When she saw Shen Peichuan, she ran over and stood by his car window. She asked, "I'm sorry, I can't ask you to come down. My classmates know that I do not have any relatives. So, if they suddenly see you, I'm worried they might start gossiping."

"Come on in." Shen Peichuan unlocked the car doors.

Sang Yu opened the door and hopped in. She then instructed, "Drive ahead and turn right."

Shen Peichuan didn't ask where they were going as he just followed her instructions. With his eyes looking ahead, he asked, "What did you want to see me for?"

Sang Yu turned her head towards him and asked jokingly, "Can I not see you if I don't have a reason?"

"It's not that." Shen Peichuan laughed awkwardly. "I'm just more direct, so don't take it personally."

“I know, I didn’t.” In her mind, Shen Peichuan was exactly as his friend described, he was someone extremely serious.

Is someone like that capable of having any fun in life?

In a short moment, the car arrived at where Sang Yu wanted to go. She waved her hands, “You can stop here.”

Shen Peichuan parked the car by the roadside. Sang Yu opened the car door and alighted. “You should come down too.”

She led him into a noodle shop called ‘Come Back If It’s Good’. As Shen Peichuan looked around, he realized they were not far from the university. Therefore, most of the shops along the street were selling food. Once he entered the restaurant, he saw Sang Yu ordering. Meanwhile, he furrowed his eyebrows tightly as he wasn’t sure what she was up to. *Did she ask me out just to have noodles?*

“That’s all for us,” Sang Yu told the noodle shop owner before picking a seat. She motioned to Shen Peichuan. “Let’s sit here.”

Shen Peichuan complied and sat down without saying a word.

“Is this place uncomfortable for you?” Although the noodle shop wasn’t big, it was well kept. It was just that the oil stains on the glass windows haven’t been cleaned for some time.

“This place may look unassuming, but their noodles are delicious. Despite its tacky name, the food does live up to its reputation.” Sang Yu smiled. “Since you helped me twice, I will give you a treat in return. That way, we’re even. So, I hope you will accept it.”

“It’s nothing at all. Don’t worry about it,” Shen Peichuan replied impassionedly.

Sang Yu frowned in her heart. This man was really boring. His tone and expression are forever monotonous as if nothing could affect him.

Meanwhile, the owner served them the noodles in a porcelain bowl. It also came with a hexagonal plate that contained six compartments. Within each compartment was a different accompaniment while the last compartment contained the sauce. Even the chopsticks were longer than usual.

Sang Yu pointed to the accompaniments. "These serve as garnishing. You can choose not to add them in if you don't like them, but the sauce has to be mixed with the noodles."

Shen Peichuan nodded. As he was not particular about food, he poured all the accompaniments into the bowl and used his chopsticks to mix them. Sang Yu laughed as she looked at him. "Hey, what kind of woman do you like?"

Just when he was about to dig into his delicious noodles, Shen Peichuan looked up in surprise.

"Don't misunderstand. The last time we had breakfast, your friend told me that you have not been in a relationship before and never had a girlfriend. He asked me to introduce someone to you. Therefore, I need to know your type before I can do so." Sang Yu lowered her head and started eating.

Shen Peichuan let out a long sigh as he had the urge to give Su Zhan a good beating. *How could he say something like that to a child?*

Where am I going to hide my face now?

"He must be joking with you so don't take it seriously."

"Okay." Sang Yu swallowed her noodles and asked, "Does that mean that you have been in a relationship before and have a girlfriend now?"

Shen Peichuan was stupefied.

He cleared his throat. "Erm, what I meant was that you don't have to introduce anyone to me. I don't like kids."

She is just a university student, who can she actually introduce me to?

Su Zhan really has a big mouth.

As a friend, he felt Su Zhan was doing more harm than good.

"Have you been in a relationship before?" Sang Yu asked.

Shen Peichuan put on a serious face. "Don't stick your nose in the business of adults."

Sang Yu pouted. "In that case, I don't have to introduce anyone to you?"

Before this, Shen Peichuan noticed that the noodles smelt good and expected them to taste delicious. But now, he had lost his appetite.

He put down his chopsticks and said to Sang Yu in earnest, "My friend like to spout nonsense. Hence, you don't have to take what he says seriously."

"Mmm, in that case, I'll just listen to what you say from now on?" She smiled at him. Her smile was so disarming that it could cause anyone's heart to flutter.

Stunned, Shen Peichuan quickly looked away and buried his head in his noodles. "Mmm, just listen to what I say next time."

Holding her chin, Sang Yu laughed at him as she found him 'adorable'.

However, when used on him, that word didn't seem suitable. But, she felt that at that very moment, it was an apt description of herself.

After they finished the noodles, Shen Peichuan sent her back to school and drove off. After driving for a while, he realized that she left her bag in the car. Hence, he turned the car around to head back.

When he arrived at the school entrance, he saw that a crowd had gathered. After parking his car, he got out with Sang Yu's bag in hand.

“She's the one! I saw her leaving with a bunch of guys at the nightclub. And yet, she acted as if she was demure and poor in school. I believe you made a lot of money by sleeping with them. But you still pretend to be poor and innocent to elicit pity from your male classmates. Sang Yu, do you even have any self-respect?”

The girl that was accusing Sang Yu was from the same dorm as her and also her classmate. Her name was Lu Wanwan. Ever since Sang Yu was chosen and taken away that night, she held a grudge against her.

She felt that she was a lot more superior than Sang Yu in many aspects and was therefore jealous of her. *She has an ordinary appearance and has slept with other men. So what makes her so special that those seniors favor her?*

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Lu Wanwan held a grudge against Sang Yu as the senior she had a crush on confessed his feelings to Sang Yu a few days ago. It caused the jealousy that had been brewing inside her to explode. And when she saw Sang Yu get down from Shen Peichuan's car, she stopped her at the school entrance. She wanted to humiliate Sang Yu and destroy her reputation in school.

In the face of Lu Wanwan's insults, Sang Yu didn't show any emotion. She was used to being scolded by her father when she was young. Now that she was an adult, she was more confident of herself. She would not admit to something she had not done and definitely would not allow someone to malign her this way.

"How did you know I was at the nightclub? Were you also there and was that how you saw me? In that case, tell me what were you doing there? Were you also watching when I slept with those men?" Her gaze was defiant when she confronted Lu Wanwan fearlessly.

What she said made a lot of sense.

The crowd turned toward Lu Wanwan with the same burning question in their minds. *How did you know Sang Yu was at the nightclub?*

Panicking for a moment, Lu Wanwan retorted, "I'm not lying as my friends told me about it. You can ask them both." She pointed to another two students. "Did Sang Yu just alight from a man's car this afternoon?"

Both of them did see Sang Yu get down from a man's car; hence they told everyone what they saw.

"Look, I'm not bluffing, alright? She keeps pretending to be poor and pitiful in school to elicit the sympathy of the other male students, when in fact, she does

unscrupulous work outside. Yet, she still has to gall to come to school. If I were her, I would have hidden my face away in shame.”

Sang Yu trembled as she bit her lip. She had no way to rebut as she did alight from Shen Peichuan’s car.

Realizing that Sang Yu didn’t counter her words, Lu Wanwan pressed her advantage. “You despicable slut, how dare you refuse Jiang when he confessed his feeling to you. Do you always seduce men with your body?”

Sang Yu was furious as she stared daggers at Lu Wanwan. “Nonsense!”

“Haha, me spouting nonsense? The man you’re involved with has even appeared at school. Did you not expect this to happen when you slept with him? Do you not know what the meaning of shame is?” The more Lu Wanwan spoke, the more vicious her words became. “Look at how many students are looking at you. Why don’t you take your clothes off and show them how you seduce men with that slutty body of yours?”

Sang Yu was incensed and could feel the rage burning within her.

“I can see how pissed you are now. So what are you going to do about it? Are you going to hit me?” Lu Wanwan burst into laughter.

Sang Yu clenched her fist and closed her eyes. Swallowing her anger, she sneered, “Hitting you will just dirty my hands.”

With that, she headed into the school. However, Lu Wanwan wasn’t finished and she grabbed onto Sang Yu’s clothes. As the fabric of her summer top was thin, the pull exposed her fair and slender waist. When Lu Wanwan realized all the other male students were ogling, a devious idea flashed through her mind. She lifted Sang Yu’s top further. “No wonder you can seduce men easily. Look at that waist of yours, there are so many ways a man can fool around with it.”

Sang Yu used her hands to hold her top down quickly. She glared angrily at Lu Wanwan and screamed, "Let go of me!"

"You slut! Why are you pretending to be demure when you're not a virgin?" Lu Wanwan grimaced viciously as she was jealous of Sang Yu's figure. Although she also had a good figure, she realized it couldn't compare to Sang Yu's after seeing hers. Though she was thin, she had a big frame and protruding hips, unlike Sang Yu whose waist was slender and curvaceous. Sang Yu's flawless skin was also taut while her hip was of the right size.

Lu Wanwan's actions had infuriated Sang Yu so much that she had crossed her limit. Losing control of her sanity, Sang Yu pushed out forcefully. As her actions were too sudden, Lu Wanwan was caught off-guard and stumbled backward, almost falling down. Her comical reaction caused everyone around to burst into laughter.

Lu Wanwan felt that it was Sang Yu that had humiliated her. Glaring at Sang Yu, she raised her hand to hit her. However, the moment she put her hand up, someone grabbed her by the wrist. In her rage, she cursed, "Who dares to meddle..."

When she saw the face that emerged in front of her, she choked on the rest of her sentence.

Everyone scrutinized the man that had just emerged. When Shen Peichuan was not smiling, he looked very stern. Given that he was in his uniform today, it made him look even more fearsome.

Someone whispered softly, "Wow, even the police is here."

"Y-You..." Despite how arrogant Lu Wanwan was, she could recognize from the uniform that Shen Peichuan wasn't just any ordinary person. She became so nervous that she was lost for words.

Lucky for her, Shen Peichuan was taciturn. If it were Su Zhan, he would have humiliated Lu Wanwan thoroughly with his incessant insults.

As he coldly pushed Lu Wanwan aside, he walked towards Sang Yu.

Sang Yu watched on as Shen Peichuan came to her rescue at her most desperate moment. He couldn't care less about the fact that all the other students were looking.

This was the third time he saved her.

Stopping in front of her, he handed her backpack and murmured, "Do you want me to talk to the principal?"

Those despicable words will affect her reputation in school.

Sang Yu felt her heart squeezing and didn't reach out to accept her backpack. She looked him straight in the eye. "Did you hear what she said?"

Shen Peichuan pursed his lips and grunted affirmatively.

"Most people just like it when there is controversy. When you try to clarify the issue, they will just think you're being defensive. Hence, I don't need to explain myself and they can think whatever they want."

On the surface, Sang Yu's words didn't seem rational. One should always clear the air when something like this occurred. However, given a second thought, others might not believe the explanation. In fact, they might even accuse him of abusing his authority to cover up the truth. Just when Shen Peichuan wasn't sure of what to do, Sang Yu suddenly stood on her toes and put her arms around his neck. The next moment, she kissed him with her lips that never had any lipstick applied on them before.

Shen Peichuan froze. As he stared at her exquisite face with his eyes widened in shock, his mind went blank. All he could feel was a sweet innocent breath lingering around him.

With his lips captured by her soft kiss, he stood still stiffly.

By the time he realized what Sang Yu was doing and wanted to push her away because she was too young for him, Sang Yu let go of him. After that, she turned towards the nosy students who were watching. "That's right, he is my man outside of school. Since I'm already an adult, am I not allowed to be in a relationship?"

With that, she grabbed her bag from Shen Peichuan, nudged the students who were blocking her way aside, and ran into the school compound.

As Shen Peichuan watched her leave, he sympathized with her for having to face humiliation alone. At a loss of what to do, he suddenly had the urge to protect her. In a blink of an eye, the shock on his face was replaced by a grim expression.

He turned to look at Lu Wanwan and asked with an imposing voice, "What's your name?"

Gulping in panic, Lu Wanwan was so frightened that she wanted to run away from him.

One of the nosy students who was watching added, "Her name is Lu Wanwan, she is Sang Yu's classmate. They share the same dorm too."

Shen Peichuan nodded and sneered, "If I ever hear you insult her again, I will ask the principal to invite your parents to school. I want to see what kind of parents are they to have such a mean daughter."

Just as he spoke, he scanned around at all the students who were watching and ordered, "It's over, so move along now."

As the crowd dispersed, they did it slowly just in case there was something else to see.

As Shen Peichuan walked towards his car, Lu Wanwan bit her lip and glared at him. She blamed him for humiliating her.

How am I going to show my face in school now?

“You look like someone important and probably are not young anymore. How could you date an undergraduate who could almost be your daughter? And yet, you shamelessly bully me just because I’m a helpless student.”

When Shen Peichuan stopped in his tracks, Lu Wanwan thought that he was going to beat her up and fled in terror.

He heaved a long sigh as he watched Lu Wanwan run away. He then lowered his head and massaged his throbbing temple. After that, he entered his car and just sat inside without driving off.

He thought of the incident that had just happened. As it happened so fast, he didn’t have the opportunity to relish it. After all, it was the first time he was this close to a girl. Hence, the impression was seared into him, especially that breath of hers which was unforgettable.

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Shen Peichuan leaned back on his chair and held his head with one hand. *I should have pushed her away at once, why was I stunned?*

He felt as if he had taken advantage of a young girl despite her being the one who initiated the kiss. Nevertheless, he was the adult in the room and wasn't a youngster anymore. *Why wasn't I able to react then?*

Just when he was struggling with himself, his phone rang. It was Su Zhan who called to ask if he wanted to go Country Y.

Shen Peichuan was surprised. *What are we going there for?*

Su Zhan didn't explain and only asked if he was interested.

After hesitating for a while, he figured staying would only cause his imagination to run wild. Hence, he agreed, "Ok, I'll go."

"Be at the airport before three. Or else, we won't wait for you." Su Zhan ended the call the moment he was done.

Inside the car, he held the invitation card in his hands and continued to scrutinize the person on its cover. On the back of the card was information on the time and address. The exhibition wasn't held domestically. In fact, it was part of the international fashion exhibition being held in Country Y, which was famous for its design and fashion industry. However, there was only one theme this time.

He tapped his fingers on his lips. "I really don't understand what are you going there for..."

At that moment, something clicked in his mind. *Lin Xinyan is also a fashion designer. So, is he going there to look for her?*

He turned toward Zong Jinghao and asked, “Do you think we will find Xinyan there?”

Zong Jinghao furrowed his eyebrows as he obviously didn’t want to talk about that topic. Hence, he closed his eyes and pretended to be asleep instead.

He wasn’t sure if they would be able to find her there. In fact, she might not choose to even be there. If she were willing to expose herself, the invitation card would also have her on it instead of Qin Ya alone.

He wasn’t sure of his decision as there were still some lingering fears of facing her. However, he was also looking forward to it at the same time. Hence, he was stuck in a dilemma.

Meanwhile, Su Zhan was sensitive enough to not push the issue so he sat quietly and waited for Shen Peichuan to arrive.

While waiting, he brought up the invitation card and continued to stare at its cover. He wasn’t sure what was it that somehow captivated him.

Finally, when he felt that staring at a lady in a picture was a form of disloyalty to Qin Ya, he chucked the invitation card aside.

Soon, Shen Peichuan arrived. Their flight would arrive there in the morning and they would have the day to rest. After that, the exhibition would begin at night.

Meanwhile, Su Zhan could understand why Zong Jinghao was silent the whole time. *But why is Shen Peichuan equally sullen?*

He looked as if he had lost his soul and was no longer as energetic. Su Zhan felt as if he was going on a trip with two terminally ill men.

When they arrived, they kept a low profile as they were here on personal matters. In the evening, they took a cab from the hotel to the exhibition venue. The hall where the exhibition was held was huge and surrounded by skyscrapers. As night fell, the busy city's atmosphere did not dampen at all. In fact, the city felt livelier than ever lit with the glistening lights.

At the entrance, there was a huge signboard. On it were the same words that were written on the invitation card followed by a translation beneath it.

As the invitation card was sent out to different countries, they were customized in different languages. With Mrs. William's help, Lin Xinyan managed to send out many invitations. There were also many who came due to her fame. As this was Lin Xinyan's first fashion exhibition, Mrs. William was the guest of honor as she was the one who uncovered Lin Xinyan's talent. Breaking from her usual attire, she wore a Cheongsam which was exquisitely embroidered with both eastern and western motifs. Matched with a plain colored shawl, it made her look exceptionally elegant and dignified.

As all the lights were switched on, they flooded the hall as if it was daylight. Many members of the international media were calibrating their cameras while waiting for the event to begin. As the event was well-publicized, the hall was filled with attendees from different industries. There were those who worked in bridal houses, owners of photo studios, and anyone whose work related to fashion one way or another.

The hall was packed and all one could see was a sea of people. All the organizing staff wore special uniforms which made them easy to identify. Near the T-shaped stage, there was a long table covered in white silk. On it, were bottles of expensive wine and an array of hors d'oeuvres.

There were seats on both sides of the stage for the guests to sit during the fashion show.

Amidst the chatter of the crowd, a loud bang was suddenly heard. The T-shaped stage lit up and the host ascended the stage wearing a black suit. Beside him was the female host. She was wearing a long red Cheongsam that extended to

her ankles. It was matched with four inched heels that made her look tall and exceptionally elegant.

With one in black and the other in red, it made for a contrasting visual effect as the spotlight followed wherever they went. The male host raised his mic and began to give the welcome speech. As the main theme of the event was Country Z's style, the host spoke in Country Z's language. Separately, there was an interpreter beside him who would translate everything he said.

“On this star-studded night, I would like to welcome all of you ladies and gentlemen to tonight's event and also to thank you for gracing the occasion.”

When he finished, the female host continued where he left off with a vibrant voice. “As we gather during this wonderful season, I would like to thank all of you for coming and participating in this international fashion exhibition.”

After the pleasantries were completed, the atmosphere was further elevated with excitement. The male host added, “Ladies and gentlemen, please have a seat. At eight-thirty, the Cloud Corporation's first and foremost exhibition will begin.”

The female host continued, “After much anticipation, we finally welcome a brand new collection of works from Cloud Corporation.”

Once the two hosts descended from the stage, the guests started to take their seats. Su Zhan and his companions sat in the last row by the right corner. Suddenly, the lights dimmed.

As darkness encapsulated the hall, an old Chinese classical piece called *River in the Mountains* played slowly in the background. The crowd quietened down while they allowed themselves to relish in the music. When the song was about to end, the lights on both sides of the stage lit up suddenly and gently crisscrossed at the center.

The event started with two models from Country Z strut down the stage. Both were wearing Chinese-styled wedding gowns with one in pink while the other

was in red. Their elegant swagger accentuated their feminine charm and modesty at the same time. When they stopped right in front of the stage, the host explained, “Country Z has a history of five thousand years with a rich cultural legacy. Tonight, Cloud Corporation will present to you a whole new perspective on these traditional wedding gowns.”

in the past, traditional wedding gowns had always been loosely cut. But this time, Lin Xinyan employed western-style tapering techniques in her designs. With that, she created a whole new look that accentuated the bride’s perfect figure. At the same time, it had a modern and luxurious touch while highlighting the cultural traditions of Country Z. As a result, these wedding gowns looked modern and fashionable as opposed to their usual conventional design.

Her designs were simply impressive.

Western-style wedding gowns were more pure and solemn where the focus was on the design of the gown. As for Chinese wedding gowns, the focus was on the embroideries on top of the gowns and the meaning behind each embroidery, which carried different meanings. The dragon and phoenix represented wealth and auspiciousness while a pair of mandarin ducks represented fidelity.

Hand-embroidered gowns offer deeper colors and tactile sensations. The delicate yet glistening threads and lifelike designs exude a sense of luxury. Despite being highly time-intensive, they maintain their unique charm with the passage of time while serving to preserve the cultural heritage.

Finally, it was time for the finale.

The design of the gown remained steeped in tradition despite some minor details modifications. A gold-rimmed lotus flower was embroidered to the chest, weaved using a unique and exquisite technique. As for the cuffs, they were also embroidered using in the same fashion but in red festive colors. The color symbolized the gentility of the culture while the cuffs accentuated one’s femininity. The gown came with a cloak that swayed as the model strutted down in catwalk, creating a magnificent sight.

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The final twelve models posed on the stage one by one, trying their best to showcase their respective gowns. As the models walked slowly, the spotlights followed them. At that moment, the melodious sound of a zither was played. The male host began to narrate with an emotional and vigorous tone.

“I still like you a lot, just like the sound of the zither echoing far away.”

“I still like you a lot, just like the flowing river in the mountains, unable to find a soulmate.”

“I still like you a lot, just like the strings of the zither, strong as they may be.”

“I still like you a lot, just like how chess pieces are dependent on each other wherever they move.”

“I still like you a lot, just like the battlefield covered in smoke.”

“I still like you a lot, just like black and white checkers where each piece has its own meaning.”

“I still like you a lot, just like the fragrance of a book that is close to my heart.”

“I still like you a lot, just like a book in one’s hand, filled with affection.”

“I still like you a lot, just like learning itself which never stops.”

“I still like you a lot, just like the fragrance of wine that emanates for a thousand miles.”

“I still like you a lot, just like aged wine that intoxicates me.”

“I still like you a lot, just like the beautiful tea that wakes my palate.”

As the host recited the piece filled with emotion, the fashion show became a feast for the senses, pushing the atmosphere towards a climax.

The host’s expressive recital felt like declarations of love.

The theme of the exhibition was presented to everyone in a really unique way, especially with the recital.

The theme of the event was marriage, which referred to the union between a man and a woman out of love.

Coincidentally, it shared the same idea as the poem the host had just recited.

The poem sparked the yearning of most female audiences to wear one of those beautiful gowns on their wedding day.

The exhibition was a huge success as the crowd applauded and cheered fervidly.

Just when everyone wanted to interview the organizers and planned to explore partnerships with them, the male host interjected, “And now, I’m pleased to introduce you to the founder of Cloud Corporation, Qin Yanyan.”

With the spotlight at her back, Qin Ya emerged and walked out slowly. She was wearing the same Cheongsam printed on the invitation card. She also had the same hairstyle and makeup on. The only difference was that she looked a lot more gorgeous in person.

Meanwhile, Su Zhan who was sitting at one corner felt as if he had met her before. But, she still looked like a total stranger to him. It was a rather strange and bizarre feeling.

Pursing his lips, he stared intently at the woman in the spotlight. He was trying his best to find a clue as to how he felt that he knew her from before.

However, it was a futile effort. He concluded that the first time he saw her was on the invitation card. Therefore, he couldn't have known her.

On the stage, Qin Ya took over the mic from the host with a calm and unfazed expression. She bowed slightly before she said, "I want to thank all of you for coming and all the staff who has made this event a success. Thank you!"

Standing elegantly on stage, she held onto the mic and looked around at everyone. "I am not the founder of Cloud Corporation. The founder is not here for personal reasons. Therefore, if you have any questions, you can ask me and I will try my best to answer them."

"May I know the origins of the name Cloud Corporation?" A reporter asked.

Qin Ya answered eloquently, "I believe there are many experienced members of the fashion industry present today, and most of you would have heard of Tea Silk?"

Someone gasped, "Is it the Tea Silk that was thought to have extinct for more than twenty years?"

Qin Ya smiled slightly. "That's right." She added, "The twelve Chinese-styled wedding gowns you see today are made from a combination of Tea Silk and hand embroidery. We have eleven master embroiderers who spent two months producing them. Although it is a very tedious process, I'm sure all of you have seen for yourself the results they achieved."

"Will you be selling them at a high price?" Someone expressed their interest in buying. Both the style and design were full of symbolism.

"I'm sorry, they won't be sold to the public regardless of the price. They are only available for exhibition. If there's any interest in forming a partnership, I will

introduce our staff who will be in charge of this aspect later.” Qin Ya smiled. “Now, we will allow you ten minutes to look at them up close. But please do not touch them. Thank you for your cooperation.”

As the gowns were embroidered, an accidental touch might break a thread which would be hard to repair.

As everyone approached, the three men sitting at the corner stayed where they were. Su Zhan and Shen Peichuan turned to look at Zong Jinghao.

Both of them knew the connection between Tea Silk and Cheng Yuxiu who had died. It might have nothing to do with Zong Jinghao before but now it did.

“Could it be Xinyan?” Shen Peichuan asked. *Who else is capable of doing something like that?*

All Zong Jinghao could do was quietly stare at the beautiful and exquisite gowns on stage. Despite not showing much emotion, it was obvious that he was suppressing the turmoil within him.

After Lin Xinyan left him, she hid somewhere and tried to redeem herself over Cheng Yuxiu’s death. However, he had never considered her feeling over the death of a loved one.

Zong Jinghao clenched his teeth so tightly that it made a hole in his cheeks. It was obvious it took a lot to restrain himself in order to maintain the calm facade.

On stage, the twelve models were standing there showcasing the wedding gowns to the guests.

As no one was able to find any flaws in the workmanship, someone exclaimed, “This exhibition is the most impressive one that I have ever attended. The luxurious and unique designs by the founder have left me breathless.”

Hearing such compliments, Qin Ya beamed. She was glad that their two months of hard work were not wasted. She was proud that from now on, Tea Silk would be introduced to the public eventually and Lin Xinyan's goal was achieved. Most importantly, the brand, Cloud Corporation, had finally got a break.

After ten minutes, the models left despite everyone not having seen enough.

"Thank you everyone for your time. Anyone who is interested to work with us can speak to Mr. Shao here."

Shao Yun was in a suit with leather shoes and not in some flamboyant clothing. He walked towards the front of the stage. "Anyone who is interested in a business venture can leave your contact here."

There was no way a proper discussion could be held given the number of crowds. It would have to be done some other day.

After Shao Yun took over, Qin Ya went backstage and instructed the staff, "You must be careful once the models take off their clothes. Don't just leave them anywhere. Instead, put them back on the special rack they were stored in earlier."

As the clothes were only brought here for the exhibition, they were still required to be sent back. Hence, to prevent them from being damaged, a special rack was made so they could be transported.

Meanwhile, Mrs. William approached and Qin Ya greeted her, "Mrs. William."

She was beaming. Prior to the event, Lin Xinyan had kept everything under wraps. Now that she had seen those wedding gowns, she smiled in relief. "She didn't disappoint me at all. In fact, she even exceeded my expectations. It's such a regret that she isn't here to share the limelight with everyone. When I first saw her, I knew that she would definitely be able to succeed with her design."

Qin Ya smiled in response. "I thank you on behalf of Ms. Lin."

“No thanks are needed. Just help me pass her a message. Tell her that I’m very happy. Although she is no longer with LEO and has established her own brand, my confidence in her has not changed. I hope that she will grow from strength to strength.” As Mrs. William was old and her only son had no interest in fashion, the fate of LEO was still undecided in the event of her death.

If it were not for the fact that she valued talent, she wouldn’t have given an inexperienced Lin Xinyan who was fresh out of school an opportunity then.

She had planned to hand LEO over to Lin Xinyan after her death. But now that Lin Xinyan had launched her own brand, all she could do was to give her blessings.

She understood that everyone had their own path to walk. LEO was the creation of both she and the people she loved. Hence, it was natural for it to die together with her. When she thought about it that way, she no longer had any regrets.

After speaking a while longer, Qin Ya escorted Mrs. William to her car personally. After watching the car leave, she returned backstage and found a chair to sit by the corridor. She wanted to give Lin Xinyan a call and update her on the latest situation. Just when she was about to press the green call button, a deep voice suddenly rang out from behind her.

“Where is she?”

Lin Xinyan turned around and saw a lonely figure at the end of the corridor. When he turned his head, Qin Ya saw his face clearly. She quickly turned off the screen. Then, she stood up by supporting herself off the wall to maintain her calm composure.

“I don’t know what you are talking about.”

As he unbuttoned his collar and let the cold air in, it was hardly enough to cool his raging heartbeat. Breathing heavily, his lungs felt like a broken ventilator that was about to explode anytime. “The reason I’m asking you is because I know

who you are. Don't forget that I was the one who arranged for you to be treated overseas."

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Qin Ya didn't mean to lie. She merely acted on her instincts to conceal Lin Xinyan's whereabouts.

Although Qin Ya knew the reason for Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao's separation, she thought that they should cherish their time together as a family with their two kids and a baby who would be arriving soon. It simply wasn't fair for them to suffer the consequences when they weren't responsible for whatever happened in the first place.

"She's at C City."

Qin Ya was initially shocked when Zong Jinghao turned up, but it then occurred to her that he must have figured out something from the invitation cards.

Thinking that Lin Xinyan surely would have gone further away, Zong Jinghao was surprised that she only went to C City, which was quite near B City.

"Maybe she doesn't want to stay too far away from you for the sake of the kids." Qin Ya made the guess based on the fact that Lin Xinyan chose not to go to Wen Xian's place which was quite a distance from B City.

Zong Jinghao stared at the streets as he steadied himself against the door. He felt as if he lost his senses as the street lights went in and out of his sight until he couldn't see clearly anymore. There was only one thought circling in his mind repeatedly. *I have to see her.*

"What's her address?" His low voice quivered as he tried to suppress his emotions.

“6, Block A, Yongjing Residence, C City.” Just as he was about to leave, Qin Ya called out to him. “Can I ask you a favor...”

She was interrupted by Su Zhan and Shen Peichuan before she got to finish. “What are you doing here?”

Su Zhan looked at the corridor and spotted Qin Ya. When he moved his gaze back to Zong Jinghao, his eyes twitched involuntarily as if something was on his thoughts, but he said nothing more.

Qin Ya felt nothing when she saw Su Zhan. She was as calm as if she just met a stranger.

She strode towards them and fixed her gaze on Zong Jinghao steadily. “May I have your number?”

Qin Ya wanted to call or text Zong Jinghao because she found it difficult to ask him for a favor in front of Su Zhan.

Knowing that Qin Ya wanted him to keep her identity a secret from Su Zhan, he turned to Su Zhan and said, “Give her my number.”

He might or might not have done so purposely.

Su Zhan frowned when Zong Jinghao left right after that. Based on his understanding of him, Zong Jinghao would never give another woman his contact details even though Lin Xinyan was absent.

Could it be that he was agitated by Lin Xinyan’s disappearance?

Shen Peichuan thought Zong Jinghao was behaving weirdly too because he didn’t believe that he would fall for another woman so easily. As he muttered Qin Yanyan’s name and watched Qin Ya absently, an idea suddenly popped into his mind.

Qin Ya must have had a new look after the plastic surgery for her disfigurement in the explosion. It can't be a coincidence that Qin Ya has the same surname as Qin Yanyan, can it?

Shen Peichuan was completely sure that Qin Ya was disguising herself as Qin Yanyan. Zong Jinghao must have come to her to inquire about Lin Xinyan's whereabouts.

Her voice sounded quite different though. *Perhaps she changed her voice deliberately?*

Realizing why Zong Jinghao asked Suzhan to give Qin Yanyan his phone number, Shen Peichuan clapped on Suzhan's shoulder and excused himself, "I'll be waiting at the roadside."

However, when he turned to leave, Su Zhan grasped his arm. "Don't go."

Shen Peichuan was speechless by Su Zhan's ignorance. *You're oblivious! Don't you want to spend some time with her alone?*

Su Zhan didn't notice Shen Peichuan staring wide-eyed at him. He was too busy keeping his eyes off other women. This was because he wanted to remain faithful to Qin Ya; thus, he failed to notice that the woman in front of him was the exact person he was looking for. He must have overlooked the fact that Qin Ya might look and sound different after the fateful incident.

Instead of giving Qin Ya the number, he stared coldly at her and warned, "Just because you're rather good-looking doesn't mean that you can seduce anyone. Zong Jinghao is a married man. I suggest you scam and leave him alone."

Shen Peichuan rolled his eyes and muttered a silent prayer. *He actually thinks that Qin Ya is here to seduce Zong Jinghao?*

Qin Ya didn't look angry at Su Zhan's false accusation. She replied smilingly, "I have no idea what you're talking about. Please give me his number."

Am I not being clear enough? "Why do you need his number?" Su Zhan demanded with a frown etched on his face.

No matter how hard Qin Ya tried to feign her indifference, her heart still pounded when the man that she used to have an intimate relationship with and bore a child together was in such close proximity to her. How could she not feel any resentment?

Out of anxiety, she actually didn't realize what Su Zhan was implying. Thinking that he was nitpicking on her deliberately, she clenched her fists and stopped smiling. "I'll ask him myself since you're so unwilling to give me his number."

Before she could stride towards Zong Jinghao, she was pulled back by Su Zhan. "Hey! I've never met such a thick-skinned woman like you before! Haven't I made myself clear that he already has a wife? Don't think that you're capable of becoming his mistress..."

"Excuse me," Qin Ya interrupted Su Zhan, "Not everyone is as dirty-minded as you. I asked for his number to discuss business matters with him!"

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Su Zhan was at a loss for words. Worried that the idiot might say something to Qin Ya that he would regret for the rest of his life, Shen Peichuan dragged him to the side and ordered, "Just go away and leave this to me."

Feeling wronged because he got berated for looking out for Lin Xinyan, he retorted, "Peichuan, women are so sharp-tongued nowadays!"

"Can you stop your nonsense, please?" Shen Peichuan had to take a few deep breaths to restrain himself from punching Su Zhan across the face.

"Let's see how you can handle her!" Su Zhan scoffed and walked away sulkily.

Shen Peichuan only turned to Qin Ya after making sure that Su Zhan was far enough from them. "You're Qin Ya, right?" he asked. Not waiting for her to deny, he continued, "Su Zhan was too blind to realize it was you."

Given Shen Peichuan's intelligence, Qin Ya knew that she couldn't hide her true identity anymore since he had figured it out himself. Smiling bitterly, she replied, "I noticed that."

"Why is your voice different? Did you change it deliberately?" Shen Peichuan asked out of concern.

Qin Ya shook her head. "My vocal cords were injured."

Shen Peichuan heaved a sigh. "You look fine now." Stretching out a hand for her phone, he continued, "I assume that you know where Xinyan is?"

Qin Ya handed him her phone. Seeing no reason to hide anything from him, she replied, "Yes, I've been with her ever since I was discharged from the hospital."

After saving Zong Jinghao's number in her phone, Shen Peichuan thought that he should explain Su Zhan's behavior. "He can be rude sometimes, but he's behaving that way because he's worried that you are a woman trying to seduce Jinghao when Xinyan isn't around. He..." Su Zhan's voice faltered as he failed to fumble for further explanations, but he believed that Qin Ya understood him.

Qin Ya took the chance to make things clear with him. "I hope you can keep my identity a secret from him. It's not that I don't want to let go of the past; it's simply because I want to live in peace without him pestering me."

Shen Peichuan searched her eyes for a while before giving his word. "I promise not to tell him. He deserves just a little hardship, or else he will keep repeating his mistakes."

"No," Qin Ya explained hastily, "I'm not doing this to punish him. I really don't want anything to do with him anymore. It's too tiring to be in love, and all I want right now is to focus on my career. After the exhibition success today, I will be even busier in the future."

"I respect your decision," Shen Peichuan sighed. Just as he began to walk away, he turned around to face Qin Ya again. "He hasn't been in the best state, you know. He has spent his days in limbo until recently when things start to crop up."

Qin Ya didn't respond.

It was what Shen Peichuan expected. He didn't think that Su Zhan deserved to be forgiven because of his sufferings, but he wanted Qin Ya to know about it.

"Take care."

A tiny smile appeared on Qin Ya's face as Shen Peichuan turned around to leave. "Take care too, and get a girlfriend soon! You're not young anymore."

Strangely, Shen Peichuan thought of the unprecedented kiss between him and Sang Yu.

Feeling a sense of guilt overwhelming him, he picked up his pace as if he could get away from it by running away. Suspecting that someone was probably on Shen Peichuan's mind, Qin Ya smirked.

Zong Jinghao was speaking to Guan Jing over the phone at the roadside. "When is the earliest flight to C City?"

Guan Jing replied, "The earliest flight available is scheduled tomorrow at half-past seven in the morning."

"Book a flight ticket for me." When he hung up, Su Zhan asked, "Why are you rushing to C City?"

Zong Jinghao replied indifferently, "Business matters. You can go home now."

He hopped into a cab and left Su Zhan speechlessly while standing by a lamppost.

Su Zhan found it harder to read Zong Jinghao's mind these days.

Knowing the real reason for Zong Jinghao's departure, Shen Peichuan patted Su Zhan on his back and told him to go back to the hotel. "If you can't sleep, we can have a drink together."

Su Zhan rolled his eyes at him. "Stop pretending. You don't have to find such an excuse if you want to drink."

"Fine, fine, I admit it! Can you accompany me?"

"Of course." Su Zhan hooked his arm on Shen Peichuan's shoulder and walked along the pedestrian sidewalk.

Out of the blue, Shen Peichuan began, "Can I ask you a question, Su Zhan?"

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Su Zhan was thrown off by Shen Peichuan's seriousness because he never thought that his opinion would be valued.

"Okay."

Shen Peichuan intended to tell Su Zhan about Sang Yu kissing him and ask for his advice, but he thought the better of it once he noticed the twinkle in Su Zhan's eyes.

Not wanting to be made fun of, Shen Peichuan swallowed the words on the tip of his tongue back and asked something else instead, "Haven't you noticed that Qin Yanyan is quite beautiful?"

He purposely emphasized the surname "Qin" in hopes of knocking some sense into Su Zhan.

However, Su Zhan didn't get the hint because he was taken aback by the fact that it was the first time he heard Shen Peichuan praising a woman's good looks.

Shen Peichuan was confused when Su Zhan let out a sudden laugh. "What are you laughing at?"

"I'm laughing at you and Jinghao. Both of you are obviously besotted by that woman!" Clapping hardly on Shen Peichuan's back, he suddenly became serious. "Listen to me, Peichuan. Keep your mind off that woman. She's wicked. Don't waste your chance with the innocent college student!"

Shen Peichuan almost swore out loud because of Su Zhan's stupidity. Last he remembered, he wasn't that dumb in taking hints. What happened to his brain?

Fearing that he might explode in anger anytime, Shen Peichuan put a stop to their conversation about women. "Enough of this. Let's go and have a drink."

Completely unaware of what he had missed, Su Zhan asked, "Aren't you curious why Jinghao rushed off like that?"

Glancing sideways, Shen Peichuan replied indifferently, "Well, it's kind of obvious, isn't it?"

Su Zhan widened his eyes after considering Shen Peichuan's reply for a while. "Are you saying that he's off to Xinyan's place? How did he find out where she is?"

Just as Shen Peichuan thought that Su Zhan might not be completely hopeless, he changed his mind immediately the moment Su Zhan exclaimed, "He must have had some detective tracking her down!"

Oblivious to the look on Shen Peichuan's face, Su Zhan went on, "That's ridiculous! How could he not say anything to us? He could have told us about it to keep us from worrying about him!"

"Well, at least he has made the first step to get his wife back. What have you done?" Shen Peichuan couldn't hold back the insult.

Su Zhan felt melancholic at the thought of Qin Ya. "Don't say that as if you aren't aware of my situation. She didn't want me to find her. It was only through Xinyan that I got to know where she was. Now that Xinyan is missing, I can't just go around looking for Qin Ya! What if I scare her and agitate her? I don't want to hurt her again."

Turning around, he whispered, "I'm heartbroken, Peichuan."

Shen Peichuan sighed, "I know. Let's have a drink."

He reassured himself that he wasn't guilty of keeping the truth from Su Zhan, because he was the one who missed all his hints.

They ordered wine to their room and drank their fill. Soon, one of them fell asleep on the couch while the other started snoring on the bed.

It was only until the evening on the next day that they woke up. After washing up, they checked out of the hotel and booked a flight heading to their home country.

Meanwhile, after spending a night at a hotel near Country Y's airport, Zong Jinghao boarded an airplane early in the morning and landed at C City in Country Z at four in the afternoon.

The sun was still shining brightly in the sky, but the heat was quite bearable.

Normally, he wouldn't have to worry about anything because he didn't have to plan his schedule personally. However, he didn't bring anything with him except for his phone and wallet because he was in a hurry. He looked quite disheveled with sweat soaking through his white shirt. With his coat hanging on his right arm, he struggled to make his way across the crowded airport.

He finally found a taxi and set off to the address Qin Ya gave him.

After half an hour, the driver stopped at the entrance to Yongjing Residence, which was decorated with a huge stone slab with the words 'Yongjing Residence' engraved on it. A few security guards were patrolling at the entrance. As soon as Zong Jinghao paid the driver and got off, he found himself standing rooted to the ground instead.

What am I going to say to her? How am I going to show myself?

Suddenly, he wasn't sure about meeting Lin Xinyan anymore. As long as Wen Qing's problem wasn't solved, he couldn't show up in front of Lin Xinyan.

Ironically, that was when he realized why Lin Xinyan had to leave him.

If she hadn't, it would be equally tormenting for both of them to stay together but not having anything to say to each other.

It was better to stay apart and reminisce their time together.

"Mommy, when is Aunt Yanyan coming back?" Zong Yanxi asked. Ever since Qin Ya changed her appearance and her name, the two kids became well-accustomed to calling her that.

Lin Xinyan left the embroidery studio to pick up her kids from kindergarten. On their way home, they walked along a shady lane to the supermarket nearby to get dumpling skin and meat because Zong Yanchen and Zong Yanxi had been craving for dumplings. The kids were holding hands while walking down the pavement with their bags jiggling behind their back.

"She'll be back soon, perhaps by tomorrow." Lin Xinyan just received a call from Qin Ya. She still had some business matters to deal with, hence the delay in her return.

After grocery shopping, they headed home. As they reached the neighborhood, Zong Jinghao recognized Lin Xinyan's voice. He turned around and saw her with their kids.

Yanchen was wearing a white shirt, khaki pants, and a pair of matching white sneakers, while Yanxi wore a pink laced dress and a pair of sandals embedded with rhinestones on which looked cute with her white chubby legs. The display of the sibling affection through holding hands made Zong Jinghao smile.

The kids looked quite the same since the last time he saw them. He noticed from the way Yanxi stepped on fallen leaves that the little girl's footsteps were still a little wobbly.

Lin Xinyan was wearing a chiffon dress with a butterfly knot tied around her waist. Her bump had started showing, and the fact that she was facing the wind when she walked made her round belly more obvious. The way the shopping bags

hung on her slim arms was mesmerizing, and when she smiled lovingly at the kids in front of her, she was positively glowing like a goddess.

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Nobody could have imagined how badly Zong Jinghao wanted to sweep Lin Xinyan into his arms and tell her how much he missed her; but sadly, he couldn't bring himself to do it because he was too afraid.

He had rushed over to their place without making any plan. Realizing that it would be stupid to show up when he wasn't ready, he hid himself at a corner just as he was about to be discovered by Lin Xinyan and the kids.

It was the first time in his life that he acted so cowardly in front of his kids and the woman he loved.

"Mommy, can I help you with the dumplings tonight?" Zong Yanxi tugged at Lin Xinyan's arm.

Lin Xinyan lowered her head and asked the little girl, "Do you know how to do it?"

"No, but I can learn!"

"Just make sure that you eat all the dumplings you make," Zong Yanchen said in an ironic tone.

"Hmph! I won't give any of mine to you even if you beg me!" Zong Yanxi lifted her head proudly and retorted.

Zong Yanchen feigned a frown. "What if there's no meat in all the dumplings you make?"

"No, that won't happen! You have to believe me. I have made dumplings before!" Zong Yanxi reached out for her brother's hand.

Then, acting like an adult, Yanxi patted her brother's shoulder to reassure him. "Don't worry."

"I remember clearly that what you made could hardly be considered as dumplings. They were doughs! Be careful, Daddy's not around to finish the doughs for you this time."

Hurt, Zong Yanxi let go of Zong Yanchen's hand and held Lin Xinyan's instead. "Mommy, look at him! He keeps laughing at me! My teacher tells us that children will improve when people praise them. I am going to become stupid because of him."

Lin Xinyan had to stifle an urge to laugh at the notion that praises can improve performances.

Nevertheless, she acted according to her daughter's wishes. "I believe you can do well and you make the best dumplings in the world."

Not wanting to be left out, Zong Yanchen said, "Mommy, I'll help with the dumplings too."

Lin Xinyan laughed, feeling a little helpless. "Alright! You can do whatever you want!"

The children giggled as they were pleased with their cheeky behavior.

Zong Jinghao waited until their laughing voices faded as they entered the neighborhood.

He was still standing at the corner. The conversation about dumplings reminded him of the past when Lin Xinyan forced him to finish the doughs made by the kids, which definitely looked and tasted nothing like dumplings.

He could still remember the stuffy feeling that made him sleepless that night. He smiled subconsciously at the precious memory.

He didn't realize how happy he was until then. It turned out that he didn't need anything luxurious or soul-stirring to feel happy. All he needed was their time together as a family.

He just looked at Lin Xinyan's apartment until the sky was dark enough for the lights to be turned on.

He found a spot to sit and threw his suit absently beside him. There he kept looking up at the apartment, imagining the fun Lin Xinyan and the kids were having, and there was a wide idiotic smile spreading across his face.

When Shao Yun came over in his car, he thought he saw a man sitting by the roadside who was grinning like an idiot. After parking his car, he got off and squinted in the direction to make sure that he wasn't seeing things. There was indeed a man.

He thought it was a shame that the handsome man appeared to be dim-witted.

Shao Yun was back from a flight that took off at noon, which was a few hours later than Zong Jinghao's flight. Estimating that Qin Ya would be back by tomorrow morning because she would be taking off at night, he picked up his pace into the neighborhood.

When Shao Yun went into the apartment, Lin Xinyan and the kids were making dumplings. "Looks like I'm just in time for a delicious dinner!"

However, he noticed the sharp contrast of the dumplings set aside. Half of the dumplings looked tasty, but the other half didn't look edible at all. Frowning, he pointed at the dough-like mixture made by Zong Yanchen and Zong Yanxi, "What are these? Can they be eaten?"

"I didn't say you can eat them." Offended, Zong Yanxi retorted sulkily.

"What's the matter with you, Yanxi? Did you swallow a granite? Because you're behaving like one. I can just snatch those even if you don't let me eat them."

Zong Yanxi tried to remain a straight face but failed. Glaring at him, she asked, "Are you a bandit?"

"No," He patted her head gently, "but I was, a long time ago," he murmured.

Zong Yanxi widened her eyes in shock. Bandits were usually bad guys in television shows. Could he be evil too?

"Bandits are bad guys! Are you saying that you are a bad guy?"

"No, I'm not!" Shao Yun denied it immediately.

"Then why did you say you were a bandit? Bandits are nasty!" Zong Yanxi started getting on his case.

Shao Yun sighed and sat down on a chair. "Whatever you say, Yanxi." The image of the dim-witted man he saw just now suddenly popped into his mind. "Xinyan, you should be more careful around the neighborhood," he advised.

"Why? Is there something wrong?" Lin Xinyan looked up and asked.

"There's a mad man in front of the guardhouse. I'm worried that he might hurt you and the kids," Shao Yun said in a serious tone.

"Is there? I didn't notice anything wrong when we came home just now." Lin Xinyan replied indifferently as she reached out for another dumpling skin.

"I'm serious! He's not normal! I mean, who would sit by the road and laughs to himself? From the way he's dressed, he must be distressed over a recent business failure. Haven't you watched the news? A director of a large corporation in C City almost committed suicide when his company was bought over a few days ago! That mad man out there might just do anything crazy!"

By the time he finished, Lin Xinyan had already started to cook the dumplings.

Not receiving any reply from her, Shao Yun nagged again, "Do you hear me? You must be careful. If you can't take the kids to school personally, just give me a call. It will be too late for you to regret if they are abducted one day."

Knowing that Shao Yun was acting out of concern, she replied smilingly, "Alright, I will."

When Shao Yun saw Zong Yanchen heading towards the toilet to wash the dough off his hands, his eyes widened. Laughing, he choked, "Yanchen, you look like that idiot!"

Zong Yanchen's expression froze as he spat, "You're the idiot!"

Shao Yun didn't expect the kid to get angry, but he soon realized that nobody was going to feel happy about looking like an idiot. He didn't mean to insult the boy, but he could swear for one moment that Yanchen looked almost identical to the dim-witted man sitting by the roadside. He explained hastily, "Well, you might look like him, but I know that you are far from being an idiot. You are the smartest kid I know and you are going to be a CEO in the future."

Since Lin Xinyan didn't want JK Group, she might as well leave the company for Zong Yanchen.

When the kid finished washing his hands, he glared at Shao Yun and demanded, "Where is that idiot? I want to see how stupid he is."

Shao Yun pointed to the balcony and said, "Look across the road and you'll see him."

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Just as Zong Yanchen was about to walk over there, Lin Xinyan called out to him from the kitchen, “Yanchen, can you do me a favor?”

“Sure.” He headed towards the kitchen and saw that she was pointing at the green onions in a basket. “Can you help me wash the green onions?”

Without any hesitation, he picked up the green onions and started to wash them.

After he was done with that, she sliced them into small bits and put them aside in a bowl. Dumpling broth was usually prepared directly in the bowl, so she put some soy sauce, lard, and sliced green onions into a bowl and added some hot soup directly to it. She then put the boiled dumplings inside and completed the dish.

“Wash your hands. It’s time to eat now.” Lin Xinyan instructed as she placed the dumplings on a tray so that it was easier to carry the bowls over.

Zong Yanchen took a whiff and smelt the fragrance from the dumplings, so he ditched the task at hand and sat down on the dining table after he washed his hands.

The lard added a rich fragrance to the dish while the dumpling skin was very smooth and thin. Lin Xinyan placed the bowls in front of her two children before giving another bowl to Shao Yun. “I’ll make something else if this isn’t enough for you.”

She never thought that he would come back so early because she thought that he would be there with Qin Ya. That was why she didn’t prepare a lot of food, so she was afraid that one bowl wouldn’t be enough for him.

Shao Yun waved his hands dismissively and smiled. "I'm good, thanks. I ate a little on the plane, so this is enough for me. I hope there's still enough for you."

He then asked the two children, "Do you have enough?"

Zong Yanxi licked her lips and smiled at Shao Yun as she said in a sweet voice, "Mr. Shao, can you bring us out for a walk after we finish the dumplings?"

She wanted to eat some ice cream, but Lin Xinyan didn't buy her any because she was worried about her stomach.

Zong Yanchen immediately realized his sister's intentions. "I want to go too."

He wanted ice-cream as well, especially after eating a hot meal like dumplings.

Lin Xinyan frowned and asked, "What are you trying to do? Huh?"

"We just want to take a walk to digest our food." Zong Yanxi pouted and said to Zong Yanchen, "Right, Yanchen?"

Unexpectedly, Zong Yanchen played along with her. "That's right. Taking a walk after having a meal is good for digestion."

Lin Xinyan wanted to say something, but Shao Yun interrupted her, "Just let them be. I'll take care of them, so there's no need to worry!"

She couldn't reject them anymore since Shao Yun had agreed. After the meal, Lin Xinyan cleared the dishes while Shao Yun placed a USB drive on the table. "I asked someone to take a video of what happened. It's a shame you didn't go; it was very festive there."

I came just to give her that. He sighed and said, "I really don't understand why you didn't show up since you have worked so hard on it for two months."

She lowered her head and offered no explanation. Instead, she said, “Don’t bring them out for too long.”

Shao Yun agreed, “Alright.”

As Lin Xinyan went to the kitchen with the dirty dishes, the two kids already put on their shoes. At present, they were able to take care of themselves without any help.

As Shao Yun brought them into the elevator, he asked, “What are you actually trying to do?”

He had been with the two kids for two months already, so he knew them well. *It’s so unusual of them to want to go for a walk.*

Zong Yanxi giggled and tugged Shao Yun’s hands as she said, “We’re not trying to do anything. We just want some ice-cream.”

Shao Yun patted her head. “I knew it. You all like to laze around at home and watch television all day long, and you’d always complain that it’s too hot outside when we want to take you on a walk. What happened to that? Is it not hot outside anymore now that you want some ice cream?”

“We’ll cool down once we eat the ice creams,” Zong Yanchen replied.

With a *ding*, the elevator stopped and Shao Yun brought them out. He smiled and rubbed Zong Yanchen head as he said, “You’re a smarty-pants, huh?”

When they stepped into the streets, Zong Yanxi could see that someone was taking a phone call at the opposite side of the road. The person was facing away from them, but she still managed to recognize who he was. She blurted out loudly, “Daddy!”

Zong Jinghao, who was on a call with Guan Jing, heard her voice and turned around. At that moment, Zong Yanxi let go of Shao Yun's hand and ran towards him.

"Be careful!" Shao Yun reminded her because she needed to cross the road to reach the opposite side of the street.

Right then, a car raced down the road, but Zong Yanxi failed to notice it. She was completely distracted by Zong Jinghao's presence because she was afraid that he might disappear if she didn't make it across the street in time. After all, it had been two months since she last saw him.

She even forgot about wanting an ice cream when she saw her Daddy, so naturally, she wouldn't notice the impending danger.

The car was travelling at a high speed and the driver never expected that someone would suddenly appear on the road. He jammed the emergency brake, but even so, the car didn't stop immediately. He was about to slam into Zong Yanxi when suddenly a figure swept across the road as fast as lightning and pulled her away from danger.

The whole ordeal only lasted one second, and if the figure was even half a second late, Zong Yanxi would've been rammed into. The car gradually stopped and Shao Yun marched towards it to give the car a powerful kick. He then screamed at the driver, "Are you blind? Why did you drive so fast?"

The driver was startled as well because he never expected someone to appear on the road so suddenly.

Shao Yun gave the car another kick and dented it when the driver didn't respond to him. "Get the f*ck out of there!"

The driver was so terrified he was trembling as he stepped out from the car.

Shao Yun always seemed amiable and relaxed, yet he could look scary when he was angered. After all, someone had struck his last nerve by almost hurting Zong Yanxi. The reason why Zong Yanxi was so important to him was that she was Lin Xinyan's daughter, and Lin Xinyan was the daughter of a man he respected greatly.

What would I do if something happened to her?

Meanwhile, Zong Yanxi, who was in Zong Jinghao's arms, was in a daze because of shock.

Zong Jinghao gently patted her back and cooed, "It's fine. It's fine. Daddy's here. Don't worry."

Zong Yanxi regained her senses and recalled the terrifying incident that happened just now. She then wailed loudly and attracted Shao Yun's attention.

Shao Yun gave the driver a fierce glare and hissed, "If this happened a few years ago, I would've beaten you to death. You'd better stay put and don't even think about running away. There's a security camera right there."

Afterwards, Shao Yun hurried towards Zong Yanxi to check on her. She sobbed uncontrollably in Zong Jinghao's arms and wailed, "Daddy, I'm scared."

Zong Jinghao gently kissed her tear-stricken face and felt his heart ache for her. He consoled her softly, "Don't be scared. Daddy's here."

Zong Yanxi cried even harder when she heard the word 'Daddy'.

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Zong Jinghao hugged her with one arm and used his other arm to pat her back repeatedly.

He was drenched in sweat, but yet he didn't smell bad. He whispered in her ears with a pain-stricken yet affectionate voice, "Don't cry. You'll look ugly if you keep crying."

Zong Yanxi cared about her appearance a lot since she was praised for her beauty ever since she was young, so she couldn't stand being called ugly. Her voice croaked as she asked, "Do I look ugly?"

"Yeah." Zong Jinghao gently wiped away the tears on her eyes with his fingers. "Ruixi, don't cry."

He was used to that name even though her name wasn't Lin Ruixi anymore. After all, he felt that that name suited her very well.

Zong Yanxi sniffled and asked Zong Jinghao with tears in her eyes, "Daddy, you don't want us anymore because you think I look ugly, right..."

As she said that, she started to sob again. She missed her Daddy a lot in his absence.

The more she thought about that, the sadder she felt.

Meanwhile, her words made Zong Jinghao's heart ache like crazy because all he wanted was to be with his children. He pressed his forehead against his daughter's and kissed her nose and cheeks. "Of course not. You are the most beautiful girl in the whole wide world. You are the love of my life."

“Daddy.” Zong Yanxi hugged his neck and sobbed uncontrollably in his arms. Zong Jinghao tried to console her patiently because he understood how dejected she must have felt.

On the other hand, Shao Yun was gaping in shock as he stared at the man carrying Zong Yanxi. *What’s going on here? Is this idiot, I mean, man, Zong Yanxi’s father?*

He turned around and gave Zong Yanchen an inquiring look.

His brows furrowed as his expression turned into a comical one. “Is that man really your father?”

Zong Yanchen his head firmly. “Yes.”

Shao Yun was rendered speechless at that answer.

Why did he sit here and smile like an idiot then?

Shao Yun cast his glance back on Zong Jinghao and incidentally met Zong Jinghao’s gaze. *Who is he and why is he taking my two children with him? What kind of relationship does he and Lin Xinyan have?*

Lin Xinyan wouldn’t allow a man that she doesn’t trust to bring the two children out, and he seemed genuinely concerned for their safety as well.

Shao Yun chuckled and greeted, “Nice to meet you. Why didn’t you come in? I saw you smiling on the street and I thought you were a...”

He didn’t complete his sentence because he saw that Zong Jinghao didn’t look like a dumb person.

However, Zong Jinghao still managed to sense the derision in his words. He replied with an inquiring tone, “Who are you?”

Zong Jinghao never saw this man around Lin Xinyan before, and she never told Zong Jinghao that she had friends or relatives in C City.

If he's not Wen Xian's relative, that means he's...

He made an educated guess from the fact that it wasn't hard to figure out who Lin Xinyan's friends and family members were. *Zhuang Zijin and Lin Guoan were her family in the past while Wen Xian and Zhuang Ziyi are her family now. Wen Xian's relatives are all in B City, so he should be Zhuang Ziyi's relative, right?*

Shao Yun smiled and answered, "It's a long story. How about we find a place to talk after we take care of this?"

Zong Jinghao's silence indicated his agreement.

Shao Yun patted Zong Yanchen's shoulders and said, "Stay put. I'll be back soon."

The driver is still standing there, and I need to teach him a lesson. I can't have him driving so recklessly and possibly hurting someone else in the future!

"Alright." Zong Yanchen nodded his head obediently. After Shao Yun left, Zong Jinghao asked him, "How have you guys been?"

Zong Yanchen nodded in a way that showed his sorrow. "We're doing fine. Yanxi and I have started going to school, and mommy has been quite busy with work."

After he said that, he turned around in a huff.

Zong Jinghao caressed his head and asked, "Are you angry?"

Zong Yanchen twisted his body slightly to shake off his hand as he replied coldly, "No."

“Are you jealous of Ruixi? Should I give you a hug too?” Zong Jinghao immediately knew what was going on judging by Zong Yanchen’s personality.

However, Zong Yanchen didn’t back down. “No, I didn’t!”

“Really?”

“Yes.”

Actually, he was a little jealous of his sister because Zong Jinghao showered her with all his attention and seemed to have forgotten about him.

Ah!

Suddenly, a shriek interrupted their standoff. Shao Yun couldn’t control his temper, and as a result he threw a powerful punch at the driver and sent him reeling.

“You’d better count your blessings and watch it next time. Get lost now,” Shao Yun hissed.

The driver stumbled into his car and drove off in the speed of light.

Meanwhile, Zong Yanchen took a nervous gulp when he saw Shao Yun’s vicious expression. Usually, Shao Yun seemed quite childlike and friendly, so they hit it off very quickly when they first met. This was the first time Zong Yanchen saw Shao Yun acting so violently, so he couldn’t help but shudder. When Shao Yun approached him, he unwittingly took a step back as Zong Jinghao bent over and held his hands.

Zong Yanchen took a look at Zong Jinghao and didn’t say anything. However, he didn’t break free from his grasp as well, so it seemed like they had come to a truce.

“I know a quiet place. Let’s go there,” Shao Yun suggested.

Incidentally, Zong Jinghao wanted to go somewhere quiet to spend time with his two children as well because he realized that loitering at the street wasn’t that appropriate.

“Please show us the way.”

Shao Yun replied, “Sure.”

He flashed his usual cheeky and innocent smile and added, “It’s not too far from here. Let’s walk there.”

The place he mentioned was a coffee house, and it was a quiet environment because there were private rooms inside. After they arrived, Shao Yun ordered two servings of ice cream for the children. Besides that, the restaurant also provided cold drinks because the weather was getting hotter as summer was just around the corner.

The room wasn’t big, but it was air-conditioned and quiet. Zong Jinghao carried his daughter with him and sat down while Shao Yun sat down opposite them.

At that moment, the waiter came in with two servings of ice-cream. The ice-cream was served in exquisite crystal glasses, so it looked very appetizing. When the waiter placed the ice-cream down on the table, he asked, “Would you like to order anything else?”

Without looking up, Zong Jinghao replied, “I’ll have a glass of iced water.”

The waiter smiled and responded, “Alright.” He then directed his question at Shao Yun, “What about you, sir?”

“I’m good, thanks.” Shao Yun waved his hands.

With a courteous smile on his face, the waiter walked away with the tray in his hands.

The moment he stepped out, Shao Yun asked impatiently, "You're from B City."

Just like how Zong Jinghao guessed who Shao Yun was, Shao Yun did the same to Zong Jinghao as well.

Zong Jinghao responded in an indirect manner, "The kids are still young."

He was insinuating that they shouldn't talk about their affairs in front of the children.

Besides that, they already had a good guess of each other's identities even if they didn't introduce themselves, so there was no point in talking now.

Shao Yun was an intelligent man, so he understood what Zong Jinghao was trying to say. He replied knowingly, "I need to go out to handle something else. I'll come back later."

"Thank you." An equally quick-witted man himself, Zong Jinghao knew that Shao Yun was giving him some time alone with the children.

Meanwhile, Zong Yanchen stared at the ice-cream on the table and patted his sister. "Are you gonna eat the ice-cream?"

Only then, Zong Yanxi emerged from Zong Jinghao's arms. "What ice-cream?"

Zong Jinghao was amused at how much of a glutton Zong Yanxi was. He stroked her face and sat her up on the couch for her to see the ice cream on the table. Then, she took a scoop of the ice cream and tried to feed Zong Jinghao. "Daddy, give it a try. It's delicious. mommy doesn't want me to eat too much ice cream, so I asked Mr. Shao to bring me out to get some."

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Zong Jinghao tasted the cold ice-cream that formed a stark contrast with his warm breath.

After that, Zong Yanxi grabbed another scoop of ice-cream for herself too, not minding that the spoon had been used before by Zong Jinghao. "It's so tasty!"

Her eyes thinned into a line as she savored the sweet and milky ice-cream.

"Daddy, are you going back with us to visit mommy after we eat the ice cream?" As she said that, she handed him another scoop of ice cream.

Zong Jinghao could taste the rich sweetness in his mouth, but at the same time, he was troubled at how he should possibly explain things to the kids.

At that moment, Zong Yanchen looked up at him as well as if he were expecting an answer.

However, Zong Jinghao blinked anxiously as his face contorted to a pained expression. Anyone who saw him could tell that he was feeling very conflicted.

Zong Yanchen sighed softly and ate a scoop of ice-cream. "I really don't what you two are doing. You make up and break up with each other like it's a game."

Do you know that Yanxi and I are the victims of your actions?

Daddy is barely around, and I thought that we can return to our normal lives if we managed to convince him to stay, but...

Zong Yanchen felt helpless when he thought about that, so he let out another deep sigh.

“You didn’t even consider your children’s feelings. Both of you really are equally stubborn. Huh!”

Zong Jinghao’s gaze wavered between both of his children as he muttered softly, “Please give us some time.”

“Do you miss mommy?” Zong Yanchen looked up at him and asked out of concern, “Would you go after another woman when mommy isn’t around?”

Zong Yanchen was scared that Zong Jinghao might have a change of heart again. After all, he had abandoned their mommy once.

“If you mess up this time, mommy and we will definitely not forgive you anymore,” Zong Yanchen swore solemnly.

There is no such thing as second chances!

Zong Jinghao fell silent for a while, before declaring, “I miss your mommy. I won’t get together with another woman when she isn’t around, because she’s the only woman in my life.”

Zong Jinghao stared at his son seriously and beseeched, “Take care of your sister and mother when I’m not around.”

Zong Yanchen nodded his head heavily. “I will.”

On the other hand, Zong Yanxi finished her ice-cream and crawled in Zong Jinghao’s arms once again. “Daddy, are you not coming back with us?”

She seemed to have realized from their conversation that Zong Jinghao wouldn’t go and visit Lin Xinyan.

She didn't understand what was going on in her parents' relationship. All she knew was that her Daddy should go and visit her mommy. "The baby is starting to kick inside mommy's tummy. Aren't you going to visit them?"

Zong Jinghao was faced with a huge dilemma. On one hand, he yearned to go back because he missed his wife, but on the other hand, the rational side of him told him that this was not the time to go back since things were not settled yet. He felt torn between the two equally valid decisions.

Suddenly, Lin Xinyan's face appeared in his mind and swayed his decision. He stared at his son earnestly and requested, "Please do me a favor."

"What is it?" Zong Yanchen was incisive. "But, you need to promise me something if you want me to help you out," he added.

Zong Jinghao stared at his son helplessly. *He's still so young, so why is he acting like an adult?*

"Fine." He had no choice but to agree.

"You need to come and visit us at least twice a week," Zong Yanchen laid down his terms.

He still didn't trust Zong Jinghao fully and he was afraid that he might fall for another woman because he had been away from Lin Xinyan for so long.

Actually, Zong Jinghao intended to visit them whenever he had time. However, when Zong Yanchen stated his terms, it sounded as if Zong Yanchen thought of him as a playboy that might betray his wife at any time.

Zong Jinghao leaned closer to his son and asked, "Do you really have so little trust in me?"

"You had a change of heart once, so I need to protect mommy from being hurt by you," Zong Yanchen replied seriously.

Zong Jinghao fell silent for a while.

“It’s your turn now. What do you want me to help you with?”

Zong Jinghao rubbed his temples helplessly. *Don’t tell me he’s gonna remember the one mistake I made for the rest of his life!*

“I want to meet your mommy, but she can’t find out about it,” Zong Jinghao declared.

Zong Yanchen thought that it was a difficult request, so he blinked and asked, “And how are we supposed to do that?”

Zong Jinghao beckoned his son closer and whispered, “At night when your mommy falls asleep...”

Why is he acting so secretive?

Whatever. The fact that he wants to meet mommy no matter what means that he still cares for her. Because of that, I am more than willing to help him out.

Meanwhile, Zong Yanxi was in a good mood because of the ice cream, so she snuggled in Zong Jinghao’s arms and asked, “Can’t we all just live together?”

She understood from their conversation that her Daddy wanted to sneak in to meet her mommy.

Can’t he just meet her in person? Mommy is home anyway. He can just come with us now.

Zong Jinghao pulled his daughter closer into his embrace and gently stroked her ears. “Please wait for a little longer. That day will come soon.”

We need to wait until the results of Wen Qing's trial come in and wait until everything settles first. Now is not a good time to go back yet.

The young girl didn't understand her father's concerns. "I really want to sleep with Daddy."

Zong Jinghao kissed her forehead and instructed, "Ruixi, don't tell mommy you met me today, alright?"

Zong Yanxi replied, "I can promise you that, but you need to promise me that you will come visit me often and bring me ice-cream."

"Alright," Zong Jinghao agreed.

Half an hour later, Shao Yun came back and said, "Yan told me to not bring them out for too long. Should we go back together?"

Before Zong Jinghao could reply, Zong Yanchen tugged on Shao Yun's shirt. "Let's go. He's not coming with us."

Shao Yun read the room and didn't inquire further. *If things were normal between them, Lin Xinyan wouldn't have brought the children here, and he wouldn't have hovered around her place without going in to visit her.*

He held Zong Yanxi's hands and said, "We should get going. Let's not keep your mommy waiting."

However, Zong Yanxi tugged Zong Jinghao's sleeve and whimpered, "I don't want to leave Daddy. I want to stay with him a while longer."

Zong Jinghao cupped her face and consoled her, "I'll come visit you often. Go back first."

She let go of his sleeve reluctantly, pounced on him and gave him a kiss. "I'll be waiting for you."

Zong Jinghao's felt his heart melting when he looked at his daughter.

Shao Yun held the young girl's hand and waved goodbye to Zong Jinghao. "We'll get going now."

"Please don't tell Lin Xinyan about our meeting today," Zong Jinghao requested.

Shao Yun replied knowingly, "Don't worry."

Shao Yun didn't try to give Zong Jinghao any advice or convince him to stay because he knew that they had their reasons.

Zong Jinghao stayed for a while longer after Shao Yun left as he waited for Zong Yanchen's instructions.

During the wait, the waiter poured another glass of water for him as he lay down on the couch and rested.

Even though he looked unkempt because he came here in a rush, he still exuded a masculine charisma.

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When it was ten o'clock in the evening, Zong Jinghao left the coffee shop because it was closing soon.

Meanwhile, Su Zhan and Shen Peichuan had never seen him in such misery before. It was as if he was a homeless person because of how he hovered outside Lin Xinyan just to catch a glimpse of her.

He returned to the street outside Lin Xinyan's house to wait for his son, but he saw Shao Yun coming out instead.

Shao Yun was discussing with Lin Xinyan about the exhibition's matters, so he came out late. He directly passed the access card to Zong Jinghao when he saw him. "You can't get it without this."

Without any hesitation, Zong Jinghao took it. "Thank you."

Shao Yun thought about it for a while before asking, "Do you want to have a shower at my place?"

"I'm good. I still need to go back tomorrow." Previously, Guan Jing called him to tell him that something bad happened to Shen Peichuan. However, he didn't hear the rest of the story because he heard Zong Yanxi calling out to him instead. On the other hand, Guan Jing must've thought that Zong Jinghao heard what he said, so he didn't give him another call.

Guan Jing wouldn't have called me to tell me something trivial. I need to rush back after I see Lin Xinyan.

Shao Yun smiled and took out a business card from his pocket. "You can come look for me if you need any help. I have a lot of friends in C City."

“What is your relationship with Zhuang Ziyi?” Zong Jinghao asked when he received the card.

Shao Yun was stunned because it had been a long time since anyone mentioned Zhuang Ziyi to him. His smile faded as he replied seriously, “I was a young and foolish kid who liked to stir up trouble. One time, I almost got my hands chopped off, but he saved me. After that, I served under him and... in the end, I took charge of the JK Group on his behalf.”

He then added, “So you’re the one Wen Xian sent to Yan.”

The way he phrased his sentence made it seem like it was a factual statement.

Back then, Wen Xian didn’t allow him to meet Lin Xinyan because she said it’s for her good. Even though Wen Xian didn’t tell me anything, I can kind of guess what happened from the fact that the kids’ surnames are both Zong.

After all, Wen Xian’s husband is from the Zong family as well.

As a wise and experienced man himself, Shao Yun didn’t find it hard to speculate what happened.

“We are destined to meet each other,” he said. *Fate brought us together, not someone else. Besides that, no one is trying to absolve their guilt by sending Lin Xinyan to me.*

I can only imagine the pain Lin Xinyan felt because her mother tried to pay for her sins. To me, this is a form of sacrilege to the feelings I have for her.

My love for Lin Xinyan is not tainted by anything; it is pure and simple.

Shao Yun chuckled because he realized that what he said might be somewhat inappropriate. After all, no one in their right mind would want to be someone’s else’s control. “I’ll get going.”

Zong Jinghao replied with a nod.

After Shao Yun left, Zong Jinghao sat down somewhere and continued waiting. When it was one in the morning, Zong Yanchen gave him a call and immediately hang up.

His son promised to call him after Lin Xinyan fell asleep. He couldn't help but frown when he checked the time. *She sleeps so late!*

However, he didn't ponder too much about that. Instead, with the access card Shao Yun gave him, he went into Lin Xinyan's house and stepped outside her room. The door wasn't shut tight, so he could open it with just a gentle nudge. Meanwhile, Zong Yanchen was wearing his pajamas and slippers as he stood at the corridor. The lights weren't on, but the moonlight pouring through the balcony's window was enough to illuminate the room.

Zong Yanchen gave him a pair of slippers and reminded him, "Don't make any noise."

"Does she usually sleep so late?" he asked as he put on the shoes.

Zong Yanchen nodded his head and answered, "Yeah. Sometimes, she sleeps late because of work, but sometimes, she... I don't really know why too. Anyway, she only sleeps after twelve o'clock."

He then headed towards Lin Xinyan's room and stated, "This is mommy's room."

Zong Jinghao patted his head and thanked him.

"You're welcome. I'll be heading to bed now," He yawned as he said. *I have never slept so late before but I really put in a lot of effort for them.*

His room was situated diagonally from Lin Xinyan's, and it was only a few steps away. He stepped into his room and closed the door.

The bustling streets all fell silent as the quiet of the night filled the entire house.

Zong Jinghao gently pushed the door open and saw that the window was opened while a white drape covered it. The air conditioning and the lights weren't turned on as well. As the occasional breeze ruffled the drape, he strode lightly towards her.

A double bed was placed in the middle of the middle-sized room, and through the dim light, he could see a petite figure lying on the bed. She wore a night dress that showed her pale skin that glowed slightly in the dark.

He didn't make any noise as he sat down by the bed, so the woman wouldn't notice him. She lay sideways on the pillow as her messy hair covered half of her face. He uncovered her face by combing her hair backwards and saw her striking features.

It seems like she has lost weight after two months. I can feel my heart ache for her.

Wouldn't it be great if time could stop? I would be happy watching over her just like this forever.

He leaned down and kissed her forehead. He took a whiff and smelt her unique scent that mesmerized him as his lips slowly traversed through her bare skin.

On the other hand, the woman frowned her eyes deeply as if she were in pain because she was having a nightmare. She dreamt that she was left behind in a desolate world that was filled with nothing but darkness and the feral roar of a monster. The monster inched towards her before pushing her to the ground. She was terrified when she saw the menacing and bloody features of the monster, so she tried to scream. However, something seemed to have clasped her throat shut, so she couldn't make any sound or even move. She struggled with all her might, but she still couldn't break free from its grasp.

Zong Jinghao felt how tensed she was and saw the beads of perspiration on her forehead. From her pained expression, he deduced that she was having a nightmare. Without any regard whatsoever if she would see him, he patted her face softly and tried to break her out of her nightmare. "Hey, wake up..."

The gentle action woke her from her sleep as she suddenly opened her eyes. Still in a daze, she saw the familiar figure as she croaked, "Is that you?"

He hugged her delicate body and caressed her arm as he comforted her, "Yes. It's me. Did you have a nightmare?"

Upon hearing his reply, her yearning of him flooded through her body and hypnotized her. As if she was possessed, she sniffed him fervently and greedily and smelt the faint smell of his sweat. From his scent, she could tell that he left everything behind and rushed to see her, and that made him especially alluring. She kissed his neck and enjoyed every moment of their unexpected tryst.

She was still in an addled state, so she couldn't tell if this was reality or just her imagination.

All she knew was that she wanted to hold him tight so that she wouldn't be afraid of the night.

She shut her eyes tightly as she held onto him for a long while. Suddenly, he turned around and pulled her into his arms. His warm lips engulfed hers as he took her breath away with a passionate kiss.

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Reality and imagination intertwined into a hot mess as she reverted to her primal instincts to own him for the night. All logical thought left her, and all that was left was a shell acting on its own volition.

The passion and attraction engulfing made her sink deeper and deeper.

Suddenly, she heard him say, "I missed you so much." Unwittingly, tears brimmed her eyes as she felt a hand caressing her belly nonstop.

She surrendered herself to his arms as he kissed her incessantly. He had the power to drive away all her fear, and as a result she fell into a peaceful sleep.

The next morning, Lin Xinyan turned around and tried to hug him, but all that was left was a cold, empty space beside her.

She slowly opened her eyes and realized that the other side of the bed was left untouched, it was clear that no one was around. Even so, what she experienced last night felt so real to her.

She felt that she wasn't dreaming last night because of how familiar the voice and the scent were. She quickly got out of bed and opened the bathroom door but no one was inside. *Maybe he isn't here anymore.* She hurried to the kitchen and heard a sound. *Is that him?*

Almost running towards the kitchen, she blurted out, "Zong..."

However, before she could say the name, she saw that the person in the kitchen wasn't the man she desired. Instead, it was Qin Ya.

Qin Ya came back early in the morning and went to cook something because she was hungry. She asked when she saw that Lin Xinyan was still wearing her pajamas, “You just woke up? I have made some noodles. Would you like some?”

Lin Xinyan regained her senses and ruffled through her messy hair. *Was I hallucinating?* She turned around to catch a better view of the whole house and noticed nothing abnormal.

How did he appear in the middle of the night?

She rubbed her temples to calm herself down. *I must've hallucinated. How could he even have showed up in my room?*

That doesn't make any sense at all. Even if he managed to find me, it's impossible for him to slip into my room without a trace.

The strong smell of soup filled the room as Qin Ya came out with her spicy noodles. Lin Xinyan frowned and asked Qinya, “Are you really eating that first thing in the morning? Won't your stomach hurt?”

Qin Ya placed the spicy noodles on the table, sat down, and said, “I just thought of eating this and one meal probably won't do any harm.”

When Lin Xinyan entered the room, it was as though something was on her mind, so she looked at her and asked, “Did you run into anyone familiar lately?”

“Nope.” Qin Ya lowered her head as she had prepared herself to put up an act to cover up her lie. Even though she could answer Lin Xinyan's doubts with ease, she didn't want to make any eye contact with her because she felt guilty.

Shao Yun gave Lin Xinyan the USB drive but she could not spot Zong Jinghao in the video. The three of them sat inconspicuously at the corner and it was crowded there, so the video did not capture them.

Zong Jinghao probably doesn't know about that, so he definitely didn't show up last night.

Lin Xinyan lowered her gaze to hide the fact that she was deep in thought.

“Why did you ask me that?” Qin Ya asked in a quizzical tone, “Is there someone in your mind that you want to see?”

As Qin Ya said that, she looked down and saw Lin Xinyan's bare feet.

Lin Xinyan followed Qin Ya's gaze and looked down, and only then did she realize that she forgot to put on her slippers. She tried to explain herself, “Um, I just asked that question for fun. I didn't put on my slippers because I was dying for a glass of water.”

To prove her innocence, she poured a glass of water and finished it. “I'll go and change my clothes now.”

The moment she finished saying that, she hurried back to her room to avoid any further questions from Qin Ya. When she reached the room, she realized that everything was in its rightful place, and she noticed nothing unusual. She then put on her slippers and laughed at herself. *I must've been so tired lately that I started to hallucinate.*

She rested her elbow on the table and rubbed her temples.

Zong Yanchen entered her room and looked around with his sleepy eyes. He felt that there was no sign of Zong Jinghao at all, so he knew that Zong Jinghao had already left. In the morning when he was still sleeping, he felt that someone came to his room too, but he didn't bother to check because he was dead tired.

He threw himself into Lin Xinyan's arms and asked tentatively, “Mommy, did you sleep well last night?”

She looked at him with her eyes wide open, then she touched his face and said, "I slept very well. What about you?"

I was kept awake by bad dreams but as soon as I dreamed of him, I just dozed off soundly.

Even though it was just a dream, I still felt warm inside.

He nodded and said he slept well too. He studied his mommy's face and she seemed to not realize that someone had visited her yesterday night. He continued asking, "Would you be able to stay home with us today since it's the weekend?"

"Sure. I'm not going anywhere today, so I'll just stay home with you guys." *It has been a long while since I last spend time with them, so I'm just going to stay with them today even if I have a lot of things to do.*

Zong Yanchen gently rubbed her tummy and asked her with anticipation, "When is the baby coming?"

"In five more months." she replied plainly.

It was a common belief that pregnancy takes ten months to complete its cycle from the moment the baby was conceived, but actually, it only took nine months.

"Mommy, can you take Yanxi and me to a movie today?" he asked again in a cute voice, "Can you, mommy?"

He usually didn't act cute to Lin Xinyan because he knew that she wouldn't be able to resist his charms whenever he did that.

As expected, Lin Xinyan smiled lovingly and replied, "Alright."

"I want popcorn and Coke and..."

She interrupted him without any hesitation, “Can you go wash up and change your clothes first? You can think about that after you have breakfast.”

“All right.” He loosened himself from her arms and rushed straight into his room. On the other hand, she composed herself, walked to her closet, and picked out a dress.

Meanwhile, in B City.

Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan who came back from country Y were stunned by a piece of news; a video of Shen Peichuan kissed by Sang Yu at the university entrance was uploaded on the internet by a student.

This caused an uproar because Shen Peichuan wasn't an ordinary man, but a government official instead. As a government official, his every move would be watched and scrutinized, so this piece of news would surely cause an uproar from the general public.

Su Zhan could not believe his eyes when he saw this piece of news because the Shen Peichuan that he knew wasn't a devious person.

Through that incident, he had a newfound impression of Shen Peichuan.

“You're really a wolf in a sheep's skin. How could you do this? She is just a minor! Were you trying to show off your kissing skill in public?”

From the video, one could tell that there were indeed many people watching.

Besides that, both of their faces were clearly visible as the recording was taken from the side.

However, Shen Peichuan paid no mind to whatever he said. The news had already exposed their identities, but the effect it had on Shen Peichuan was negligible and he wasn't afraid to be investigated. The same could not be said about Sang Yu though.

After all, as a woman, she was more vulnerable to criticism. Furthermore, she was only a young freshman.

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There were some rather nasty comments online as well, most of which had been directed at Sang Yu.

After just a brief glance, he found many nasty comments saying that Sang Yu went around leveraging on her youth to seduce other men.

There were other comments accusing her of being shameless, of selling herself out in exchange for glory and more...

Since he knew that reading further would only anger him more, he didn't continue. After exiting the airport and getting into a taxi, Shen Peichuan instructed the driver, "To Hua Qing University, please."

Su Zhan reached out and gave the driver a pat on the back. "Don't listen to him. We're going to Number 1 Mansion."

Shen Peichuan's brows furrowed. "I'm not going home," he said. *I've got to go see how Sang Yu is doing.*

It was now Su Zhan's turn to think of his friend as a fool. Glancing at his friend, Su Zhan snorted, "You're only causing her troubles if you go looking for her now. Think about it, how would it look like if you were to turn up at her school? What would other people think? Doing that will only serve to affirm the relationship they think the two of you share. You're a guy, so this won't really affect you. However, have you thought of how she would feel? How other people will think of her?"

After calming down, Shen Peichuan came to realize that his friend was right. Turning up at her school now would only worsen things further.

“Give me her address. I’ll go look for her while you go home and freshen up first,” Su Zhan suggested.

Shen Peichuan clapped his friend on the back. “Thanks. I wasn’t thinking clearly earlier.”

Su Zhan immediately shrugged off his hand in disgust. “You’re thanking me? Who do you take me for?”

Shen Peichuan grinned. He knew this was just how his friend was and didn’t take what he said to heart. Deep down, however, he was anxiously mulling over about when the news had broken out, how bad the situation was, and if the station had gotten wind of this. *I definitely need to go home, freshen up and calm down. Only then will I be able to face what comes next with a clear mind.*

Soon, the car rolled to a stop outside Shen Peichuan’s house. Su Zhan stayed in the car and confirmed Sang Yu’s address with Shen Peichuan once more. They had to resolve this matter as soon as possible. After all, gossip was a fearsome thing.

It would be detrimental to either party if this were to drag on for too long.

Shen Peichuan wanted to know how Sang Yu was doing recently as well. “Once you reach the guard post, tell them that you’re looking for a first-year student named Sang Yu. Someone will go inform her.” Shen Peichuan instructed.

“Okay,” Su Zhan replied, “Don’t worry, you’ve got me on the case, haven’t you? If worse comes to worst, there’s still Jinghao. The public relations department in his company isn’t just for show. They’ve encountered all kinds of tricky situations and yet, they always manage to pull through.”

Shen Peichuan gave his friend a light punch in the shoulder. At that moment, there was no need for words to convey his gratitude.

“Don’t you get all decent on me now,” Su Zhan snorted as he gave Shen Peichuan an upward nod, “I’ll head over there now.” He then told the driver to start driving. After everything that they had been through together, he was certainly more than willing to do this for Shen Peichuan.

During the journey there, the taxi driver looked into the rear mirror and asked, “That guy back there... He’s the man in the news, isn’t he?”

Su Zhan was at a loss for words for some time.

“Do you actually have time to watch the news while driving?” Su Zhan asked. *Does everybody know about this now?”*

The driver grinned. “I look at my phone sometimes when I’m free. The story is rather eye-catching. That’s why it’s been spreading so fast.”

That’s true, Su Zhan thought, Who wouldn’t be interested in a story regarding an older man “hooking up” with a University student?

After all, there are lots of people trolling online nowadays simply because they have nothing better to do. They just love to pick fights online for no reason at all.

“It’s mainly because of who my friend is. Tell me, is dating someone younger against the law? There aren’t any laws saying that you can’t do that, am I right?”

“Haha, that’s true,” the driver laughed, “Who doesn’t want to find a mistress after becoming rich? Rich men nowadays always have a mistress outside and a wife back at home.”

Su Zhan frowned. *Wait a minute, why does that sound so offensive?*

I was talking about relationships with large age gaps. Yet, all he talked about was being wealthy and having a mistress. He isn’t even talking about the same thing as me.

Sighing, Su Zhan fell silent and decided against explaining further. For all he knew, the driver might misunderstand further if he were to do so.

“Oh, I was so engrossed in our conversation I forgot to ask you where you’re headed,” the driver said. Recalling that Shen Peichuan had said something about a school, he ventured, “Are you going to Hua Qing University?”

With one hand supporting his head, Su Zhan glanced at the driver and commented coldly, “You’re quite clever, aren’t you?”

“Nah! I just happened to notice that Hua Qing University was in the background of that picture. Plus your friend mentioned a school as well. It was just a hunch,” the driver chuckled, completely oblivious to Su Zhan’s displeasure.

The driver was a rather talkative guy. After all, as a taxi driver, he would be cooped up all day in his taxi which was rather boring. That was why he liked talking with passengers as it helped the time to pass faster.

Closing his eyes, Su Zhan pretended to be tired and not in the mood for talking. Not wanting to disturb his rest, the driver spent the rest of the journey in silence. After they had arrived, he informed Su Zhan, “We’ve reached.”

Opening his eyes, Su Zhan fished out a leather wallet from his pocket and handed a red note to the driver. As the driver handed him the change afterward, he sighed, “Ugh, earning money nowadays sure is tough.”

What he really meant, though, was that nobody’s money grew on trees.

After what the driver had said about rich people, it was clear that he wasn’t particularly fond of them.

And the label of “rich man” certainly wasn’t complimenting Shen Peichuan.

His mindset was bound to cause him lots of trouble.

The smile slipped off the driver's face. Seeming to have sensed Su Zhan's displeasure, he immediately sped off after Su Zhan had gotten out.

"Hmph!" Su Zhan snorted. There were so many people like that driver that he couldn't even be bothered to take them seriously. He then walked over to the guard post at the school's entrance and said, "I'm looking for a first-year student named Sang Yu."

Glancing at him, the guard asked, "What's your relationship with her?"

"I'm a relative of hers. Could you tell her that I'm here? Thank you very much," Su Zhan asked with a smile on his face.

The guard picked up a phone and punched in Sang Yu's form teacher's number.

News of the incident had long since spread like wildfire throughout the school. At that moment, Sang Yu happened to be being questioned inside the staff room.

Having something like that happen to one of their students was detrimental to the school's reputation.

People would start doubting the quality of education students at this school would receive. They would assume that the students of this school were unsavory characters, thus resulting in these students being rejected by society.

Soon, the guard hung up the phone and turned to Su Zhan. "Head down to the first years' form teacher's office on the third story of the second general office.," he said as he opened the retractable gates.

After thanking the guard, Su Zhan proceeded to walk through the gates.

It was Sunday, as such, there weren't many students in school. Every now and then, Su Zhan would bump into a couple of students walking and laughing together. It seemed as though they were discussing something.

After getting closer, Su Zhan overheard what they were talking about and his brows furrowed.

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 516

The only gossip that everyone would engage so enthusiastically in at this point in time was none other than the sensational story about Sang Yu and Shen Peichuan.

Putting one hand in his pocket, Su Zhan greeted the students walking towards him. "Hey, do you guys know where the first years' form teacher's office is?"

One helpful student pointed at a building nearby. "Over there on the third floor. You'll be able to find it when you get there. There's a sign by the entrance."

"Oh, thanks," Su Zhan replied with a smile, "By the way, I couldn't help but overhear what you guys were talking about. Were you guys talking about the rumor regarding a student and an officer?"

"Yes, that's right. You've heard of it as well, haven't you?" a short-haired girl replied. Her eyes began gleaming once Su Zhan mentioned the rumor. "The story has spread like wildfire throughout the school and it's received quite a bit of backlash. For all we know, the student in the story might be expelled."

"The whole school knows about this?" Su Zhan asked with a smile on his face, "And this has become fodder for your entertainment, hasn't it?"

Although Su Zhan was rather subtle, the students still managed to read between the lines and the smiles gradually slipped off their faces.

Lifting his head, Su Zhan glanced at the towering buildings and the elegant environment he was standing in before he sneered, "Seems to me this school is nothing special. The students that this school produces are quite useless, seeing that not only did they fail to protect the school's honor and reputation, but they were actually the ones that are trampling all over it. How ridiculous."

Once he had finished, Su Zhan marched off in the general office's direction.

Those students, on the other hand, were so embarrassed that their faces had turned beet red. Like what Su Zhan said, they were indeed from this school, and yet, here they were making light of the situation. From a certain point of view, they were removing themselves from the situation.

The short-haired girl retorted, "Even if we did want to protect and defend our school, there are bound to be several bad apples that will spoil the whole barrel. In my opinion, the school should make an example out of these students and expel them. That way, no one would ever dare taint our school's reputation again."

Some people agreed with her, while others thought that her view was relatively myopic. After all, there was only a picture. For all they knew, there might be more than met the eye.

"Come on. Let's go." Afraid that things would escalate, one of the students hastily rounded up the rest of them and left the school.

Soon, Su Zhan found the first years' form teacher's office. After knocking on the door, a voice rang from the inside, "Come on in."

Su Zhan pushed open the door and entered the office. There were several desks inside the room, but only the one furthest inside the room was occupied. Sitting at the table was a bespectacled middle-aged man. Even though he was seated, one could see that he wasn't very tall. At that moment, Sang Yu was standing in front of the table with her head hung low while the man stared at her sternly.

As Su Zhan walked in, Sang Yu's form teacher turned to look at him and asked, "Who are you?"

Su Zhan pointed at Sang Yu. "I'm looking for her."

Hearing his voice, Sang Yu raised her head. Her lifeless eyes began gleaming once she realized that it was Su Zhan. She had wanted to contact Shen Peichuan to find out how he was doing. However, she had been lectured all morning after getting called into her form teacher's office.

Su Zhan is Shen Peichuan's friend, he would definitely know how Shen Peichuan is doing.

As the brows of Sang Yu's form teacher furrowed, the expression on his face soured and he asked Sang Yu, "I thought you didn't have any relatives here? Who on earth is he?"

"I'm a distant relative of hers," Su Zhan explained as he walked to Sang Yu's side, "How does the school intend to resolve this issue?"

Pushing his glasses upwards, the form teacher replied, "We'll need to hold a meeting to discuss how we'll solve this issue. But I personally have very high hopes for Sang Yu. She's always had stellar grades and performed well in various other aspects. I must say that this incident has left me very surprised and very disappointed."

Sang Yu lowered her head, not because she had done something wrong, but rather because she felt like she had let her teacher down. Her teacher had always taken very good care of her. Furthermore, he had been the one who helped her apply for her scholarship.

Now that something like this had happened, all hopes for the scholarship had probably gone down the drain.

Although all these might seem very trivial now, she knew full well the consequences of not having any academic credentials. If that were to happen, it would be really hard for her to find a good job. Without a good job and the handsome salary that came along with it, it would be immensely difficult for her to survive in this city. Thus, she didn't want to be expelled.

“You have to believe me, sir. I really didn’t do all those messed-up stuff outside school. It was my classmates who forced me. I only succumbed in a moment of rashness,” Sang Yu explained with her head hung low.

Her teacher’s expression hardened. “A moment of rashness? Well, that shouldn’t have happened either! You’re still a first-year university student. How could you lead such a promiscuous lifestyle outside of school? Don’t you know that that would affect your future?”

Biting her lower lip, Sang Yu knew that she wouldn’t be able to explain herself out of this mess.

Left with no choice, she could only plead, “Sir, please, you can’t expel me. I put in a lot of effort to make it into this school. Could you put in a good word for me?”

“Don’t be so quick to jump to conclusions. I have to see how the higher-ups feel about this incident as well,” her teacher sighed, “I really didn’t expect such a thing to happen to you. Many students from smaller cities put in a lot of effort to get into our school. It’s the first time they’re in such a big and flourishing city. Thus, they are easily enticed by the fascinating life outside of school and carry on to make some bad decisions that cannot be salvaged. It’s such a pity. Sigh, if this can be resolved quickly such that the impact can be minimized to as small as possible, I will put in a good word for you with the higher-ups.”

“How about this?” Su Zhan suggested, “I hope that the school can investigate what happened that day. I noticed that there were many other students in the picture. I believe setting up an investigation wouldn’t be too difficult. We have to get a clear picture of what really happened so that we can better resolve this incident, don’t you think so?”

Nodding his head, the teacher agreed, “You’re right, I was so caught up in my emotions that I wasn’t thinking clearly. I’ll get in touch with the principal right away and set up an investigation for this matter.”

The further they delayed their response, the more unpredictable the situation would become.

“In the meantime, we’ll do our best to resolve the situation outside school. Now, can I leave with her?” Su Zhan asked.

After glancing at Sang Yu once more, the teacher’s gaze eventually landed on Su Zhan.

Su Zhan’s stern expression looked rather reassuring.

“Fine. But I must be able to get in touch with you two at any time.” It would be quite troublesome if the school encountered any problems requiring their assistance and they were unreachable.

“Why don’t I leave you my number? If you can’t reach Sang Yu, you can give me a call,” Su Zhan offered.

“That works as well.” Sang Yu’s teacher then handed him a pen and a piece of paper. After Su Zhan scribbled down his number, the teacher continued, “Since you’re her relative, I would advise you to pay more attention to her. Even though university students are adults, they sorely lack life experience and are very gullible.”

“I will.” In that brief moment, Su Zhan had completely transformed into a parental figure. “Thank you for your concern.”

Waving his hand, the teacher replied, “Oh, it’s our duty to do so.”

“Could I give you a suggestion?” Su Zhan said after handing the piece of paper with his number to the teacher, “On my way here just now, I heard several students in this school discussing this incident. In my opinion, before stopping this incident from spreading amongst outsiders, the school should first start with controlling its own students. If even students from this school are making light of the situation, how is the school supposed to stop others?”

A look of admiration flashed across the teacher's eyes. *He makes so much sense. He certainly sounds like someone who can be counted on.*

"I'll report this to the higher-ups immediately so that the students will stop discussing this incident."

Upon hearing this, Su Zhan nodded his head and proceeded to leave the office with Sang Yu. Once they were outside, Sang Yu asked anxiously, "How is he? Did it cause him any trouble?"

"How do you still have the time and energy to concern yourself with him? Have you not thought about how you're going to solve your own problems?" Even though that was what Su Zhan said, inwardly, he felt that Sang Yu's question had improved his impression of her significantly.

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 517

Judging from how much Sang Yu cared for Shen Peichuan, there was no way Su Zhan would believe that she was not attracted to him. *They must be into each other as they would not have made out so passionately in public otherwise.*

Sang Yu inferred from his expression and guessed as much what was on his mind. She explained, "I must have gotten Chief Shen into trouble. This is probably going to affect him badly, am I right?"

"Most definitely I think. After all, his status is quite special." Su Zhan was very perceptive when it comes to people so he intended to exaggerate the gravity of the situation in order to guilt-trip Sang Yu. He reckoned that by doing so, it ought to be able to help accelerate the development of the relationship between Shen Peichuan and her.

He then quietly thought to himself that he might just be the best person ever, as no one else in the world would possibly have devoted as much effort towards securing his buddy's future happiness as he did. Su Zhan felt that anyone who could deservedly hail him as a friend must have had attained some good karma.

"At best, Shen Peichuan might be getting a tongue lashing right now... and at worst, it could dampen his career prospects," Su Zhan sighed as he purposely made things sound dismal.

Sang Yu bit her lip as she felt at fault for dragging Shen Peichuan down.

It did not take much from Su Zhan to reduce the young and impressionable Sang Yu to a bundle of nerves as she fell for his ruse easily. "Would I be able to see him?"

Su Zhan said, "I'll have to take you to see someone first. We could contact him now but I'm not sure if he'd be able to make himself available."

With that, the duo left the school compound and stood together by the roadside as they waited for a ride. He turned to Sang Yu, "I'll be looking to you for your cooperation should the need arises."

"You can count on me for anything that would offer Chief Shen some relief," Sang Yu responded quickly as she was worried Su Zhan might doubt her commitment were she to appear indecisive.

"Relax. I'm sure we'll be able to help him." Su Zhan smiled broadly. When he noticed the paleness on Sang Yu's face, he was concerned that he might have saddled her with too much pressure.

A taxi approached and Su Zhan raised his hand to flag it down. He opened the door for Sang Yu and followed her in after he saw that she was properly seated. As he closed the door, he looked ahead and said, "To Wanyue Group."

"Sure," replied the driver. Soon, the taxi was on its way.

En route to Wanyue, Su Zhan began to introduce himself to Sang Yu, "You already know that Peichuan and I are close friends."

Sang Yu nodded. Preoccupied about Shen Peichuan's well-being, she held her hands together in unease.

"Allow me to introduce myself. My name is Su Zhan. You can call me Su Zhan just as Peichuan does. I'm a lawyer by profession at my own firm, but I have not been handling cases personally for a while now."

Sang Yu listened to Su Zhan but pursed her lips without replying. That day at the shop, she had already known that the three of them were no ordinary individuals.

“How about you? Why don’t you tell me about yourself?” Su Zhan smiled as he asked.

Sang Yu instinctively kept her head bowed, self-conscious of the fact that she did not walk in the same social circles as them. She replied meekly, “I don’t have any relatives. My father is dead and my mother is currently serving out a prison sentence.”

Su Zhan did not probe Shen Peichuan about Sang Yu’s background as he was not particularly class conscious. He thought that given a choice anyone would have wished for both of their parents to be present so that they may have a happy childhood growing up with a complete family.

He understood that when it comes to circumstances surrounding one’s birth, no one gets to choose what family they would be born in. Outsiders may envy that he was young, good-looking, successful, and seemed to lack for nothing save a woman to marry and start a family with. But even he too had struggles of his own that he would rather not speak of.

Su Zhan placed a reassuring hand on Sang Yu’s shoulder, “We are not so different, you and I. Beneath mere appearances, we are all human beings with our fair share of struggles.”

He usually came across as articulate and highly competent, able to dissect matters with clarity and handle them dependably. But when it came to dealing with Qin Ya, he just could not seem to get anything right.

Due to Su Zhan’s talent for conversations, Sang Yu had become visibly less nervous.

They continued to chat for a while more before the taxi stopped in front of Wanyue Group’s premises. Su Zhan paid the fare and got off, but held the door as he waited for Sang Yu to alight.

Sang Yu lowered her head when she stepped out. As she stood by the roadside, she raised her head and took in the view of the towering skyscraper in front of her which had become an architectural landmark in B City's financial district.

Never before had she been so close to this sort of place which she used to only gaze at from afar, and never had she imagined that she could one day have an opportunity to go inside.

Su Zhan smiled at Sang Yu, "There's no need to stand on ceremony. The person we are here to see is no stranger and someone very much like Peichuan and myself. I had to bring you here as we would need to ask him for help for the situation at hand."

Sang Yu acknowledged this and reiterated her stance, "I understand. I'm willing to do anything so long as it helps."

Su Zhan was delighted for Shen Peichuan, as he saw in this girl a certain strength and sense of responsibility that belies her diminutive stature. It doesn't matter what her family background was as it was not like Shen Peichuan was going to marry her parents, so who they were did not matter so long as she was good for him.

He smacked himself for thinking so far ahead when the focus should be on what was happening right now, "Come on. Let's head inside."

Su Zhan was a familiar face hence the reception did not intercept him and they were able to make their way up to the top level with no trouble. They then chanced upon Guan Jing as he was coming out of the President's office. Su Zhan called out to him and asked if Zong Jinghao was around.

"He just got back in and is aware of the current situation," Guan Jing said as he looked past Su Zhan and smiled at Sang Yu who was standing behind him, "Ah, that must be Shen Peichuan's best-kept secret."

Guan Jing had no idea that Shen Peichuan got attached, and with a young one at that. *I heard that she's a freshman at a university. My, my, who would have thought that old rascal, Shen Peichuan would snag himself a woman so much younger than him?* If not for Sang Yu's emergence, Guan Jing would have been convinced that the notorious bachelor Shen Peichuan was only interested in men.

Su Zhan wore a humorless expression as he warned Guan Jing, "Behave yourself."

It's not a done deal yet. Don't spook her off.

Guan Jing cleared his throat as he realized how his excessive eyeballing might have made Sang Yu uncomfortable. "Go on ahead," he exhaled, "I still have plenty of work waiting for me to attend to."

Su Zhan playfully poked fun at Guan Jing who had been slogging like a horse all day, "Somebody should give this man a raise!"

Guan Jing wore a straight face, "I have no time to mess around you." He then went on to attend to his own affairs.

Guan Jing was a rather wealthy man himself. With an annual income comparable to that of small business owners, his net worth might rival or even exceed that of Su Zhan.

Su Zhan had no time for idle banter either. He took Sang Yu with him and rapped on the office door. Zong Jinghao, who was in the middle of reading the news, answered in an even voice, "Come in."

Su Zhan pushed through the door with Sang Yu in tow. Zong Jinghao did not redirect his attention to the visitors as he continued to scan through the articles about Shen Peichuan which had been pulled up on his browser. He had returned to the office straight off the flight from C City and still had the same clothes he

had worn from before on him. His button-up shirt was crumpled and he looked haggard as he had not been able to get in much rest over the past two days.

“This issue is rather thorny and with the way information about it is spreading, the ramifications on Peichuan could be considerable.” Su Zhan’s eyebrows perked up at the sight of the rare stubble on the jaw of the man seated in front of the computer but thought that the rugged look did not look half bad and rather accentuated his manliness.

He nearly slapped himself at that thought. *I’m a regular heterosexual man. I must have gone mad to find Zong Jinghao gorgeous...*

He thought to himself that perhaps this was the sort of legendary charm associated with “bad” boys.

Zong Jinghao finally peeled his eyes away from the screen and shifted them briefly onto Su Zhan, then to Sang Yu who stood quietly to Su Zhan’s rear. He then dialed the extension to the secretary’s seat and instructed them to connect him with the Department of Public Relations, “Get me their chief.”

With the landline phone in hand, his attention was instead tuned to his cellphone screen.

On the lock screen display was a photograph of Lin Xinyan.

It was taken while he sat awake by the bed and watched her sleep peacefully, with her hand in his. Her hand was small and delicate in comparison as it rested on his palm. With her slender fingers and defined joints. There were no varnish applied nor fancy work done on her nails, and he very much liked how they were neatly trimmed and clean.

By simply looking at the photograph, Zong Jinghao could remember how it was like just to hold her hand back then, and that made him feel warm inside.

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 518

Looking at his phone, Zong Jinghao could not help but think of the time Lin Xinyan leaped on him and forced a kiss on him. Although her consciousness was a little muddled back then, he liked how expressive she was about her love for him. Lin Xinyan would do everything she could to make sure he felt her love.

She was such a darling and he could not have enough of her.

Although she was with him for just a few hours, it was enough for him.

Lin Xinyan never failed to put a smile on his face and Zong Jinghao grinned unknowingly as he thought of her. Across the office table, Su Zhan could not believe his eyes. He rubbed his eyes to make sure he was really seeing Zong Jinghao smiling.

“Are my eyes deceiving me? I can’t believe you’re smiling!” Su Zhan exclaimed.

He craned his neck and peered at Zong Jinghao’s phone to see what he was looking at. But before he could see anything, Zong Jinghao locked his phone screen and glared at him stiffly.

What a petty man...

It’s not like I’m a busybody. You don’t have to look at me like that!

Just as Su Zhan was rolling his eyes at Zong Jinghao, the call got through to the Department of Public Relations. “Mr. Zong, you’re looking for me?” the chief asked.

Zong Jinghao’s gaze returned to the computer screen as he replied, “Have you seen the news?”

“Yes,” the voice said.

“I did some digging and I think someone randomly posted these photos. I need you to find the person who posted this and stop the photos from spreading further,” Zong Jinghao ordered.

After he saw the news, he found out that the photos were first posted by an individual account. There were not a lot of comments about the photos in the original post until a social media influencer account reposted them.

It would not be difficult to settle this.

“Understood, I’ll look into it right away,” the chief of the department said.

Zong Jinghao ended the call and stood up with his phone in his hand. He grabbed his suit and turned to Su Zhan. “Stop by the school when you have time. One of the students has an account named “I Am Ketchup”. Ask the school to get this student to write a statement. I’ll get the Department of Public Relations to contact the school and settle this issue,” he said before turning and left.

“But how are we gonna explain the photos?” Su Zhan called out to Zong Jinghao before he could disappear from his sight.

“The Department of Public Relations will take care of that!” Zong Jinghao answered without looking back.

They just needed to make sure the situation did not spiral out of control. Once they were able to take down the news and get the person who started it to make a statement, they would be able to give the public an acceptable explanation and verify the authenticity of those photos.

“Alright, I’ll swing by the school then,” Su Zhan agreed.

Zong Jinghao walked out of his office and headed home. He badly needed a good shower. His shirt stank and his whole body felt sticky.

Back in the office, Su Zhan looked at Sang Yu, thinking about what he should do with her. *I don't think I can bring her back to school...*

Just as he was contemplating what he should do, his phone rang in his pocket. It was Shen Peichuan. Su Zhan picked up his call immediately and asked urgently, "How is everything?"

"I just got back to the police station. I'm going to meet with the superiors later on. Have you met Sang Yu? How is she?" Shen Peichuan inquired.

Su Zhan looked at Sang Yu from the corner of his eyes and said, "She's fine, you don't have to worry about her. Just make sure you don't lose your job over this." Su Zhan's voice rang loud and clear in the room—he wanted Sang Yu to know Shen Peichuan would be punished because of this matter.

"Chief Shen, you're wanted at Captain Song's office," a distant voice could be heard from the other side of the call.

Shen Peichuan nodded and quickly ended the call. "I gotta go, talk to you later," he said and hung up right after.

Sang Yu sat up and asked, "Was that Chief Shen?"

"Yeah. I guess he's going to get a good scolding," Su Zhan replied.

"Can you tell me where he is? I want to go see him. I won't go in and create more mess. I'll just wait for him outside," Sang Yu pleaded.

Su Zhan looked at her and finally nodded. "Alright, I'll send you over."

He had everything planned out—he would send her over and get Shen Peichuan's officers to take care of her before he went over to the school.

Besides, by sending her over, Shen Peichuan and Sang Yu would get to spend some time together as well.

Although photos of them had spread like wildfire, Su Zhan knew that Shen Peichuan would never kiss her in public even if he really liked her.

From the angle of the photos, it must have been Sang Yu who kissed him.

He raised his eyebrows and looked at her as he never expected the woman in front of him to be so open-minded.

After coming out of the office, Su Zhan went to look for Guan Jing. Su Zhan felt it was inconvenient to take the cab all the time. There were times where he would even have to wait for a while until the car arrived. So he decided to just borrow Guan Jing's car.

Guan Jing threw him his car keys without any objection since he had no plans to go out that day.

Su Zhan drove Sang Yu to the municipal police station and called an officer working under Shen Peichuan to pick her up at the gate.

After sending Sang Yu off, Su Zhan headed for the school.

Since the photos had gone viral, the officer knew with just one glance who Sang Yu was. When the photos came to light, none of Shen Peichuan's officers believed they were real.

But when the officer saw Sang Yu in person, he started having second thoughts. *Maybe Shen Peichuan really had something going on with this girl. And she's still so young!*

"Let's go in," the officer said after stealing a look at Sang Yu. His name tag glistened under the sun as he turned towards the entrance.

“Will it be okay for me to go in, Mr. Liu?” Sang Yu decided to address him by his name.

She looked at Liu nervously and waited for a reply. She did not want to further complicate the issue.

“Things are already in the gutter, so it won’t make any difference,” Liu said.

Sang Yu pursed her lips awkwardly, not knowing what to say.

“I’m sorry if I was too blunt,” he quickly followed up with an explanation.

“It’s okay,” Sang Yu replied, shaking her hands.

“I’ll bring you to Captain Shen’s office then,” Liu said as he led the way.

“How is Chief Shen now?” Sang Yu asked as she followed behind.

“He’s in the captain’s office now,” Liu told her the situation.

“Will everything be okay for him?” Sang Yu was worried sick.

Liu thought for a while and said objectively, “I’m not sure. There will definitely be some form of disciplinary action taken against him. Since he is someone of position, the issue is bound to have negative impacts.”

“Can you bring me to see your captain? This is all my fault and has nothing to do with Chief Shen” Sang Yu quickly replied.

Liu did not expect the girl to be this bold. “Alright then,” he said after seeing the determination in her eyes.

After all, it might be better to listen to both sides of the story. Things might get cleared up sooner.

Liu ushered her through another corridor towards the captain's office.

Just as Liu was about to reach for the door handle, a loud crash pierced through the air. Liu jerked and Sang Yu almost cried out. Judging from the sound of it, the captain must have flung a cup across his office.

This would be the worst time to disturb them.

Captain Shen must be getting a good scolding right now.

However, Sang Yu simply collected herself and stepped forward. She was set on shouldering the blame with Chief Shen. She knocked on the door with a determined look on her face.

Liu stared at her, astonished. "Did you not hear what just happened?" he asked softly.

"Yes, I did. That's why I have to go in," Sang Yu said resolutely.

Even though she was fearful, she decided that she would go in and face everything with Shen Peichuan.

"Come in," a coarse voice came from inside the office.

With that, it was too late for Liu to stop her.

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 519

Liu instantly felt a pang of regret. He was not sure if bringing Sang Yu here was the right decision. He looked at her helplessly, hoping that things would not turn into a total disaster.

“Good luck,” he said, sending her in.

Sang Yu looked at him and nodded. She pushed the door open and went in. Inside the room, a huge and dark-colored table sat right in the middle, making the atmosphere seem heavy and serious.

Shen Peichuan’s brows knitted the moment he saw Sang Yu. *What on earth is she doing here?*

“Get out, you have nothing to do here.” His voice echoed sternly in the cold air.

Sang Yu rubbed her hands nervously as she stood by the door. Her heart pounded heavily as she looked at Captain Song, but she stood her ground. “Everything happened because of me, I feel that I have a need to come here and explain things,” Sang Yu said.

Captain Song scoffed and replied, “Sure. Since Shen Peichuan refused to say a single word, why don’t you tell me what happened?”

“This has nothing to do with him, I was the one who initiated it,” Sang Yu admitted.

The captain raised his brows as he found the girl amusing. He leaned into his chair and questioned, “But the two of you were hugging in the photo. How is it possible that he has nothing to do with it? He’s someone who has a good name to keep. Do you know what kind of effect this would bring onto him?”

Sang Yu did not know how to explain the photos. But she knew things were really serious.

Nevertheless, she clenched her fist and insisted, "I don't care if you believe me, but I won't change what I say because it's true. I'm the one at fault here and I hope you won't punish Chief Shen."

To everyone's surprise, Captain Song chuckled and looked at the two of them. The stern look he had on his face just mere moments ago vanished all of a sudden.

He knew Shen Peichuan's character and that he would never do something like this. Captain Song knew there must be some misunderstanding the very moment he saw the news.

But as a public officer, this kind of scandal will tarnish Shen Peichuan's reputation, and the public might mistake this as an abuse of power. People might think that he was trying to get his way around with women.

Sang Yu was getting anxious because Captain Song was not saying anything but staring at them. She finally lost it and cried out, "I know I'm young, but I'm legally an adult. Chief Shen is still not married, is there a problem with us dating? Is this against the law?"

Shen Peichuan was bewildered. "Sang Yu, I..."

"I just don't understand why people have to keep coming at you as if it were your fault! I've already told them a hundred times that I was the one who did it, but nobody would believe me! Everyone is so hard-headed that they never want to listen to me!" Sang Yu did not wait for Shen Peichuan to say a word before she unleashed a tirade of frustration.

Captain Song frowned and commented, "I didn't know she's this stubborn."

Right at this moment, someone opened the office door in a rush and whispered something in Captain Song's ear.

His smile vanished and the captain's face became serious again. "Alright, you may go now," the captain said after letting out a sigh of relief.

He moved his mouse around and starting typing away on his keyboard after the officer left. True to the officer's word, he could no longer find anything about Shen Peichuan on the internet.

Instead, the person who first released the photos came forward with a statement, saying that the photos were edited because that person held a grudge against Sang Yu and wanted to get back at her. An apology for causing disruption was also directed towards the public and all public officers in the statement.

It seemed like Su Zhan found the culprit who first uploaded the photos and got the person to issue a statement after talking things through with the school. As a lawyer, Su Zhan handled the whole issue flawlessly without doing any damage to Shen Peichuan and Sang Yu. Regardless of whether the photos were real, the issue was solved in the end. Besides, the Department of Public Relations had also communicated with many media companies about pulling down those photos. Even related keywords were no longer available on Weibo.

Given the circumstance, things would die down in days.

As long as the public stopped talking about it, the issue would eventually fade away. Given how there was other interesting news that would gain attention on a daily basis, the people would soon find another compelling story to talk about.

Meanwhile, Shen Peichuan was still trying to figure out what was going on.

The captain had told him that he would be punished, but it was taking unusually long for the former to say how he would be punished.

“Captain Song, this is negligence on my part. I promise this won’t happen again. Is it okay if you let her go first?” Shen Peichuan inquired politely as he looked at Sang Yu from the corner of his eye.

He knew Captain Song did not want explanations. He had always focused on solving the issue rather than listening to excuses.

Upon hearing his request, Captain Song finally looked up and said sternly, “She’s involved in this, how can I just let her off the hook like this? By the way, how did you even meet such an eloquent girl?”

Just as Shen Peichuan was about to answer the question, the captain continued, “That being said, what she said is true. You’re both single and it’s totally okay for both of you to date. But you’ll have to keep it low profile. We serve the public, and hence, we should also set a good example.”

“Noted, captain,” Shen Peichuan answered quietly.

“Write me a report and hand it in tomorrow. Make sure you reflect on your mistake and mean what you write,” the captain added.

“Yes, sir,” Shen Peichuan responded.

“Alright, that’s all. You may leave,” Captain Song said. But before Shen Peichuan turned and left, the captain snapped his fingers and said, “Oh, this just occurred to me. I hope you’re aware of how old you are. Your girlfriend is still so young. I bet she’s still a freshman student! Make sure everything is low-key so I don’t have to deal with any more drama.”

“Yes, sir. And sir, do you happen to want some tea?” Shen Peichuan asked sheepishly.

“What tea? Get out!” the captain shouted and looked at his broken teacup.

Shen Peichuan smiled and bowed before leaving. He grabbed Sang Yu by the hand and rushed out of the office. *I'd better get out quick. Who knows what's gonna happen next?*

Captain Song grinned as he watched them leave. But his face changed in a split of a second and he ordered someone to come clean up the mess.

Sang Yu was still having a hard time processing what just happened. Things had taken a drastic turn in just a short time. "So what's the situation now? Are we off the hook?" she asked.

"Yeah," Shen Peichuan said, exhaling a long breath. He was glad that the whole matter was finally settled.

But he gave it a second thought and said, "Well, at least that's what I think."

Zong Jinghao and Su Zhan popped up in his mind. *It must be them.* Coincidentally, Shen Peichuan saw Su Zhan the moment he came out of the police station.

"It's your treat today," Su Zhan stated as he looked at the couple walking out hand in hand.

"Come on, enough PDA. We just settled a scandal!" he reminded them.

Hearing this, Shen Peichuan quickly let go of Sang Yu's hand.

Sang Yu glanced at him and lowered her head silently.

Shen Peichuan realized his action might have been hurtful and he tried clearing his throat to ease the tension.

Meanwhile, Su Zhan opened the car door for them before hopping in the driver's seat.

“What a day! Why don’t we call Jinghao to come along and have a meal with us?” Su Zhan suggested as he started the car.

“Sure, it’s on me!” Shen Peichuan’s voice came from the front passenger’s seat. He purposely sat in front, thinking that a young girl like Sang Yu would want to keep some distance.

Su Zhan looked at him from the driver’s seat and thought about how dumb his dear friend was. Sang Yu was young and she had everything written on her face. She obviously wanted to sit with Shen Peichuan, but Shen Peichuan was playing coy all of a sudden.

Su Zhan sighed and said, “Give a call to Jinghao then.”

Shen Peichuan took out his phone and dialed a number, but nobody picked up. He tried again to no avail.

He then tried calling his house and the office, but still, he could not reach Jinghao. Even Guan Jing was not reachable.

Su Zhan and Shen Peichuan were perplexed. They knew that Jinghao would never switch off his phone. Most importantly, ever since Lin Xinyan left, Zong Jinghao spent most of his time at his office. There was nowhere else he could be if he were not at work.

Where the hell is Zong Jinghao? He’s too old to go MIA for fun...

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 520

Zong Jinghao received a text from Qin Ya after he showered. She said that Lin Xinyan was going for a prenatal checkup the day after tomorrow. She also texted him the hospital's name and address.

Now that Qin Ya had already done her part, it would depend on Zong Jinghao what he wanted to do.

After Shen Peichuan gave her Zong Jinghao's number, Qin Ya texted him and asked him to keep her identity from Su Zhan. Zong Jinghao agreed, but in exchange, he wanted live updates on everything related to Lin Xinyan every day.

Qin Ya readily agreed to his condition. On one hand, she wanted to keep her identity a secret from Su Zhan; on the other, she hoped Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao could get back together.

Zong Jinghao decided he would definitely show up to Lin Xinyan's prenatal checkup. After all, Qin Ya gave him an early notice so that he could have time to prepare.

Zong Jinghao planned on going over for a few days, so he packed extra sets of clothes. He did not want his trip to be brief and hectic this time.

He pulled a few connections and managed to have everything planned out on the day of Lin Xinyan's appointment.

After sending the kids to school, Qin Ya and Lin Xinyan went to the hospital together.

Ever since Lin Xinyan got to C City, she had been visiting the same doctor at the same hospital.

Over at the hospital, the doctor gave Lin Xinyan a checklist of checkups that she needed to do for that day. It had been four months since she last visited and the doctor told her last time that she should come on an empty stomach for her next checkup in order to do the down syndrome screening test. She also had to do a 4D ultrasound to ensure there was nothing abnormal about the fetus.

The doctor had seen her medical record before and was familiar with her condition. On top of that, the doctor was a renowned obstetrician.

Lin Xinyan was confident that the doctor would do a good job.

“You’re four months into the pregnancy, but you’re still a little underweight. You have to rest more and make sure you maintain a healthy diet,” the doctor advised.

Lin Xinyan smiled and said, “I don’t usually gain weight.”

“You’d better keep this a secret or else many girls will get green-eyed.” The doctor chuckled.

Everyone was trying to lose weight these days, especially young women. It was their dream to never gain weight no matter how much they ate.

“This is the first time you’re doing a blood test. I’ll get a trainee doctor to go along with you,” the doctor said.

Lin Xinyan was surprised. She did not know that the hospital had such services.

But she thought it was unnecessary since Qin Ya was there with her. “It’s fine, doctor. My friend is here with me,” Lin Xinyan replied.

“This trainee doctor is still studying. Some clinical experience will be good for him,” the doctor said, smiling. In truth, she was asked to make sure Lin Xinyan agreed to have the trainee doctor follow her.

Lin Xinyan finally gave in and nodded. "Alright, thanks," she said with a smile.

"Don't mention it. In fact, I should be the one thanking you," the doctor responded with a grin.

Lin Xinyan looked at her with her eyes wide open. "Huh? Why? What do you have to thank me for?" she asked cluelessly.

At the same time, Qin Ya was staring at the trainee doctor who stood behind the obstetrician.

He was dressed in a white coat and a blue cap. It was impossible to see his face since he wore a mask and a pair of goggles.

If she did not know beforehand that Zong Jinghao knew about Lin Xinyan's checkup today, she would never have thought the trainee doctor she was staring at right now was him.

But from what the doctor said, Qin Ya could very well guess that it was Zong Jinghao from his height.

Luckily, he is all dressed up, otherwise, Lin Xinyan will definitely realize that it's him.

"I mean, there are not a lot of male doctors who want to be an obstetrician. Look at him, he's got himself all covered up because he's shy. I should give him a little more exposure," the doctor explained.

It wasn't until the doctor pointed towards the trainee doctor that Lin Xinyan realized that there was another person standing in the corner of the room all along.

Qin Ya took the list given by the doctor and helped Lin Xinyan up. "Alright, enough questions. Let's get going," she told Lin Xinyan.

Lin Xinyan looked at her and wondered if she really asked a lot of questions just now.

She was not aware of it and decided to ask her friend.

“Was I really asking too many questions?” she asked Qin Ya.

“Not really. I just don’t want you to waste any more time. You haven’t taken any breakfast, so we need to hurry and get everything done in order for you to eat,” Qin Ya answered. She helped Lin Xinyan to the door and said to the trainee doctor, “I’ll go settle the bill, make sure you take good care of her.”

Lin Xinyan wanted to call her friend back but Qin Ya left without losing a beat.

She looked at the trainee doctor shyly and said, “Sorry to trouble you.”

The trainee doctor gestured her to follow after him without saying a word. *Hmm, he must be really shy!* Lin Xinyan thought and shrugged her shoulders before following after him.

They were on the second floor, and the blood test department was on the first floor. But they could not take the elevator, nor could they use the escalator because it was out of service. They had no choice but to use the stairs instead.

Seeing Lin Xinyan was about to step down the flight of stairs, the trainee doctor reflexively held out his hand. Yet Lin Xinyan brushed off his hand because she felt uncomfortable. After all, the trainee doctor was a man and Lin Xinyan had no trouble walking on her own. Nevertheless, she soon realized she might have been too harsh on him, so she said, “I can walk on my own, there’s no need for you to help me.”

The trainee doctor seemed to have realized that his action was too brash, so he pulled back his hands and walked beside her slowly.

He followed her closely so he could catch her in case she missed a step.

Lin Xinyan walked down the stairs slowly and taxingly as she held on to the handrail.

After they reached the first floor, the trainee doctor walked in front of her and continued leading the way.

Lin Xinyan could not help but feel that he was too nice to her. In fact, he was so nice to the point that it made her feel uneasy.

She glanced behind her, hoping that Qin Ya would come back soon, but her friend was nowhere to be found. Left with no choice, Lin Xinyan withdrew her gaze and continued following the trainee doctor.

When they reached the blood test department, there was already a huge crowd. Everyone was lining up and waiting for their turn.

They needed the receipt so they could get a number, but Qin Ya was nowhere in sight.

Meanwhile, Qin Ya had thought that she could entrust Lin Xinyan to Zong Jinghao for the rest of the day, but it suddenly occurred to her that they needed the proof of payment, so she came to the blood test department in advance.

Just as Lin Xinyan was about to call her, Qin Ya waved at them and held out the receipt towards the trainee doctor. "Since you're here to get more experience, I'll just pass this to you," Qin Ya said, emphasizing the words "more experience" as if she was trying to tell him that childbearing was a Herculean task.

The trainee doctor shot her a glance and took the receipt. At the same time, Lin Xinyan reached for the receipt but she was too late. She accidentally brushed against his hand and retracted her hand instantly. She glared at Qin Ya and complained, "You're supposed to accompany me, but look at what you're doing now."

Can't you tell that I'm uncomfortable around him?

“What am I doing now? I’m gonna go get you some food so that you can eat right after you finish your checkup!” Qin Ya reminded her.

“It’s fine, we can grab something simple after we finish the checkup...” Lin Xinyan refused.

“You know what, I really can’t stand the smell of the hospital. I’d rather go buy you some food,” Qin Ya said.

Lin Xinyan knew Qin Ya had a hard time in the hospital herself. Back then, Qin Ya’s injury was serious and she spent such a long time in the hospital she was probably traumatized by the smell of disinfectant. With that thought, Lin Xinyan sighed and finally caved. She looked for an empty seat as she waited for the trainee doctor to come back with their number.

After passing the receipt to the nurse, the trainee doctor came back and stood behind Lin Xinyan.

Just then, another pregnant lady came and sat down beside Lin Xinyan. Her baby bump was much bigger and she was older than Lin Xinyan. She was very sociable and started talking to Lin Xinyan. “How long have you been pregnant?”

“About four months. What about you? Six or seven, I presume?” Lin Xinyan replied.

“Yep, seven months to be exact. Are you here alone? Where’s your husband?” the lady asked.

Lin Xinyan looked at her awkwardly and said, “He’s busy, I’m here with my friend instead.”

“My husband is also busy, but unlike you, I lost touch with most of my friends ever since I got married. I’m assuming this is your first child? You look really young!” the lady remarked.

Lin Xinyan looked at her tummy without saying another word. She was pregnant when she was eighteen, and gave birth to the twins when she was nineteen. She was now only in her early twenties, but this was already her third child.

Behind her, Zong Jinghao looked at her through his goggles. His emotion was securely hidden under his disguise.

Seeing that Lin Xinyan did not reply, the lady thought it was really her first child. "Are you doing C-section or natural birth?" she asked.

"Natural birth, I guess," Lin Xinyan said. She opted for natural birth when she was pregnant with Zong Yanxi and Zong Yanchen because their sizes were relatively small. But the process was still painful nonetheless.

"I'm going for C-section," the lady said in a serious tone.

"Why? Isn't natural birth better?" Lin Xinyan inquired.

"You might not know this because you're young. But it's better to go with C-section," the woman said.

Zong Jinghao leaned forward out of curiosity as the lady sat closer to Lin Xinyan and whispered, "I heard that after giving birth, your vagina gets loosened up. Your husband might find that less pleasurable, you know?"