

# Stealing Your Heart Chapter 976

Tawan might have inherited his title, but everyone looked up to him nonetheless.

He was a capable man, and everyone respected that.

In fact, they were more concerned about his lacking love life.

There used to be rumors of Sorn being an illegitimate child of his, but it was quickly dispelled by people who knew of his adoption.

However, the truth was that the people who spread those rumors knew perfectly well that Sorn was adopted; all they wanted to do was to remind Tawan of the fact that he was a mere human just like everyone else.

When Tawan appeared at the event with a female companion, it stirred up a huge commotion.

People approached them one after another for small talk, though it was obvious that they were there just to find out more about Zong Yanxi.

“Are you sure it’s a good idea to bring a foreigner to an event like this?” a man asked, glancing at Zong Yanxi every so often.

Tawan’s expression did not change. “Isn’t this just a birthday party?”

A royal birthday party was a birthday party nonetheless, so there were no restrictions as to who could accompany him to it.

The man smiled. “Everyone had thought that you weren’t interested in women, but it looks like you’re just not interested in Thai women.”

Zong Yanxi could not understand him, but she could tell that he was not being very polite towards her.

She could feel Tawan's body tensing up beside her, and she decided to intervene. Smiling sweetly at Tawan, she asked, "Can we go somewhere else? I would like some water."

"Alright," Tawan said. He excused himself and led Zong Yanxi to a table nearby loaded with various snacks and wine bottles. The flowers that lined the table glimmered under the soft moonlight.

Tawan glanced at Zong Yanxi in confusion and asked, "Are you sure you aren't fluent in Thai?"

"That's right," Zong Yanxi said honestly.

"Then how did you..."

"I can tell from his body language," Zong Yanxi said with a smirk.

Tawan fell silent.

*Can you read my mind then?*

"Lord Thitipoom," a beautiful woman headed their way said. She was clad in the clothes of a noblewoman, and despite her soft, supple skin, it was obvious that she was much older than them.

Her name was Saranta, and she was one of the King's royal consorts. She had been extremely beautiful in her youth, and her beauty remained even as she aged.

The King appointed her to be the emcee for the event, and he had even instructed her to make Tawan meet the princess in private in a bid to make them fall in love with each other.

Saranta figured that it would be an easy feat, but Zong Yanxi's appearance came as a massive shock to her.

*What now?*

She decided to figure out what Zong Yanxi's relationship with Tawan was for starters.

After all, there had been no news of Tawan going out for dates with any woman of late.

“Oh, what a surprise! I didn’t expect you to bring such a beautiful lady over today! May I ask how she’s related to you? I’ve never seen her before,” Saranta asked.

“She’s just a friend,” Tawan answered.

“Oh, really?” Saranta asked, not convinced. She glanced at the accessories on Zong Yanxi’s body.

“Only the marchioness of the Thitipoom family could wear this set of accessories. Are you sure she’s ‘just a friend’?” she continued, her smile unwavering.

In contrast to Saranta’s deep-set features, Zong Yanxi’s appearance gave off more of a gentle and tender vibe.

“We’re just friends,” Tawan repeated.

He did not want to attract unnecessary attention to Zong Yanxi, and neither did he want to become Saranta’s target.

He tried to distract Saranta from Zong Yanxi, but he knew that it would be difficult to hide Zong Yanxi from her prying eyes for the whole event.

*I’m sorry, Zong Yanxi...*

Saranta raised an eyebrow. “Oh, so she’s a guest? I could bring her around to meet some of the other ladies here tonight.”

She saw it as a chance to separate the two of them, and she went for it.

Tawan tried to turn her down. “She doesn’t speak Thai, so I don’t think she’ll be able to communicate with you or the others.”

Saranta frowned. “Can she play the piano?” she asked, determined to embarrass Zong Yanxi. “I don’t think she deserves to be your companion for the night if she doesn’t have any talents!”

Tawan narrowed his eyes.

Noticing his expression, Zong Yanxi tugged at his sleeve gently. "Does she want me to play the piano?"

Saranta had pointed at the grand piano across the room as she spoke, and Zong Yanxi could tell what she had meant by that.

Tawan clenched his fists. "Yeah..."

"Sure, I'll do it," Zong Yanxi said before Tawan could stop her. The last thing she wanted to see was Tawan getting into a fight with the woman standing before her, as it was pretty obvious that she came with a purpose.

She walked over to the piano with a skip in her step.

She only started to learn the piano when she was eight, after she heard her mother Lin Xinyan playing the piano.

She had ten years of experience under her belt, and even though she was not a professional pianist, her experience was more than enough to solve the issue she was facing at the moment.

*I must not embarrass Tawan!*

Sitting down before the grand piano, she rested her long, slender fingers on the keyboard and announced in Mandarin, "I will be playing a piano arrangement of Colorful Clouds Chase The Moon. Please enjoy."

She took a deep breath and began her performance. Slowly and steadily, she picked up her pace, and a beautiful melody began to weave its way through the hall.

As the music climaxed, everyone stopped what they had been doing and turned to watch her in awe.

Tawan was mesmerized. *I didn't know she could play the piano so well...*

He stared at her and admired how beautiful she looked onstage.

When she finished playing, Zong Yanxi stood up from the seat and smiled at Tawan. The latter walked over and reached out to help her off the stage.

He turned to the audience and announced, "This is our gift to the Princess."

Saranta gazed at Zong Yanxi from a corner. *Looks like I'll have to find some other way to embarrass her...there must be something that could stump her!*

"Would you like to take the stage for the first solo dance later on?" she asked Zong Yanxi with a smile.

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Amp ran over upon hearing Saranta's words. "Your Highness, allow me to take the lead! I've been taking dance lessons since young!"

She hated seeing Zong Yanxi getting all the attention, and she took Saranta's new request as yet another opportunity for Zong Yanxi to impress the guests.

She decided to seize it before Zong Yanxi could.

Saranta, however, was not very happy about it. *Is she crazy?*

Amp was completely ignorant of her true intentions, and Saranta's displeased look merely convinced her that her request was meant for Zong Yanxi to prove herself worthy. "I'm not lying, Your Highness! I'm better than her!" she protested, pointing at Zong Yanxi.

"I agree with Amp," Tawan said.

However, Saranta simply smiled. "I would prefer if she did the dance instead."

"She hurt her foot not too long ago, so I don't think she's fit for the dance," Tawan said. "Amp is the child of a marquis, so I think she's more suited to lead the dance."

Saranta fell silent.

Seeing her reaction, Amp nodded vehemently. "That's right! Besides, why are we letting a foreigner dance for the Princess?"

"Let Amp dance," a voice rang from behind them. They turned around to see the princess walking towards them, clad in a bright yellow gown and with Pongsom by her side.

Saranta glanced at Pongsom and frowned. "Greetings, Your Highness," she said, bowing politely.

In terms of status, the children of the Queen, including the Princess standing before them, ranked higher than the royal consorts.

Just like any aristocratic family, the royal consorts did not have much say in royal matters, and neither were they regarded as important members of the royal family.

As such, Saranta was not in a position to suggest otherwise when the Princess herself requested for Amp to lead the dance.

With that, it was decided that Amp was to lead the dance for that night.

Saranta had a word with the Princess before taking her leave.

The Princess walked over to Tawan to ask about Zong Yanxi's identity, to which he merely answered, "We're just friends."

The Princess smiled. "Don't worry. I won't pick you."

The Princess was more cute than pretty, with slightly tanned skin and an intelligent mind. She knew exactly why Tawan brought Zong Yanxi along for the party.

She turned around and glanced at Pongsom. "My father will satisfy him for sure."

After all, the King liked Pongsom, and he would approve of his marriage to the Princess as long as she raised the matter to him.

Pongsom and the Princess have had feelings for each other for some time already, so they made a tacit agreement way before the party was announced.

"You'll still be my wonderful big brother!" the Princess said, grinning cheekily at Tawan.

The Queen and Tawan's mother had been the best of friends, which meant that the Princess and Tawan met each other frequently for play dates when they were kids. The amount of time they spent with each other decreased after Tawan's mother's death, but the Princess treasured the fond memories of her play dates with Tawan as kids.

"She's a great girl. Treat her well," the Princess said before turning around and walking away.

Pongsom glared at his sister, who was completely ignorant of the fact that she had messed up Saranta's plans.

He dragged her away by the arm to stop her from creating even more trouble for Tawan and Zong Yanxi.

"By the way, what event is this?" Zong Yanxi asked. She could not understand what everyone was saying, but she could tell from their body language that it was no laughing matter.

"The Princess' birthday party," Tawan answered.

"So...why did you take me along?" Zong Yanxi asked without bothering to be tactful. "Are you scared of the Princess taking an interest in you?"

"That's right," Tawan confessed. "Apologies for that."

Zong Yanxi smiled. "It's fine."

She walked over to the table and picked up a glass of fruit juice.

Tawan followed her over. "Aren't you mad?"

Zong Yanxi shook her head. "Take it as a favor."

As the dance party commenced and the guests flocked to the dance floor, Tawan took Zong Yanxi to a quiet corner of the palace.

He had never talked about his private matters with Zong Yanxi before, but he figured that he was about time he came clean with her.



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His decision to talk about it was made on a whim.

As someone who had kept quiet for too long, it would take a while for him to truly open up to someone he trusted.

He had his duties to fulfil and people to protect, which meant that he did not have any time for himself.

In fact, every move of his would almost certainly bring about a considerable impact on everyone in the community, which in itself had plenty of risks.

“Thank you,” he said, both gratefully and apologetically.

I’m so sorry for getting you into so much trouble today...

Zong Yanxi, on the other hand, did not mind it a single bit. “Would you have chosen this life if you had the choice?” she asked all of a sudden.

“Of course I would have,” Tawan said without hesitating.

He cared more about the warmth and happiness he got to enjoy as part of the Thitipoom family than the riches and profits.

Zong Yanxi grinned, knowing full well why he answered that way. However, the flip side of the coin was that he had to deal with complex relationships.

Sometimes, he had no choice in who he had to appease.

She smiled at Tawan. “I pity you.”

Tawan was captivated by her dazzling smile.

At 11 P.M., the party finally drew to a close. Pongsom spent the entire dance segment with the Princess, which hinted to everyone that she had the most interest in him.

As Pongsom and the Princess twirled around on the dance floor, Amp was getting swarmed by her many admirers, making it difficult for her to talk to Tawan.

Besides the incident with Saranta, Tawan and Zong Yanxi managed to have a relatively peaceful time at the party that night.

However, they ran into trouble again when they were on their way home after the party.

Jiang Youqian had been sitting by the side of the road for the whole evening just to wait for Zong Yanxi's return.

When her car emerged from the distance, he ran over and threw himself in front of the car just before it could make a turn towards the courtyard of Tawan's mansion.

The headlights were on, and the car plate number matched the one he managed to memorize that afternoon. He was sure that Zong Yanxi was sitting inside.

"Yanxi, I need to talk to you," Jiang Youqian said, sticking out his arm stubbornly to block the car's path.

Zong Yanxi took one look at the person standing before the car and frowned.

Tawan hesitated before asking, "Do you want me to talk to him instead?"

Zong Yanxi shook her head. "It's fine. I'll talk to him myself."

Tawan pursed his lips together as Zong Yanxi alighted from the car and closed the door behind her. "Go home first," she told him.

The chauffeur glanced at Tawan, who gestured for him to drive off.

Jiang Youqian's eyes followed the car as it disappeared into the courtyard. When Zong Yanxi walked over to him, he asked, "Who's that man in the car just now?"

Zong Yanxi evaded his question completely. "Why are you here?"

"Who's that man?" Jiang Youqian repeated.

His goal was to convince Zong Yanxi to return to his brother's side, and Tawan's appearance caught him off guard.

"None of your business. Answer my question," Zong Yanxi said coldly. "If you're here for Jiang Mohan's sake, then there's nothing for us to talk about."

"Of course I'm here for my brother's sake!" Jiang Youqian exclaimed. "He hurt his leg recently, and he wants to reconcile with you. He promised that he'll change for the better, so why don't you just give him a chance?"

"Is that it? Alright then, goodbye," Zong Yanxi said before making a move to return to the mansion.

Jiang Youqian ran up to her and grabbed her by the arm. "Why are you so cruel?"

Zong Yanxi flung his hand away and scoffed. "We're divorced. I don't think I'm being cruel."

"You can always remarry each other!" Jiang Youqian insisted. "I'm sure it'll be easier than finding a new partner!"

"No way!" she cried, making Jiang Youqian raise an eyebrow. "Why? Is it because of that man?" he exclaimed, pointing a finger at the courtyard of the mansion.

To Jiang Youqian, Zong Yanxi was still the lovestruck girl who treasured Jiang Mohan wholeheartedly, and her sudden change in attitude shook him to the core.

"How could you? My brother loved you!" Jiang Youqian yelled, grabbing her arm again. "How could you betray him like that?"

"Let me go!" Zong Yanxi shrieked, trying to push him away to no avail.

"Why? Just why would you do such a thing?" Jiang Youqian repeated desperately.

"It doesn't matter! Let me go!" Zong Yanxi yelled, annoyed by his persistence.

"Tell me what's going on!" Jiang Youqian insisted. "I know just how much you loved my brother back then. What happened to you?"

Zong Yanxi calmed herself down and scoffed. "I did love him, and that's precisely why I married him. Do you know what happened after that?"

Jiang Youqian fell silent.

"I nearly died, don't you know that?" she questioned.

"I know," Jiang Youqian said. "I saw the news about the fire, and I thought you died! I'm really happy to see that you're still alive and well."

"Very good. Next question: do you know why I got a divorce?" she continued.

Jiang Youqian shook his head.

"It was because Jiang Mohan asked for it," she said.

Jiang Youqian stared at her disbelief.

"I don't think he truly loved me. He took advantage of my love for him to get revenge, and almost killed me in the process. In fact, did you know that I had been pregnant with his child when he brought up the topic of divorce? Don't you know how heartless he had been? I have no idea why you're so concerned about his relationship with me all of a sudden, but think about it: would you forgive someone for taking advantage of you and hurting you?" she questioned.

Jiang Youqian fell silent.

Why didn't I know about that?

Didn't they get married because they loved each other?

Didn't they get a divorce because they stopped loving each other?

Had it all been part of a plot?

I can't believe it...it's such a tough question to answer...

However, he reminded himself of his aim, and he puffed out his chest confidently. "My brother regrets everything now."

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Jiang Mohan frowned, silently waiting to hear what Jiang Youqian had to say.

On the other hand, Jiang Youqian was still piecing his words together in his mind, thinking of how to tell him in a tactful manner.

When Jiang Mohan was about to lose his patience, Jiang Youqian finally said, "Um, I'm in Thailand now."

"Why are you there?" Jiang Mohan immediately realized something. "Who allowed you to go there?"

"I wanted to help you! Also, I met Yanxi." Jiang Youqian was currently sitting under a street lamp outside the Thitipoom Residence.

Jiang Mohan gripped his phone, feeling inexplicably nervous as he waited to hear updates about Zong Yanxi.

"There's a Thai man with her, who looks like he's a big shot. They even went out together today. Yanxi dressed up really prettily. I think that they..."

He paused for a while before completing his sentence, "They might be dating."

Jiang Mohan narrowed his eyes. Isn't Gu Xian the one by her side?

Since when did a Thai man enter the picture?

"If you still want to win her back, act as quickly as possible. After all, her attitude is very resolute. It'll be quite a challenging feat if you want to win her back."

He lifted his head and glanced at the mansion. At this time, it was completely pitch-dark except for the light from the streetlamps. "She's living at his place."

Jiang Mohan suddenly felt his heart ache, as if someone had stabbed it with a dagger.

"In my opinion, this man isn't just an average rival. You must be careful." Jiang Youqian continued rambling on, oblivious to how Jiang Mohan must be feeling now. "When he stands together with Yanxi, they look quite compatible."

Before he could even complete his sentence, the call ended. Only then did he realize that he had said something inappropriate.

He wanted to call Jiang Mohan again to explain, but his line was busy.

Jiang Youqian slapped his mouth. Even if they look compatible, I shouldn't say it! After all, I'm supposed to be thinking from Jiang Mohan's perspective.

Even if that man is as exceptional as Jiang Mohan, I must only support my brother.

He's definitely angry after hearing what I said, right?

Jiang Youqian felt extremely frustrated with himself. Standing up, he paced around while dialing Jiang Mohan's number. It was already late in the night and he desperately needed to find a hotel to sleep in.

The call went through, but no one picked it up.

Is he truly mad now?

As he thought about it, he had an idea to call Nan Cheng. However, considering that it was already so late, he dispelled that thought. He would make the call tomorrow morning instead.

Back at home, Zong Yanxi laid the accessories out neatly, planning to return them to Tawan. She would leave tomorrow, so it was better for her to return them to him today. After all, it would be bad if she lost or damaged such valuable items.

Tawan stood beside the pond alone, gazing at the swimming fishes blankly.

His mind had already wandered off, so he was still oblivious even when Zong Yanxi walked towards him.

"It's so late already. Aren't you preparing to sleep?" Zong Yanxi walked towards him.

Returning to his senses, Tawan turned around and looked at her. She had changed out of the evening gown into some casual home clothes.

Zong Yanxi passed the accessory box to him. "I'm returning this to you."

Refusing to take it, Tawan insisted, "Actually, I..."

"Um..." She interrupted his words and pointed at a fish in the pond. "What's this fish?"

Tawan ignored her attempt at changing the topic. "My Grandma gave these accessories to my mother. Before she passed away, she instructed me to give them to the person I like. Hence, I'm giving them to you now."

The smile on Zong Yanxi's face froze. Tawan's words were so direct and honest that she was at a loss for how to reject him.

"Tawan..."

He interrupted again, "I heard that these accessories were crafted last century by European craftsmen. Although the designs may not be as fashionable now, they bore witness to the glorious history of my family."

"They're too valuable. I cannot accept them." As she spoke, she placed the box beside the pond and thanked him again. "Thank you for taking care of me for these few days."

With that, she turned around and left.

Tawan gazed at her. "Can you give me a reason?"

Stopping in her tracks, she explained, "I'm a woman who has been hurt; who has gone through both life and death. If I have not experienced all those, I'll definitely be moved by such an exceptional man like you confessing to me. However, I'll never date anyone anymore. Thank you for liking me."



Then, she strode away, leaving Tawan gazing at her back with a despondent look.

He wanted to persuade her further, but she kept evading him. After returning to her room, she closed her door and refused to talk to him anymore.

The next morning, Zong Yanxi woke up and packed her suitcase.

She even received a call from Zhuang Jiawen.

“When are you coming back? I, your little brother, am getting married.”

Holding the phone, Zong Yanxi replied, “If nothing goes wrong, I’ll reach tonight.”

“Are you leaving now?”

“Yeah. I wanted to fly back in the morning but there were no available tickets. Hence, I bought a later flight so I could reach home at night.”

“Okay. Call me after you arrive and I’ll pick you up.”

“Okay.”

“There’ll be no more accidents this time, right?”

Back in C City, he was standing in a famous dessert shop in Long Teng Plaza and talking to her on the phone.

“No,” assured Zong Yanxi.

“Okay, I’ll wait for you.”

“Okay.”

After hanging up the call, he pointed at the displays in the dessert shop. “I’d like this strawberry cake, chestnut pastry and this cranberry cookie. Please pack them up for me.”

The staff opened the glass cabinet, took out an exquisite box and said, “Okay.”

As they were going to have a wedding shoot soon, his fiancée was on a diet so she would look better in the pictures. Knowing that she loved the desserts here, he made a special trip to buy some back for her.

While he waited, he heard his fiancée's voice.

Glancing over to the direction of the voice, he spotted her standing at the shop's waiting area.

Shen Xinyao came to buy some desserts. However, she had been hesitating in front of the display counters for a long time. She really wanted to eat those cakes, but as she needed to wear the wedding gown soon and was afraid of gaining weight, she tried to resist that urge. Just when she was feeling conflicted, she bumped into two of her college classmates who were shopping there as well.

Exclaiming that they had not met her for ages, they insisted on her sitting down and having a chat with them. When she drinking some water, a classmate spotted the ring on her finger and asked, "Are you married?"

Placing her cup down, she swiftly moved her hand under the table, deliberately wanting to hide it. "Soon."

Noticing how quickly Sheng Xinyao hid her ring, Yang Zhenzhen, who always loved to compete with her ever since they were classmates, was certain that her ring was fake. She chuckled and said, "Your diamond ring is huge! Is it real or fake?"

As she spoke, she stretched her hand out. "My boyfriend bought this ring for me, which cost hundreds of thousands. If yours is authentic, it probably costs a couple million, right?"

Shen Xinyao had always kept a low profile. Back in school, not only was her grades exceptional, but she was also extremely pretty. She was hailed as the most beautiful girl in school, with flocks of men pursuing her. Hence, she attracted the envy and hatred of many girls.

Although Shen Peichuan was an extremely high-ranking officer, he kept a low profile too.

Shen Xinyao had never told her classmates about who her parents were. Thus, everyone thought that she was from an average family.

Yang Zhenzhen deliberately said, "Stretch your hand out for me to take a look. I can tell whether it's authentic."