

Chapter 1171: The Best Candidate

Jiang Yao waited for Lu Xingzhi to leave before she got dressed and went to the office. She did not know whether Lu Xingzhi would go to training or the office, so she was a little cautious when she passed by the office building. When she reached the chief's office, she saw him just as he was about to leave.

"Mrs. Lu, what are you doing here?" The man was startled when he saw someone who seemed to be sneaking around. When he realized that it was Lu Xingzhi's wife, he smiled. "Are you looking for Sergeant Lu?"

"No, Chief, I'm here for you." Jiang Yao straightened her back and smiled at the man. "I have an extremely important matter to discuss with you, Chief."

Jiang Yao emphasized the words extremely important. When the chief heard that, he raised his voice slightly and said, "Oh." Then, he invited Jiang Yao into his office.

When he saw Jiang Yao's secretive manner, the chief guessed that Lu Xingzhi probably did not know that Jiang Yao was there. She must not have wanted her husband to know about it.

So, after Jiang Yao entered his office, the chief closed the door and poured Jiang Yao a cup of hot water. Then, he said, "The weather is cold. Drink some hot water to warm your body. By the way, why are you looking for me?"

"Chief, I know that Xingzhi will partner with Chen Feitang for his mission. I don't trust Chen Feitang, and even Lu Xingzhi doesn't trust her. Furthermore, as Lu Xingzhi's wife, I object to Chen Feitang partnering with Lu Xingzhi to carry out the mission together." Jiang Yao took a step forward. "Chief, I won't beat around the bush. I'm here to tell you that I think I'm the best candidate to work with Lu Xingzhi!"

The chief sipped his tea again. When he heard Jiang Yao's words, he did not react, and the hot tea scalded his tongue.

However, he could not spit it back into the cup. That would be too unpleasant, so he could only endure it and swallow it. Then, the hot water scalded his throat.

After enduring it for a few seconds, he raised his hand and patted his chest. Then, he pointed at Jiang Yao. "No, Mrs. Lu, I don't quite understand what you're saying. You want to replace Chen Feitang as Lu Xingzhi's partner. I did not hear that wrongly, right? Is that what you mean?"

Jiang Yao nodded solemnly. "Yes, that's what I meant! Chief, I don't want to brag, but I don't think there's anything I can't do compared to Chen Feitang. As a partner with Lu Xingzhi, I think that I'm more suitable than anyone else for a mission like this. There's no need for us to pretend to be a couple in this undercover mission."

Without waiting for the chief to ask, Jiang Yao immediately said, "Trust. I have that with Lu Xingzhi. We have a tacit understanding. We're husband and wife. No one has all that better than us."

"There are things other than trust and tacit understanding in a mission; there are also many other equally important abilities." The chief rubbed his brows; he had a headache. He knew that Lu Xingzhi and his wife were at odds with Chen Feitang. When he learned that Lu Xingzhi would be partnered with Chen Feitang in the mission, he negotiated with the other person in charge to change Lu Xingzhi's

partner. The other party said they would try to make a new arrangement; they would choose another female soldier for the mission.

The bureau chief thought that the matter was solved then.

However, Lu Xingzhi's wife had gone to him and announced that she wanted to be Lu Xingzhi's partner. What had happened? That was the first time the bureau chief had met a family member who had such a request in the duration that he had been in the army.

Chapter 1172: Persuasion

"I know what you mean, Chief," Jiang Yao said confidently. "First and foremost, a spy's identity requires not only psychological attributes, but also acting skills and the ability to adapt. Of course, it is also necessary to be able to defend yourself and support your partner in completing tasks and objectives. Anyone who looks at me will think that I am an unarmed and weak lady with no defenses. I have an inherent advantage that other soldiers do not have."

"Yes, continue." The bureau chief became interested when he heard that Jiang Yao understood everything; she sounded so confident. He did not interrupt Jiang Yao and let her finish.

"My marksmanship and my skills are not bad. Lu Xingzhi taught all of those personally. You should know that I learned marksmanship in the army when I visited him last time. He even praised me for it. My physical strength is comparable to that of a regular female soldier. Most significantly, I am a medical professional. I am capable of handling any emergency. Furthermore, the importance of being a spy is to adapt to the situation rather than to fight. I must be quick-witted to obtain relevant information and relay it to the organization."

Even though the chief initially believed Jiang Yao's self-recommendation was ludicrous, he changed his mind after hearing Jiang Yao's statements.

He gazed at Jiang Yao's tiny face; it was the size of his palm. He had to accept that Jiang Yao was right about one thing. Her physical appearance gave her an advantage. People would mistake her for a delicate young lady based on her appearance.

The chief had also learned that Lu Xingzhi had personally taught his wife to shoot. Sergeant Lu had also praised his wife's marksmanship.

Jiang Yao had also persuaded the bureau chief on another point. The trust and tacit understanding between her and Lu Xingzhi were incomparable. The most important thing was her medical skills. Perhaps her medical skills would be of great help in the field.

However, the bureau chief remained rational. Those advantages did not mean that Jiang Yao would not become a burden to Lu Xingzhi in his actions.

Jiang Yao waited for a long time but did not receive an answer from the bureau chief. When she saw the bureau chief's brows relaxed, she frowned again. She guessed that the bureau chief was still worried about her.

“You can test me. If I pass your test, then you can put it in your report that I am the best partner for Lu Xingzhi!” Jiang Yao was brimming with energy. “I can do it all, whether it is physical fitness, adaptability, or marksmanship!”

Jiang Yao gritted her teeth and stomped her feet when she noticed the bureau chief’s hesitation. She said, “Chief, think carefully. At that moment, Lu Xingzhi will have to pretend to be married to another woman! With his cold face, who do you think will believe him if he pretends to be married to another woman? Unless you arrange for him to act alone or get him a sister instead!”

Jiang Yao’s words amused the bureau chief. “Sergeant Lu has always been very dedicated and responsible for every mission.”

“Is he also responsible for the intimate interactions he has with other women? There’s nothing to lose if you just consider it. You can test me. If I pass, it’ll be beneficial for the mission. If I fail, then I’ll never mention such things to make things difficult for you again!”

Jiang Yao almost broke her tongue before she finally got approval from the chief. He asked for her phone number before telling her to go home and wait for the call to attend her test. Jiang Yao felt satisfied as she left the chief’s office.

Chapter 1173: Buy Me A Present

Jiang Yao returned home and waited for the chief’s call. She waited until it was almost noon before it finally arrived. Jiang Yao began to look forward to the time that the chief had set aside for her.

It was the day after the next, which was the day after Lu Xingzhi’s birthday.

She seemed to need a reason to deceive Lu Xingzhi ahead of time. She could not let Lu Xingzhi figure out her scheme.

Lu Xingzhi would definitely go home to cook at midday if Jiang Yao was at home. Even though his lunch break was brief and he could opt to bring it back from the cafeteria, Lu Xingzhi did not mind the hassle and went home to cook every day.

They cooked pretty quickly; there were two dishes and a soup. Lu Xingzhi’s cooking abilities improved all the time. He could satisfy Jiang Yao’s appetite with one meat and one vegetable dish.

“I’m going to the city with Mrs. Lin tomorrow morning.” Jiang Yao drank the soup and looked at Lu Xingzhi as she talked about her plans for the next day. “Do you want Colonel Lin and the others to come over for dinner? If so, I’ll bring more food back from the city tomorrow.”

“No need.”

Lu Xingzhi shook his head. He did not intend to let anyone disturb him and Jiang Yao. He had hoped that there were only the two of them during the New Year, and he had hoped for the same on his birthday.

“So you don’t have to go to the city to buy groceries,” Lu Xingzhi said. “We still have many in the fridge. When Mom and Dad were here, they also brought a lot of bacon from home. They were all frozen on the balcony.”

In the north, the temperature could be as low as minus 10 to 20 degrees Celsius in winter, so there was no need to use the fridge. The balcony was a natural refrigerator, so it was convenient to freeze everything there.

For example, the family members in the army who lived in a courtyard would freeze their new year's vegetables and meat in the yard to keep them until the weather warmed.

"I still have to go. I have something to do." Jiang Yao shook her head. "I'll try to be quick and be back at noon. Otherwise, I might not be back for lunch."

Lu Xingzhi's expression froze. He asked, "Are you going to buy me a present?"

"Perhaps."

Jiang Yao giggled; she did not say that she was going to Mrs. Lin's mother's house to use their oven to make a birthday cake for him.

When she looked up, Lu Xingzhi's expression did not look great. However, Jiang Yao's smile grew deeper. That guy probably thought she was going to the city to buy him a present at the last minute, and he was unhappy about it.

At that moment, he had forgotten that she had hidden the gift.

Lu Xingzhi did not say anything. After a few seconds, he said, "Take Moe with you. When you get to the city, let Big Ke and Ah Lu follow you to protect you."

Jiang Yao nodded. Then, she lowered her head and ate her food seriously.

Lu Xingzhi seemed a little busy recently. After he finished eating and washing the dishes, he went into the study. Jiang Yao did not know what he was busy with, but she respected and understood his work. When he was busy in the study, she would not disturb him. Instead, she read and did her homework in the bedroom.

Lu Xingzhi was on the phone in the study room with someone. He was discussing the two Xie sisters in Ping City—Madam Cheng and Mrs. Sun.

"Young Master Lu, I took photos of Madam Cheng and Mrs. Sun when they were young and asked about them with the locals. Everyone said they were the fool's wife, but no one could tell that they were two different people. I even got the wife's name—Xie Qiuran. So it must be Mrs. Sun." The man on the phone paused and said, "The locals said that they heard Xie Qiuran mention her father before, but they had never heard about her other family members. They thought Xie Qiuran only had her father."

Chapter 1174: Closer To The Truth

"I asked elderly about the fool's daughter in private. Two of them said they saw the old woman carrying the child out into the mountains with their own eyes. When she came back, the old woman was alone. The old woman had carried the child, and she said that she had buried the child alive, so it must be true. At that time, it was very common for people to give away their daughters, so they did not feel like it was wrong. They just sighed about it. It was still relatively rare to throw one's daughter away. Most of them would keep their first daughter, but they would give the subsequent daughters away."

That person did not say anything else, but people still scolded the fool's mother. They had seen people give their children away or left them by the roadside. No one had ever seen a grandmother who would be so cruel as to bury her grandchild alive.

"Have you returned to Ping City to investigate?" Lu Xingzhi was not surprised at all. After hearing the news, he only felt that it was as he had expected.

"Yes," the person on the other side said. "I found the Xies' old neighbors and investigated the two Xie sisters. There are many suspicious points."

"Tell me." Lu Xingzhi stood by the window; the wind blew as he focused his attention on the door. He was afraid that Jiang Yao would come in at that time, so he needed to keep an eye on whether she was near the study.

"Their old neighbors said that although Xie Qiuxiang and Xie Qiuran are twin sisters, Xie Qiuxiang had always been more talkative than Xie Qiuran since she was young. Xie Qiuran had always been quiet. She liked to read, learned to write from her father, learned to play the piano, draw, and so on. Xie Qiuxiang was close to her mother, and Xie Qiuran was closer to her father. Xie Qiuxiang was supposed to be sent to the countryside as an educated youth, but she was already engaged at that time. Mrs. Xie decided to let Xie Qiuran go to the countryside instead. It seemed like Mrs. Xie favored Xie Qiuxiang. Before Xie Qiuran went to the countryside, her relationship with her mother had turned cold.

"After Xie Qiuran went to the countryside, she only wrote letters and contacted her father. Occasionally, she would call him. Her father was worried that his daughter would suffer in the countryside, so he would send money to her. When her mother found out, she quarreled with her husband. She said that her eldest daughter, Xie Qiuran, was getting married, and the family was tight on money. He also subsidized her youngest daughter, who had almost no money in the countryside. Therefore, her mother wrote a letter to scold Xie Qiuran for thinking about the family's money all day long."

"The neighbors said that if it weren't for the fact that the two sisters were twins and looked the same, and one of the neighborhood nurses had helped deliver them when they were born, they would have suspected that the family had picked Xie Qiuran from the roadside. Mrs. Xie's treatment of her two daughters was worlds apart."

"Is Mrs. Xie still alive?" Lu Xingzhi asked.

"Yes, she's still quite healthy. She lives with her son-in-law and his family."

"Continue." Lu Xingzhi raised his eyebrows and nodded.

"After Xie Qiuran went to the countryside for a few years, she was about to be transferred home. However, Xie Qiuran called her family and told them she wanted to marry a man she knew there. Mr. Xie asked about the man's conditions. The neighbors said Mr. Xie thought that the man's conditions were too poor and not good enough for his daughter. He insisted that his daughter go home. However, Xie Qiuran was stubborn and refused to listen to his advice. She insisted on marrying that man. Because of that, Mr. Xie threatened to disown his daughter. From then on, Xie Qiuran did not contact her family anymore."

Chapter 1175: Incredible

When they were asked about the Xie family's history, the neighbors sighed. After Xie Qiuran severed ties with her family, Mr. Xie frequently lamented that neither of his two daughters had married the right person.

"Xie Qiuran returned to Ping City in her third year of marriage. The Xie family had moved, but Xie Qiuran did not know that. She had to look for their old neighbors to find her family's new home. She also learned from the neighbors that Mr. Xie had passed away in the spring of her second year of marriage. Those neighbors realized that no one had informed Xie Qiuran of Mr. Xie's passing when she went to the Xie family to quarrel with her eldest sister and mother. At first, the neighbors thought that Xie Qiuran was heartless and ashamed of Mr. Xie's love for her. Later, they found out that it was not Xie Qiuran who was heartless and did not come back to see her father off, but that her mother and sister did not inform her of her father's passing. They treated Xie Qiuran as an outsider."

"Did you find out what happened to Xie Qiuxiang when she was in prison?" Lu Xingzhi did not care that Xie Qiuxiang and Xie Qiuxiang were not loved by their parents. He only cared about Jiang Yao.

"I've found out everything." The person on the phone increased his speed. "Coincidentally, when Xie Qiuxiang returned to the Xie family, she was in the middle of a lawsuit. Xie Qiuxiang's husband was violent and often beat her until she was covered in bruises. During one of their struggles, Xie Qiuxiang accidentally killed her husband. She returned to the Xie family for about a week before she was imprisoned and sentenced to jail.

"Of course, the neighbors were surprised with Mrs. Xie's attitude. At first, when the murder was exposed, Mrs. Xie begged for help everywhere. She said that Xie Qiuxiang was innocent and that her husband deserved it. If the police wanted to arrest Xie Qiuxiang and put her in jail, she would hang herself in the police station. Later, when Xie Qiuxiang was imprisoned, Mrs. Xie changed her mind. She said that the Xie family could not tolerate a murderer for a daughter. After Xie Qiuxiang was sentenced, she even said that she would disown her. She was too ashamed to have such a murderer for a daughter.

"Mrs. Xie had a grudge against Xie Qiuran. Did she treat her daughter better after Xie Qiuxiang went to prison?" Lu Xingzhi asked with a snort.

"You've guessed correctly, Young Master Lu." The person on the other side was pleasantly surprised. "That's true. After Xie Qiuxiang was imprisoned, Mrs. Xie and Xie Qiuran's relationship improved so much that no one would believe it. They stayed in the same house, and Qiuxiang was filial toward her mother. They chatted and laughed; their relationship seemed extremely good."

After a pause, that person continued to say, "Because it was such a big change, the neighbors felt that it was strange. Some people even said that Mrs. Xie might have asked Xie Qiuran to go to prison on behalf of Xie Qiuxiang. The two sisters looked so much alike that even their figures were similar. Some old neighbors even said they heard Mrs. Xie address Xie Qiuran as Big Girl in the Xie family's courtyard. Xie Qiuran even responded very naturally, but in fact, Big Girl was Xie Qiuxiang's nickname."

"Does Xie Qiuxiang and her ex-husband have a child?" Lu Xingzhi was not surprised by that at all. Those results were in line with the neighbors' speculation.

“She has a daughter. What a coincidence! Her daughter and Xie Qiuran’s daughter were born only about a month apart. After Xie Qiuxiang was imprisoned, Xie Qiuxiang’s ex-husband’s family went to the Xie family to ask for the child. However, Mrs. Xie said that the child had died of illness.”

Chapter 1176: Who’s On The Phone?

What everyone found strange was Xie Qiuxiang’s ex-husband’s family’s attitude. “Xie Qiuxiang’s ex-husband’s family did not make a fuss either. They seemed to think that it was very normal. After they got an answer, they left quietly. More than a month later, Xie Qiuran had a baby girl by her side. Xie Qiuran’s mother and Xie Qiuran told outsiders that it was Xie Qiuran’s daughter; she had brought her back from the countryside. About half a year later, someone introduced Xie Qiuran to her current husband. Not long after that, the two of them got married.”

After that, Xie Qiuran’s life progressed quite smoothly. Her husband was considerate and generous to others. He treated her daughter as his own. Xie Qiuran’s mother took care of the child without any complaint. She was also filial to her mother and brought her home to live with them.

The only problem she had was her daughter’s health. Not long after she married Professor Sun, her daughter was diagnosed with congenital heart disease. Professor Sun spent a lot of money to pay for his stepdaughter’s illness.

Professor Sun treated his stepdaughter like his own daughter. He even spent money on sending her abroad to study.

The Sun family’s relatives and friends had only good things to say about Sun Xiaoshan. They said that the girl was a well-behaved, sensible, and filial child. Her academic results were excellent. If it were not for her health, she would have a promising future.

The Sun family’s relatives and friends would praise Sun Xiaoshan and say that she was as sensible and filial as her mother, Xie Qiuran. Back then, Xie Qiuran’s mother treated her like dirt, but after her eldest sister was imprisoned, her mother did not have anyone else to rely on. She put aside their differences and took care of her mother.

After Lu Xingzhi heard that, he hung up the phone silently. The night breeze was cold, but it would not cool his mood.

He was worried. All those investigations showed that his initial guess had been correct.

Xie Qiuran was not the real Xie Qiuran, but the Xie Qiuxiang who should have been in prison.

If she believed that Jiang Yao was her sister’s daughter, she would send the hair samples for a test.

Xie Qiuran would have hated that idiot and his mother; she would not go back to look for them in that lifetime, let alone just to get his blood sample. If she were Xie Qiuran, she would have done it for the sake of finding her daughter and not for her daughter to have a father.

Lu Xingzhi thought to himself; hopefully, Jiang Yao would never need to know that secret.

Then, Lu Xingzhi called Liang Yueze in Jindo City.

It was still early, and Liang Yueze was at the Liang family home. When he received Lu Xingzhi's call, he was reprimanded by Mr. and Mrs. Liang because he had already informed his family about his divorce from Luo Ruoran. Luo Ruoran had already bought her ticket to go abroad. She would leave with Gu Haoyu.

Liang Yueze did not ask about it, but he guessed that Luo Ruoran would probably be with Gu Haoyu in the future.

"Who is it?" When she heard Liang Yueze's phone ring, Mrs. Liang stopped and asked.

"It's Lu Xingzhi," Liang Yueze replied.

"Then answer it first." Mrs. Liang sat down and took a sip of her tea. Then she turned around to look at her husband before looking at Liang Yuekai, their eldest son and sighed.

"Mom, it is what it is. It's useless for you to get angry. Yueze is not a child. The two of them probably have their own reasons for making that decision." Liang Yuekai's wife comforted her mother-in-law gently.

Chapter 1177: Are You Seeing Her Off?

"Of course, I'm angry. I asked Ruoran, but she did not say why. I asked Yueze, but Yueze also kept it a secret. They were still fine before the New Year; then, suddenly, he told me that they are getting a divorce. It's like they think marriage is child's play!" Mrs. Liang rubbed her eyebrows, then looked at her eldest daughter-in-law and said, "You and Yuekai have been married for many years. When are you going to have a child? Your father's colleague has been a grandparent for many years. His older grandson is about to graduate from primary school."

After Mrs. Liang finished asking, she saw that her eldest daughter-in-law had fallen silent. She sighed a few times in her heart.

Her married children did not give her any peace of mind. The husband and wife were always in harmony with each other. When an elderly like her asked about grandchildren, her daughter-in-law would stay silent, and her son would say nothing as well.

Mrs. Liang grumbled in her heart. The two of them had been married for so many years, yet they did not have children. Were they also planning to get a divorce whenever there was a chance? Perhaps they wanted to get divorced at any time, so they did not want the burden of having children.

Liang Yueze pretended as if he did not hear his mother's words and picked up the phone. He praised Lu Xingzhi for his excellent timing.

"What is it?" Liang Yueze knew Lu Xingzhi well. He was different from Zhou Weiqi and Chen Xuyao. He would not call for a chat because he had nothing better to do. Therefore, it must have been something important.

"A person called Xie Qiuran is doing a paternity test at the Jindo City hospital; please help me stop him." Lu Xingzhi and Liang Yueze did not beat around the bush.

"Okay." Liang Yueze immediately agreed. After thinking for a while, he said, "Master Cheng has already taken Madam Cheng abroad. He probably won't be back for a while."

"I know." Lu Xingzhi's people were watching Master Cheng's movements, or rather, they were watching Madam Cheng.

Lu Xingzhi had investigated Madam Cheng's condition after that. It was very serious, indeed. No wonder Jiang Yao told Master Cheng to prepare for her funeral. However, at that time, Lu Xingzhi had hoped that Madam Cheng would do well and hold on for a little longer. He wanted to take the time to arrange some things and investigate some matters.

Even though Liang Yueze was curious about why Lu Xingzhi wanted him to help stop Xie Qiuran's paternity test, Lu Xingzhi did not intend to explain, so he did not ask further.

"Has Ruoran contacted Jiang Yao?" Liang Yueze suddenly asked, "Her flight is the day after tomorrow. Is Jiang Yao going to see her off?"

"No." Lu Xingzhi shook his head. If she did, Jiang Yao would definitely tell him. She had not said anything about that, which meant that Jiang Yao did not know when Luo Ruoran would leave.

"I got it." Liang Yueze nodded and hung up the phone.

Mrs. Liang waited for Liang Yueze to hang up the phone before continuing to ask, "Ruoran is leaving. Are you seeing her off?"

"No." Liang Yueze rejected it without hesitation.

"I heard Ruoran's mother say that she wouldn't be back for a long time. She's there to expand the company's overseas market. Once she starts working, she might not come back for a few years, like her mother said." Mrs. Liang sighed.

"I know." Liang Yueze nodded.

"Since you know that—" Why won't he send her off? Mrs. Liang wanted to know, but she did not ask that question, especially when she saw Liang Yueze's expressionless face. She felt helpless. That was probably the reason Luo Ruoran wanted to divorce her son. There were not many girls who could stand that kind of husband who was always expressionless.

Chapter 1178: Warm Your Bed

Even Lu Xingzhi, who used to resemble Liang Yueze as if they were the same person, became a different person when he got married. Mrs. Liang had seen Lu Xingzhi and Jiang Yao together. He had only eyes for his wife.

It was a pity that Liang Yueze was not similar to Lu Xingzhi in that regard.

After providing Liang Yueze an explanation over the phone, Lu Xingzhi worked in the study for a few hours before returning to his bedroom.

Jiang Yao had already showered and was lying on the bed, reading a book. Her eyes brightened up when she heard him open the door and go in. "Are you done? Are you particularly busy during these days because of the mission?"

“There is also the issue of work transfer.” Lu Xingzhi agreed with a nod. “If you are tired, go to bed first. I’m going to take a shower.”

“I’ll wait for you!” Jiang Yao smiled gently and patted the empty space beside her. “I’ll warm your bed.”

There was, in fact, a heater in the house. Even if they went to bed at that time, it would not feel cold. However, Lu Xingzhi lacked the courage to expose Jiang Yao’s adoring demeanor. Instead, he approached her and kissed her. He took his clothes and went into the restroom after that.

Jiang Yao stared at the alarm clock again when Lu Xingzhi went into the bathroom. It was 11:40 pm already. Lu Xingzhi took only five minutes to shower, and he was out of there ten minutes later.

She wanted to pester Lu Xingzhi for ten minutes and then wish him a happy birthday as soon as it was midnight.

The gift she had planned to give him was already stashed beneath the bed. She would pull it out and present it to him once she had wished him a happy birthday.

It was not easy for her to hide it from him for so long. Jiang Yao was a little excited. She looked forward to Lu Xingzhi’s expression when he saw the birthday present she had for him.

When Lu Xingzhi emerged from the restroom, he was already dressed in his pajamas. Jiang Yao, lying on the bed and tracking his body with her eyes, seemed to be staring at him. He did not waste any time. He drew the cover and sat down before he pulled his young wife into his arms.

Her body was warm and soft. Perhaps it was because of her profession, Jiang Yao did not like to use perfume. She did not like having such a noticeable smell on her body. Therefore, even the shampoo and shower gel that she used had only a faint lemon scent.

However, Lu Xingzhi liked the smell of her body. It made him feel incredibly comfortable.

“Did you have a dull night?” Lu Xingzhi looked at Jiang Yao, who was not sleepy, and asked in a low voice.

Jiang Yao shook her head and found a topic to chat with him. “They will change your partner for your mission, right? Zhou Junmin is looking forward to having a beautiful female soldier as his partner. What about you? What kind of person do you want your partner to be? Have you ever gone on missions with someone who pretended to be a couple?”

“No.” That answer not only meant that he had never been on a mission where they had to pretend to be a couple, it also meant that he had never fantasized about his partner.

To him, a partner in a mission, whether beautiful or ugly, regardless of gender, was just a comrade.

It was just like when he was on a mission with Chen Feitang a few years ago; she was only his comrade back then. She was not even a junior. At that time, Chen Feitang was in charge of covering for him. However, Lu Xingzhi felt that he could still carry out the mission well without her.

“Go to Tianjin City tomorrow and come back early,” Lu Xingzhi instructed. Then, he turned around and pressed Jiang Yao under his body. After Jiang Yao nodded, he looked at her lips in satisfaction.

Chapter 1179: Happy Birthday

“Oh...” Jiang Yao knew that Lu Xingzhi was full of energy when she saw his posture, but it was not even midnight yet. She still had two things to do then!

She pushed the man off her and turned to look at the alarm clock on the bedside table. Three minutes to midnight. She smiled at Lu Xingzhi and said, “Let’s chat.”

Lu Xingzhi noticed Jiang Yao looking at the clock, but he did not understand why she would do that. When he heard that she wanted to chat, he grunted in acknowledgment, but he still pressed her down on the bed. His hands slid into her pajamas.

“Let’s chat. You talk, and I’ll listen.”

She was dumbfounded. Chat? Perhaps they should talk about how they need to speak in a serious manner?

Or whether he could take his hands out and place them somewhere else properly?

Or whether he could disperse all the sperm worms in his brain?

Or perhaps about how a hooligan should speak in a serious manner! They should have a proper talk!

Jiang Yao kicked him off her body. Then, she reached out to rearrange the buttons on her pajamas and covered herself with the blanket. Only then did she turn around and look at Lu Xingzhi, who had already laid back down.

His expression did not look good. He was not surprised at all.

Something had towered somewhere; his face was full of unsatisfied desire.

He was not happy.

“You’re quite strong.” A few seconds later, Lu Xingzhi complimented Jiang Yao. He did not give up and pushed her back on the bed again.

He wanted to prevent Jiang Yao from kicking him again, so he used a method to suppress her firmly.

“Did you want to chat? Are you not talking anymore? Are you starting a fight?”

After a few minutes of that back and forth, Jiang Yao looked at the alarm clock on the bedside table and saw that the time had jumped to midnight sharp.

She returned her gaze to the man who was like a mountain on top of her. She giggled in her heart as she noticed him staring at her with vigilance as if he was frightened she would kick him again. Then she wrapped her arms around Lu Xingzhi’s neck and drew his face in front of her. She stuck her head out and kissed him on the lips.

“It’s midnight! Happy Birthday, Hubby!”

After that, Jiang Yao looked at the stunned Lu Xingzhi with a grin. Then, she pointed at the alarm clock and said, “I’m the first person to wish you a happy birthday! From now on, we’ll celebrate your birthday together every year! I want to always be the first person to wish you a happy birthday!”

“You waited for me to come to bed and kept looking at the clock. Is this why you wanted to talk to me?” Lu Xingzhi did not quite understand what had happened.

He had never thought Jiang Yao could be so charming. She smiled like a flower beneath him, without any desire, and simply stared at him.

The most lovely speech he had ever heard was one in which she wished him a happy birthday.

She called him Hubby and said she wanted to be the first to wish him a happy birthday.

For the rest of her life.

“Are you touched?” Jiang Yao raised her hand and touched Lu Xingzhi’s face. “Get off me first. I’ll get your present.”

Lu Xingzhi’s actions were a few steps slower, but he still sat up and pulled Jiang Yao upward. “Go get it.”

Obviously, he could not wait to get her gift. He could not wait to leave the small tent behind.

Chapter 1180: Treat It Like Treasure

“Okay.” Jiang Yao nodded. She was too lazy to get out of bed, so she knelt on the edge of the bed. She bent down and reached under the bed to touch it. Then, she took out a box that she had hidden inside earlier.

Jiang Yao bought the box in the city. It was a wonderful and exquisite iron box. It also had a very retro style. She held the box in her arms, then turned around to look at Lu Xingzhi. She pushed the iron box toward Lu Xingzhi and said, “This is my birthday present to you. This is the first one. I’ll give one to you every year from now onward. You must take good care of it.”

Lu Xingzhi took the iron box and held it as Jiang Yao did. He weighed it and found that it was not heavy. Under Jiang Yao’s expectant gaze, he slowly opened the box.

The moment he saw the iron box, Lu Xingzhi could not guess what was inside.

However, he did not expect to see rows and rows of handmade paper cranes when he opened it. He estimated that there were about 1,001 of them. One of them was huge; it was placed on top of the other small paper cranes. It was like a tyrant.

“How long have you folded these?” Lu Xingzhi picked up the largest paper crane and looked at it. Then, he put it back and reached out to take Jiang Yao’s hand. “Is it tiring to fold so many?”

Jiang Yao shook her head and asked, “Do you like it?”

She was a little worried that that gift would disappoint Lu Xingzhi. Fortunately, she only saw joy in his eyes. She did not see any other emotions.

“Yes.” Lu Xingzhi nodded. She had prepared such a thoughtful gift. How could he not like the paper cranes that she had folded with her own hands?

He would treat them as treasures.

No, that was a priceless treasure to him. It was a treasure that could not be exchanged for gold.

He would hide it well. In the future, he would give her other gifts. He would put them together every year for his birthday. When they got older, they would savor those gifts again.

“Yaoyao, I like it very much.” He had liked everything that she had given him, just like how much he liked her.

That was a surprise, but it was also a joy. He knew that she had spent so much time and energy preparing that gift for him. In fact, she had looked forward to his birthday, right?

It was his and Jiang Yao’s first birthday together. She said that she would be the first person to wish him. She gave him a gift that was filled with her heart. More importantly, she would be by his side for every birthday. From then onward, he would no longer be alone in bed. He no longer needed to lie on the double bed that belonged to both of them and imagined what life would be like with her by his side.

He had achieved that; all his wishes had been fulfilled.

All that was missing was a child that belonged to both of them.

Jiang Yao realized that Lu Xingzhi had not discovered the other surprises hidden in the paper cranes, so she did not remind him. She watched him cover the box again, then carefully carried it out of bed. She watched him leave the bedroom and hid the box in his study.

She did not know when he would discover the little secrets hidden in the thousand paper cranes.

After Lu Xingzhi returned, he immediately threw his wife down onto the bed. He had received his birthday wish and present. The surprise and joy of the night filled his heart with warmth.

Birthdays did not mean much to him in the past, but there was a different expectation from then onward.

He had her presence, her companionship, and most importantly, her heart.