

# Stealing Your Heart Chapter 201

Su Zhan began to get nervous. Qin Ya was close to Lin Xinyan, so how was he going to explain this to her?

“Don’t cry,” Su Zhan said walking over to Qin Ya and putting a hand on her shoulder. She pushed it away immediately. “Get away from me! Don’t let me see you again, you disgusting bastard!”

The more she thought about last night, the more her stomach churned and her body shook.

Su Zhan’s expression shifted for a second, though he managed to stop his temper from flaring up. Indeed, as a man, he wouldn’t be on the losing end.

After all, this was Qin Ya’s first time, not his.

When a woman’s most important treasure gets taken away from her, it made sense for her to get distraught over it.

“She was outside, and she just knocked,” Su Zhan told her in an attempt to calm her down so that they could deal with their current predicament.

Qin Ya’s cries stopped abruptly as she raised her swollen eyes to look at him. “How?”

This is so shameful!

She buried herself in the sheets, wishing that the ground would just open up and swallow her right now.

“Don’t panic,” Su Zhan said, trying even harder to calm her down. “Why don’t we pretend that we’re dating?”

That would be much better than having their one-night stand exposed.

If they were lovers, it wouldn’t be surprising to get intimate once in a while.

That would make a lot of sense.

“Don’t you dare!” Qin Ya yelled, launching a pillow straight at his head.

“If you didn’t get me drunk, this wouldn’t have happened...”

Su Zhan caught the pillow she threw at him and slapped a hand over her mouth. “Shoosh! Do you want everyone to know that we slept together last night?”

Qin Ya hesitated for a moment. She didn’t want that to happen.

It would be very embarrassing.

“Let’s just pretend that we’re lovers for now, and find an excuse to break up later on. It won’t be embarrassing at all. What do you think?” Su Zhan said. He knew that she didn’t want anyone to know about this, so he decided to bring up the topic of pretending to be a couple again.

They need to bluff Lin Xinyan first.

Qin Ya thought about it for a while but didn’t say a word.

Su Zhan exhaled loudly. Why is this woman so stubborn?

“Fine, I’m a man, so a one night stand wouldn’t matter to me. I’ll just tell everyone that we had one drink too many last night and ended up in bed together,” Su Zhan said, making a move to open the door.

Qin Ya panicked.

Su Zhan wrapped his hand around the door handle and started to twist it.

“Wait!” Qin Ya stopped him. The gear was turning in her head. She figured that what Su Zhan said made sense too since pretending to be lovers would be a lot less humiliating than confessing that they had a one-night stand to everyone they knew.

“I’ll pretend to be your girlfriend,” Qin Ya said after mustering up all her courage.

Su Zhan felt relieved. However, when he opened the door, there was no one. Poking his head of the room, he realized that Lin Xinyan had gone back to her room.

Lin Xinyan figured that she was acting too rashly and that she shouldn’t have barged in at this hour. She shouldn’t have invaded his privacy no matter what their relationship was.

She was just too shocked to come to terms with the situation, and she realized just how stupid her plan sounded. So, she left soon after.

She didn’t know how to face him anyway.

“Sister in law?” Su Zhan called.

Lin Xinyan turned around to see Su Zhan poking his head out from his room. “I have to tell you something later during breakfast,” he said.

Lin Xinyan nodded, before pushing open the door to her room. She had wanted to go out for some fresh air, yet everything that had happened made her change her mind. She began to think of what Su Zhan wanted to talk to her about.

Is it going to be something about him and Qin Ya?

With her curtains drawn and the room pitch dark, Lin Xinyan collapsed onto the side of her bed.

Qin Ya was a modest girl, and it was not like she knew Su Zhan for a long time, so why would she...

The first thing Zong Jinghao noticed when he woke up was Lin Xinyan sitting at the side of the bed fully dressed. "What are you thinking about?" He asked, as he flipped over and wrapped his arms around her slender waist, pulling her into his embrace.

Lin Xinyan let herself collapse on top of him, and he buried his face into the crook of her neck, taking in her sweet smell and kissing her greedily. "Why are you up so early, hmm?" He rasped in his morning voice.

Lin Xinyan was preoccupied with the scene of Su Zhan coming out from Qin Ya's room. Considering the time of the day, he must have slept in her room last night.

"What kind of a person is Su Zhan?"

Qin Ya had been with her for a long time. Although she was born here, she had been adopted by foreigners since she was a kid.

Lin Xinyan was the only person Qin Ya knew who in her home country, so she had to be responsible for Qin Ya.

Zong Jinghao raised his head suddenly. "Why are you asking about him?"

Lin Xinyan turned around to face him. "I saw him coming out of Qin Ya's room just now."

Zong Jinghao blinked, his long eyelashes fluttering. It took a while before he finally understood what she meant.

Su Zhan and Qin Ya?

Zong Jinghao was speechless.

He rested an arm on his forehead. That boy's fast for sure!

Lin Xinyan gave him a light shove. "Hey, are you listening? Qin Ya doesn't have anyone she could trust except me when she came back, so I gotta be responsible for her. Is Su Zhan someone she could trust?"

"He's...okay, I guess," Zong Jinghao said, turning over to face the other side.

He couldn't betray his good friend, yet he couldn't do it at the expense of his wife's trust.

Lin Xinyan could smell something fishy. He was obviously hiding something. Grabbing his shoulder and forcing him to face her, she demanded, "Tell me the truth."

Zong Jinghao hugged her again and rubbed his head against her chest. "When will you let me have you? I'm just a man, and I'm going to lose control soon..."

Lin Xinyan pushed his face away. "I'm being serious here! If you mess around any longer, I'm gonna get angry."

Zong Jinghao looked up innocently. How did he end up stooping to this level?

His eyes flicked upwards to look at the sky as he silently lamented how unlucky he was.

"I'll go and ask Shen Peichuan then," Lin Xinyan said, making a move to get up, but not before she was restrained by Zong Jinghao yet again. Sorry bro, he thought, I have a wife to appease.

“He was devastated after breaking up with his first love, so he hadn’t been getting into any serious relationships for a while now. He might be in it for real now, or else...”

He gave Lin Xinyan a look instead of saying it out loud. After that, he buried himself into her body yet again. “I’ve never done that before.”

After he took over the company, he spent all his time on it. No woman had ever made him fall in love before, and neither did he have the time for that.

“Compensate me,” he whispered, pressing his lips onto her chest area. Her skin there was exceptionally soft and delicate, just like porcelain. When she breathed in, he could feel the firmness of those two mounds pressing into his face, and it felt really comfortable.

A questionable bout of energy was gaining control over his body, making his muscles contract.

He felt as though he could die from this any day.

The most vulnerable time for a man would always be the morning, let alone the fact that his beloved woman was right in front of him.

His breathing grew heavier as he called out her name, “Yan...”

“I don’t like men who only think about sex all day.”

Lin Xinyan’s words was like a wet blanket crashing down upon him.

Zong Jinghao went silent.

That wet blanket smothered the burning desire inside him, not sparing even a single spark.

Zong Jinghao flipped around and stared at the ceiling. "I'm going to die by your hands one day."

He didn't know why he wanted to get intimate with her so badly.

Tricking her to get in bed with him was near impossible.

# Stealing Your Heart Chapter 202

“I’m in love with Qin Ya.”

Su Zhan declared his love for Qin Ya out loud when everyone assembled in the dining room for breakfast.

Qin Ya was not used to getting so intimate with him she struggled a little in his embrace. However, Su Zhan immediately bent down and whispered into her ear, “If you don’t want to mess up our act, then don’t resist.”

Qin Ya had no choice but to play along.

“Hmm,” Shen Peichuan said, smacking his lips together. “That’s some amazing speed.”

Qin Ya was so hostile towards Su Zhan when they were drinking last night, and now they’re lovers?

Who are they trying to bluff?

Shen Peichuan had been suspicious of this since the beginning. Zong Jinghao could tell that Su Zhan was just playing around just from Lin Xinyan’s account.

However, he was just too lazy to expose Su Zhan.

Zong Jinghao fed Lin Ruixi as she sat in his lap.

He didn’t care about anything but his little daughter.

Shen Peichuan didn't know what to make of it either, as he watched Zong Jinghao lovingly feed mouthful after mouthful of food to his daughter. He had never seen Zong Jinghao acting so gentle before Lin Ruixi came into his life.

He is a slave to his daughter, perhaps?

That description fits Zong Jinghao perfectly.

"Rui," Shen Peichuan said, picking up a hard-boiled egg. "You want Uncle to help you peel the shell?"

Lin Ruixi shook her head, hugging Zong Jinghao tightly. "No. Daddy will help me peel it."

Shen Peichuan blinked a few times, feeling abandoned. Zong Jinghao was married and had a cute daughter as well as a smart son. Even his wife was beautiful and much younger than he was.

To add insult to injury, even that playboy Su Zhan fell in love, while he was the only one who was single.

Did he really get abandoned like that?

He moved closer to Lin Xichen, the only other bachelor in the house.

Lin Xichen wasn't sure why Shen Peichuan moved so close to him, but he still gave the hard-boiled egg he finished peeling to Shen Peichuan.

"Uncle Shen, you can have this."

Shen Peichuan's expression softened at the sound of that. Looks like someone still cares about him.

He took a bite out of the egg. "Thanks, Xi."

Lin Xichen gave him a look. “No problem. I just think that you look a bit lonely.”

Shen Peichuan went silent.

The egg in his mouth started to taste funny.

Even Lin Xinyan doubted the truth in Su Zhan’s announcement.

“Why do you think Qin Ya came here with me? It’s because we’re dating. Today just seems like the perfect day to announce it since the weather is great.”

Su Zhan spoke with ego.

Lin Xinyan didn’t have the heart to expose him anymore, reminding herself of the saying, “Even destroying ten temples is better than spoiling a marriage”. She decided to congratulate them instead. “Alright then, since you’ve made up your mind, then you should forget about the past and focus on your future with her.”

Qin Ya began to feel embarrassed. “Lin, I didn’t mean to hide this from you...”

“It’s fine. It’s getting late. Let’s hurry up and eat.”

She didn’t blame Qin Ya for anything. She was an adult after all, so she probably knows what she was doing. The only thing Lin Xinyan felt unsettled about was whether Su Zhan would end up harming her.

They hadn’t known each other for long, and Su Zhan wasn’t the kind to watch his tongue.

Qin Ya flicked Su Zhan’s hand away and walked to Lin Xinyan’s side. “Lin.”

Lin Xinyan hugged her by the shoulder and got her to sit down beside her. She didn’t want Qin Ya to feel pressured about this.

Qin Ya didn't even dare to look Lin Xinyan in the eye. She felt ashamed.

She wasn't really dating Su Zhan to begin with.

Zong Jinghao grasped Lin Xinyan's hand under the table. "Everyone has their own fates."

He didn't want Lin Xinyan to worry too much about other people's lives.

He put a glass of milk before her. "Drink this."

Lin Xinyan knew what he meant. However, she was just feeling concerned for Qin Ya due to their close relationship, even though she had no intention to interfere. Then, She picked up the glass of milk and downed it quickly.

"Mummy," Lin Ruixi said, giving the egg Zong Jinghao peeled for her to Lin Xinyan. "This is for you."

The little girl held the "little white ball" tightly as she raised it to Lin Xinyan's mouth.

She was such a filial child.

Lin Xinyan took a bite of the egg her daughter was holding. It was just an ordinary egg, yet it tasted more delicious than it should be.

She stroked her daughter's head, oblivious to the little bit of egg yolk stuck to the corner of her mouth. Zong Jinghao grabbed a piece of tissue paper and wiped it off for her.

Lin Xinyan felt slightly uncomfortable. So many people were watching them! She tried to take the tissue paper from him, but was met with Zong Jinghao's determined gaze.

Se retreated her hand recalling how he wanted them to act like they were in love whenever they were in front of others.

As she let Zong Jinghao wiped her mouth clean, Lin Ruixi wriggled deeper into her father's embrace with a giggle. She loved seeing her parents acting like that.

She felt like the happiest girl in the world.

Su Zhen was slightly shocked by all this. Taking a huge gulp of milk, he said, "Can you all stop it? You're embarrassing Peichuan! He hasn't gotten even a single date yet!"

He began to laugh awkwardly after that.

Shen Peichuan gave him a disgusted look, before stuffing the rest of his egg into his mouth and standing up.

Lin Xichen stood up with him. "I'm full too."

"Come with Uncle," Shen Peichuan said. He couldn't help but feel grateful for this boy's presence.

When they got to the door, they bumped into Bai Yinning, who was heading towards them.

Shen Peichuan stopped in his tracks. "Mr. Bai! Why are you here?"

"I'm here for Ms. Lin," Bai Yinning said with that familiar light smile on his face.

Shen Peichuan smiled too. "She's having her breakfast now. Would you like to wait here for a moment?"

"Sure," Bai Yinning said.

His gaze fell on Lin Xichen. The boy was young, yet he was undeniably handsome and had an uncanny resemblance to Zong Jinghao.

“You’re Xi?” Bai Yinning asked.

“That’s right. My full name is Lin Xichen, but you can call me Xi,” Lin Xichen replied politely.

Bai Yinning froze for a moment. Lin Xichen?

He’s using his mother’s surname?

Even the kids of ordinary families would carry their fathers’ family names rather than their mothers’, let alone a family as prominent as the Zongs.

Something felt wrong.

Interesting.

Bai Yinning’s smile only grew wider and brighter. “That’s a beautiful name. Xichen – a new beginning, something that symbolized the morning. Did your dad give you this name?”

“No, my mommy did,” Lin Xichen said.

He didn’t realize the meaning behind Bai Yinning’s question at all.

His smile made him seem like a really good guy.

Lin Xichen was not wary of this guy at all.

“Oh, your mommy is really smart then...”

As he was talking, Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao emerged from the dining room.

“I’ll bring you to see the master today.”

“Sure,” Lin Xinyan said. “Wait for me.”

She turned to look at Zong Jinghao, but he spoke before she could say anything, “I’ll go with you.”

Bai Yinning’s enthusiasm towards Lin Xinyan made Zong Jinghao unhappy.

Leaving the two of them alone?

Only if I am crazy!

“What about the kids?” Lin Xinyan asked with her eyes widening in shock. She didn’t expect Zong Jinghao to tag along.

“Bring them along too,” Zong Jinghao said. He wasn’t going to leave the kids home by themselves.

Lin Xinyan knew how Zong Jinghao’s personality was like. Once he has made a decision, no one could change him.

“Is it far away? Can we make it back before their bedtime?” Lin Xinyan asked. She figured that she should prepare some essentials for the kids if they couldn’t come back early.

“We can leave now, and we’ll be back by nightfall,” Bai Yinning answered. His gaze fell on Zong Jinghao. “Is President Zong concerned with my arrangement?”

Zong Jinghao sneered and said with a hand on Lin Xinyan’s shoulder, “I’ve never regarded President Bai as a rival.”

His real meaning was that Bai Yinning was not good enough.

Bai Yinning was not happy, but his smile was unwavering. "I'll wait outside then," he said.

He raised his hand, and Gao Yuan pushed him out.

"Who is he?" Su Zhan asked Shen Peichuan.

"He's the landlord of Baicheng."

Shen Peichuan's answer was simple.

"He's an interesting person. He can't even walk on his own, but he seems to have a couple of tricks up his sleeve," Su Zhan said, stroking his chin. Moving his gaze from Bai Yinning to Shen Peichuan, he asked, "Where are they going?"

"They're going to visit a master in tea silk weaving."

"Woah! Tea silk?" Qin Ya yelped, almost jumping out from her seat.

Su Zhan glanced at her in shock. "Is it something precious? How come I've never heard of it?"

Qin Ya glared at him. "What do you know?"

Su Zhan was silenced by her glare.

"I..."

Qin Ya ignored him completely and went straight to packing. The whole group left the hotel soon after.

They squeezed into three different cars and followed two of Bai Yinning's cars to the master's place.

Slowly, civilization disappeared from their windows, replaced by the rural scenery and bumpy roads.

When they finally arrived at a picturesque little village, Lin Xinyan went speechless in awe.

The village sat between a river and a mountain range, with unique architecture and a long stretch of grapevines spread across the mountains that faced the sun. When they went into the village, they were met with the fresh scent of soil and grapes.

Their journey continued, and a bunch of traditional buildings came into view. They were quaint little wooden houses that resembled those built in the Middle Ages, completed with endless grapevines connecting each and every one of them. Every house had scissors and bamboo baskets hanging at their door, meant to be used for picking grapes.

Lin Ruixi was overjoyed at the sight of this, her little hands banging against the window of the car. "Wow, so many grapevines! If it's summer, they would definitely be full of grapes..."

Just then, Bai Yinning's car screeched to a halt before them, and they followed suit.

Everyone alighted from their rides.

Bai Yinning pointed to another village in the distance. "It's right there, but we can't drive any further in. We'll have to walk there from here."

"It's so beautiful here so I won't mind walking there," Qin Ya said, appreciating the scenery.

A village untouched by the monotony of urban living was rare nowadays.

“Let’s go,” Bai Yinning said, leading the way.

Zong Jinghao looked around to confirm that it was just a village before wrapping his arm around Lin Xinyan’s shoulder. “Let’s go.”

“Okay.”

After around half an hour of walking, they finally arrived at the village. The population there was very sparse with a few elderly, there was almost no youngsters insight.

“That’s the one we’re looking for,” Bai Yinning said, pointing at a wooden house at the other end of a bridge that sat above a clear river.

The fence around the house was made out of branches, and there was no gate. Inside the fence was a two-story wooden house with a chair woven out of bamboo on the right side. An old man was sitting on it, and he was weaving bamboo baskets out of bamboo strips. When he raised his head, the wrinkles on his forehead was prominent, and his deep-set eyes fell on Zong Jinghao almost immediately.

He put down the bamboo strips in his hands and stood up.

# Stealing Your Heart Chapter 203

“You are...”

“Master Cheng, we’re here to learn how to make tea silk from you,” Bai Yinning explained.

The old man’s gaze swept across the group of them standing in his yard. His wrinkled eyes squinted for a second, before he turned around and entered the house. “Follow me.”

The living room of the house was rather small, so their bodyguards stayed outside.

Even so, there wasn’t enough space for everyone.

The furniture in the house were very simple as well – eight stools, a couple of paintings on the wall, as well as a bunch of bamboo baskets resting on the floor, looking slightly out of place. There was a tea table in the middle of the room, and the old man sat down near it.

He lit a cigarette and asked, “So which one of you guys want to learn...?”

Lin Xinyan stepped forward while holding Lin Xichen’s hand. “I would like to learn how to make tea silk from you, if you are willing to teach me. I would also like to invite you to help me out at my shop, and the wages are your call.”

The old man sucked in a deep breath, before spitting out a huge cloud of smoke. The smell in the room was interesting, rather than the suffocating smell of smoke from commercial cigarettes, the smell that permeated the room had faintly resembled some kind of herb.

Zong Jinghao furrowed his brows. If not for Lin Xinyan, he would never have thought of coming to this place.

The old man studied Lin Xinyan from head to toe, his gaze finally coming to rest on the jade bangle on her wrist. His eyes flitted towards Bai Yinning, who gave him a reassuring nod.

The old man pulled back his gaze and said, "I can teach you, but I won't leave this place."

Their interaction seemed cryptic, yet Zong Jinghao could see everything clearly, though he pretended not to care.

The corners of his lips curved upwards.

He wanted to see why Bai Yinning tricked Lin Xinyan into coming here.

His face remained stoic, as though he was not meant to participate in the action at all.

"Sure," Lin Xinyan said.

"You're going to have a tough time. Are you up to it?" The old man asked.

"Ms. Lin, what about me learning it?" Qin Ya asked. "You have to take care of two kids and your shop, so how about you leave this to me?" Suddenly, she realized how suspicious that sounded, and she hurriedly explained, "I won't take advantage of this knowledge..."

"I know."

Lin Xinyan trusted her wholly.

The old man, however, ignored Qin Ya completely and said, "I'm only going to teach her and her alone."

The whole room went silent at the sound of that.

"You're only going to accept only one student?" Su Zhan asked. It's not like they're in the ancient times where a martial arts master could only take in one student in their whole life, not to mention that the old man was merely a tailor.

He even chose Lin Xinyan personally. Did he think that Lin Xinyan had some kind of talent?

The old man was calm, and he ignored Su Zhan completely while focusing his gaze on Lin Xinyan instead. "If you want to learn the art of tea silk weaving from me, you have to make me your master."

Lin Xinyan was more than happy to do so, yet she struggled to understand why he picked her specifically.

That made her surprised.

She felt uneasy about this, so she didn't agree to it immediately.

"What do you see in my wife? Why did you pick her?" A low voice rumbled from the back of the living room. Zong Jinghao didn't lift his gaze from his daughter whom he was playing with, as though nothing in this world was worth his attention besides his daughter.

The old man looked at him. The sunlight shone through the windows, its rays illuminating the grains of dust floating through the air. He squinted just a little bit as he studied the well-chiseled face in front of him. His hand that was holding onto the cigarette trembled a little, and he said calmly, "She has the talent."

"Really?" Zong Jinghao asked, finally looking up to meet the old man's gaze. The latter was slightly taken aback by this sudden movement.

He pretended to cough to avoid Zong Jinghao's gaze.

"Y'all don't seem to trust me, and I don't bother teaching anyone who isn't honest. Please leave," the old man said, before getting up and opening a side door.

"Wait!" Lin Xinyan yelled after him. Maybe all art practitioners had the same weird temper, she figured.

As a fashion designer, she didn't want to perfect only the designs of her clothes, but also the materials used to make her clothes.

If she managed to master this art, it would be a great help to her business.

Lin Xichen and Lin Ruixi were comfortable with Zong Jinghao, and his fortune would be able to provide for both kids with much to spare, so she no longer needed to plan for her kids' future like she did before. However, she didn't want to give up her dream just because she was together with Zong Jinghao.

Only with hard work can she be worthy of the title of "Zong Jinghao's wife", and the last thing she wanted to become was a burden to him.

She wasn't a vine that needed support to grow, and she won't flaunt the riches that belonged to him. Furthermore, she won't agree to submit herself to him just because she gave birth to two children for him.

She remained Lin Xinyan, and she refused to follow her mother's footsteps and became reliant on another man. No hobbies, no job, and no socializing led to her living in poverty after being abandoned.

The pain and suffering she went through as a kid remained fresh in her memory, even after her life improved under the protection of Zong Jinghao.

"Please be my master."

The old man froze for a moment, before turning around to face her. "Are you sure?"

"Yes, I am," she answered without looking at Zong Jinghao.

This was something she could deal with herself.

The man's gaze moved past her to look at the looming figure behind her, before saying, "You'll have to stay here for a couple of weeks if you truly want to learn the skill from me. Are you sure?"

Lin Xinyan was fine with staying, but she couldn't help but hesitate when she thought about her two children.

"If you're so hesitant, then forget it. It's not that easy to learn tea silk weaving anyway, and not many could survive the ordeal," the old man sneered at Lin Xinyan. He felt that it was ridiculous for someone to want to learn tea silk weaving but not willing to do the dirty work.

She probably didn't want to commit because of that.

Qin Ya was annoyed, and she stepped forward to reason with the old man.

Lin Xinyan grabbed her and pulled her back to stop her from doing anything rash. "I'm fine with that," she told the old man.

The old man's expression froze for a second. "Settle what you need to settle then come and find me."

After that, he disappeared into a room.

The door closed behind him, blocking out the noise outside.

Bai Yinning moved himself closer to Lin Xinyan on his wheelchair. “That’s his temper for you. I took a really long time to convince him to make me that piece of tea silk I requested last time.”

“President Bai, this is really meticulous of you,” Zong Jinghao said, standing up with Lin Ruixi in his hands. “What exactly is your plan?”

Bai Yinning’s smile was unwavering. “What are you talking about, President Zong? I’m just introducing Ms. Lin to a skilled master. What else can I be doing?”

Zong Jinghao huffed, his dominant aura almost visible with the naked eye. “No one who tried to plot against me escaped unscathed. I’m sure your motives behind bringing us here aren’t as simple as just visiting a master, President Bai.”

After that, he took Lin Xinyan by her hand and led her out of the wooden house.

Lin Xinyan followed him out obediently. After all, she have something to say to him.

They stood by the bridge over the river, and Lin Xinyan spoke up first. “Are you angry?”

“If you need money, I can give it to you,” Zong Jinghao said coldly.

“Your money is yours, none of that belongs to me,” Lin Xinyan said, cutting him off a bit too abruptly. She knew exactly what he wanted to say next. “Are you going to say that you can provide for me no matter what, and that I shouldn’t worry about money at all?”

Zong Jinghao stared at her straight in the eye.

That was indeed what he had been thinking.

Money, accolades, honor...he could give her anything she wanted.

Lin Xinyan smiled. "I have my own dreams too. I could survive on my own before I met you. Now that we're together, I want to stay that way. To be honest, I don't feel secure about the things you gave me. I've always feared that it was merely an illusion that will disappear one day."

She looked at the endless grapevines stretching into the distance. "I've lived in poverty and shame, and I know perfectly well how it feels to be helpless and isolated..."

If she was capable then, her brother wouldn't have left her. She feared the day where history would repeat itself, yet she could only stand by and watch helplessly.

Zong Jinghao gritted his teeth. "Can't you tell that the master and Bai Yinning are plotting something?"

# Stealing Your Heart Chapter 204

“I am aware,” Lin Xinyan said. She’d figured it out since the first time Bai Yinning brought tea silk to her.

She was curious as to what Bai Yinning’s plans were. “He saved me because of this jade bangle. Do you think he has something to do with Yuxiu?”

She looked at Zong Jinghao. He didn’t like her, neither did he want to hear anyone speak her name.

However, she had a feeling that both the tea silk master and Bai Yinning had connections to Yuxiu, considering how the master had glanced at her jade bangle ever so discreetly. “Where did this bangle come from?” She asked.

Zong Jinghao didn’t know either. As a man, he never needed these kinds of things, and neither did his family tell him about the fact that they had a jade bangle as an heirloom.

“So you want to stay and figure things out?” Zong Jinghao asked, though it was obvious what the answer was.

This damn woman...

He closed his eyes and forced himself to calm down before saying, “You don’t even know why he wants you to stay. Have you ever thought about what will happen to me or the kids if something happens to you?”

That was an oversight on her part, but the curiosity to find out who Yuxiu had outweighed the guilt. She didn’t see Yuxiu as a villain.

“You will protect me anyway,” she said, hugging his arm and pressing herself against his body.

Her sudden affection made Zong Jinghao freeze for a moment before recovering.

She checkmated him.

She was nowhere near being a submissive woman, and that made her difficult to control.

He couldn't scold her or beat her, so he had no choice but to play along.

Zong Jinghao hugged her back. “What am I to do with you?”

Lin Xinyan rested her head on his collarbone and looked faraway. The reason why she wanted to find out more about Yuxiu was because of Zong Jinghao as well.

If this man wasn't her children's father, she wouldn't have stepped into this mess.

She reached out and wrapped her arms around his thin waist. “I'll protect myself.”

Zong Jinghao pressed a hand onto his head and planted a warm kiss onto her forehead. “I'll wait for you.”

Lin Xinyan didn't want to leave her kids for too long, so she nodded.

Zong Jinghao and Shen Peichuan decided to stay along with their men so Su Zhan and Qin Ya went back to the hotel to pack their things. The old man moved into a wooden house in the backyard, leaving the front side for the rest of the group to stay in.

However, none of them were allowed to go to the backyard, and neither could Lin Xinyan come out from it until she had mastered the art of tea silk weaving.

It was like the extreme private lessons of the past, reincarnated in a modern setting.

The backyard was still part of the house, yet it had all of the latest technology installed. Everything was arranged in an orderly manner and wiped clean. It was pretty obvious that the space was cleaned and used frequently.

The old man handed a notebook to her. "These are some notes I made. You can take a look. By the way, have you come across this kind of thing before?" He asked, gesturing to the machinery.

Lin Xinyan took the notebook with both hands and answered truthfully, "I've never used a weaving machine before, but I've seen many types of fabric and know their characteristics well."

The old man nodded, seemingly satisfied with her answer.

However, his mood began to sink the moment he looked at the machinery in the room. "These might not be able to see the light of day anymore..."

"Why would you say that, Master?" Lin Xinyan asked. She was curious as to why tea silk weaving was going extinct as well.

"Why don't you leave this place..."

"Read the notebook thoroughly. I'll test you on it tomorrow," the old man said before walking out of the room.

He obviously didn't want to dwell on the subject any longer.

Lin Xinyan remained calm. This was her first day after all, and she will figure out what she wanted to know soon enough.

The backyard was different from the front yard in the sense that there were only two small rooms there besides the machinery room. Each room was occupied by a bed and a table, and everything was quiet and still.

It was the perfect place to get absorbed into a good book.

Lin Xinyan spent the rest of the day just doing that.

The old man came to visit her a couple of times, clearly pleased with her patience.

When night fell, the old man prepared some dishes and called Lin Xinyan out for dinner.

There was a small wooden table in the shape of a rectangle in the middle of the yard, along with two small stools. There were two dishes, a fish as well as a plate of vegetables sitting on the table.

Lin Xinyan took the initiative to get the cutlery and handed the old man his chopsticks. "Here, Master."

The old man smiled, and it was the first time she saw him smile and it was warm and bright.

"I caught this fish using a cage in the river, so it's definitely clean. Don't worry, just eat," the old man said, putting a piece of fish meat into Lin Xinyan's bowl. "Try it. Tell me how it tastes like."

Even Lin Guoan had never been so nice to her before. She could feel tears prickling her eyes as she stuffed the fish into her mouth.

The old man had gone easy on the flavoring, leaving the original taste largely intact. The fish meat was soft, with just a hint of saltiness and even sweetness, which was something she had never tasted before.

“Did you put sugar in this?” Lin Xinyan asked.

“No. The fish itself tastes sweet, and only the fish in this river will taste like this,” the old man said calmly, answering her questions with great patience.

Lin Xinyan continued to ask questions, mostly related to things in the notebook that she didn’t understand.

He answered each and every question in great detail.

Just like that, a week passed since Lin Xinyan moved in, and she hadn’t stepped out of the yard even once.

She spent most of her time there learning how to use the machines, though she was still at the basic.

She figured that she hadn’t gotten that far yet. When the time comes, the old man would surely teach her what she needs to know.

One night, they sat down at the same dinner table, and began to enjoy their usual meal of rice and vegetables.

“Master, do you have any relatives?” Lin Xinyan suddenly asked.

The old man’s hands froze for a moment, before he stuffed a bite of vegetables into his mouth and chewed for a long while. “Yes,” he finally said.

“Then why aren’t they coming to visit you?”

The old man finally lifted his head to look at her. She was obviously seeking out information about him.

Lin Xinyan hurried explained, “I’m just asking...”

“I have a younger sister.”

The old man interrupted.

When Bai Yinning came looking for him, he made up his mind to hand down the Cheng family craft, even if it meant breaking the contract.

Since he already agreed to teach Lin Xinyan, there would definitely be some things he couldn't hide for long.

After a few days of observation, he realized that Lin Xinyan was indeed a diligent girl that didn't need much guidance.

“Did she get married off to some other village?” Lin Xinyan asked quickly, seizing the chance.

“Not just another village, she's in a really faraway place now, so she comes back only once in a while. I'm the only person living here, but I did contact her a couple of days ago, so she might be here anytime soon.”

The old man's voice remained calm, though there was a hint of sadness in it.

“Whatever you want to know, just ask her when she comes,” he told Lin Xinyan as he looked her in the eye.

Lin Xinyan gave him a bewildered look. How did he know what she wanted to know?

Most importantly, why would his sister know about it?

Who is his sister?

# Stealing Your Heart Chapter 205

The old man left her on a cliffhanger. “You’ll meet her soon enough. Now eat.”

“When will she come?” Lin Xinyan asked.

She began to get excited. “Do I know her?”

“I thought you were the kind to stay calm no matter what? Why are you so impatient now?” The old man asked with a hint of annoyance in his tone. “Just like Confucius quote, ‘A little impatience spoils great plans.’”

He stood up after that. “Eat properly. I’m going in now.”

Lin Xinyan nodded. She did act a little rashly and considering that he was willing to talk to her about this meant that he didn’t mind telling her about what she wanted to know.

As long as she waited patiently for his sister to come, maybe all her questions would be answered.

Compared to the peace and quiet in the backyard, the front yard was in a seemingly organized chaos.

Bai Yinning decided to stay on as well, and his only companion was Gao Yuan. Compared to Zong Jinghao, he was greatly outnumbered.

The water flowing in the river shimmered under the moonlight, as though the galaxy had fallen into it.

The two kids were playing chess with Su Zhan and Qin Ya, while Zong Jinghao was sitting alone by the bridge and peering into the backyard.

The village was not brightly lit as the city, and when night falls, one could only see their surroundings if there was moonlight.

At that moment, the backyard was pitch black, and he couldn't see a single thing, let alone Lin Xinyan. He stuck his hands into his pockets but didn't look away, as though waiting for her appearance.

"I never knew you have such a good relationship with your wife, President Zong," Bai Yinning said, pushing himself to Zong Jinghao's side on his wheelchair. "As they say, 'A day of separation feels as long as three autumns'?"

Zong Jinghao's face flashed under the moonlight. He turned around and looked at Bai Yinning. "Shouldn't you become a paparazzi? Since you're so interested in the private matters of others, staying at Baicheng would be like imprisoning you."

Bai Yinning's expression changed for a moment, just barely noticeable under the faint glow of the moonlight. "If you don't mind asking, why are your children carrying your wife's surname? Unless...she gave birth to them without your knowledge?"

Bai Yinning had managed to glean from Lin Xichen the fact that Lin Xinyan gave birth to him and his sister after divorcing Zong Jinghao.

With that, she bestowed her surname upon them.

Bai Yinning laughed. "I thought I stand no chance. Is that not the case?"

Zong Jinghao shifted his gaze to the side and noticed a small shadow by the door. It disappeared the moment he looked over. He had figured out who it was, though he didn't show it.

He lifted his gaze, his handsome face as cold as ever. "That depends on how good you are, President Bai," he said.

Bai Yinning smiled. "Anything is better than nothing. Isn't that what you have always said? I still have a chance thanks to you, President Zong."

Zong Jinghao descended from the bridge slowly and carefully, and just as he passed Bai Yinning, his lips curved upwards into a sly smile. "My wife doesn't like handicapped people. If you want her, then stand up and go after her."

After that, he left without glancing back even once.

Bai Yinning's signature light smile began to melt off his face. Losing his ability to walk was his biggest regret.

The hand he put on the armrest of his wheelchair tightened its grip, to the point that his veins were visible on his skin.

Zong Jinghao's footsteps faltered for a moment. He knew how angry Bai Yinning must be at that moment. "President Bai, getting angry is not good for your body."

He smirked and continued to walk towards the house. Glancing at the door again, he noticed a small dark shadow beside it, which resembled a child.

The only two children there were Lin Xichen and Lin Ruixi.

Lin Ruixi had a pure heart, and eavesdropping would never have crossed her mind. On the other hand...

It must be Lin Xichen then.

He sighed. When would this child let go of his past?

However, Zong Jinghao had to admit that he messed up.

He was the one who abandoned them and all this was due to his negligence.

It would take a while for the hatred and disappointment in Lin Xichen's heart to dissipate.

The good thing was that he had a lot of time.

After Zong Jinghao left, Lin Xichen finally mustered up the courage to emerge from the shadows. He watched Zong Jinghao's silhouette disappear into the house before his eyes flashed and his tiny hands balled into fists.

It took a while before he calmed down and walked out of the door.

He called out to Bai Yinning by the river. "Uncle Bai."

Lin Xichen walked over to his side.

Lin Xichen was different from the average five-year-old. He was highly attentive to details and intelligent, and he did notice that something was off when he first conversed with Bai Yinning. However, he was willing to take advantage of Bai Yinning to prove to Zong Jinghao that the only way to win his mother's heart was to act truthfully, rather than just putting in hard work.

His mother had a lot of pursuers besides Bai Yinning. Although Bai Yinning couldn't walk, he was rather handsome and smart, and that was why Lin Xichen decided to tell him that Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao weren't a typical married couple.

That would certainly give him hope to compete against Zong Jinghao and give the latter a sense of danger.

On the other hand, Bai Yinning was under the impression that he had managed to squeeze the right information from Lin Xichen.

Little did he know that he was being manipulated by Lin Xichen to obstruct Zong Jinghao's attempt to win back Lin Xinyan's heart.

If that succeeded, they would be able to live as a happy family forever more.

Bai Yinning thought he was the one taking advantage of Lin Xichen, while being completely oblivious to the fact that he was getting deceived by his own intellect.

Bai Yinning wasn't dumb; rather, no one would have guessed that a five-year-old child would be able to come up with such a grand scheme.

"It's cold outside, why are you wearing so little?" Bai Yinning asked, switching out his annoyance to his usual calm smile.

Lin Xichen looked down at his clothes and giggled. "I came out in a hurry, so I didn't manage to put on more clothes. Are you by yourself, Uncle Bai?"

He threw in that question on purpose, despite knowing perfectly well what just happened outside.

"Your dad," Bai Yinning said, looking at him straight in the eye. "You're unhappy with him, right?"

"He abandoned us. Of course I am very unhappy with him."

Bai Yinning smiled. "He's still your dad, though."

Lin Xichen pretended not to hear that. "Who knows?"

He decided to change the subject. "Do you need me to push you inside, Uncle Bai?"

"It's fine. I can do it myself."

Lin Xichen moved to the side and waited for Bai Yinning to move past him before following suit. He studied Bai Yinning as they walked. He just wanted to use this man to show Zong Jinghao that his mom was very popular. He would never want his mom to be with a handicapped person.

He wouldn't accept that no matter what.

Lin Xichen took a deep breath. Although he was angry with Zong Jinghao, he still wanted them to be happy together.

He would only call his real parents his family, and he was sure about that.

He started to worry if things would spiral out of his control.

After all, he was just a kid, and his abilities were limited.

He made his way back to his room, a simple and quiet one perfectly suited for quality rest.

Sprawling onto his bed, he whispered to himself, "When will Mommy come out..."

He missed her.

Squeak!

The door opened, and he shot up from the bed, turning his gaze towards the doorway.

# Stealing Your Heart Chapter 206

Seeing that it was Zong Jinghao, Lin Xichen began to panic, wondering if he had done something wrong.

“Why are you here?”

Zong Jinghao walked over and sat down at the side of his bed, ignoring his question completely. Before Lin Xichen could move away, Zong Jinghao grabbed his shoulders and asked, “Do you hate me so much?”

“That’s not true,” Lin Xichen denied.

“I knew exactly what you have done...”

“I don’t know what you’re talking about!”

Lin Xichen shouted before Zong Jinghao could finish his sentence.

His little hands grasped the clean white sheets tightly, turning them into a crumpled mess.

How did Zong Jinghao even find out?

Zong Jinghao stroked his head. “You’re using Bai Yinning to compete with me for your mom’s attention, am I right?”

Lin Xichen’s eyes widened, and his face scrunched together comically. How did he know that?

“You’re my son,” Zong Jinghao said as he sighed.

When he heard from Bai Yinning that Lin Xinyan gave birth to the two kids after she divorced Zong Jinghao, he knew that it must have been Lin Xichen who told him about it.

That was something Lin Xinyan would never talk about, and not many people knew about it. Even Shen Peichuan and Su Zhan wouldn't have known the full story.

Lin Xichen pursed his lips together to affirm Zong Jinghao's suspicion.

He could bluff anyone, but never Zong Jinghao.

After all, he was his flesh and blood.

"Are you angry?" Lin Xichen asked, lowering his head and picking his fingers.

Zong Jinghao looked at him lovingly, a small smile formed on his lips. "I'm not mad. I'm just glad that you know how to take advantage of others."

Lin Xichen got a huge shock. What was that?

He stared at his father with a bewildered look on his face.

"The highest level you could attain would be to accomplish your own goals through the hands of others. You didn't do it properly, since I managed to see through it, but you're not that dumb."

When Zong Jinghao spoke, his tone was serious, yet there were hints of love lingering around his eyes.

Lin Xichen was only five, yet he could come up with such a complex scheme. That was impressive enough on its own.

Zong Jinghao held back from praising him outright since he needed to make it clear that it wasn't enough.

If he complimented him, it would only make him complacent.

Lin Xichen huffed, not impressed with Zong Jinghao's comment. Everyone else showered him with praises, and all he gets from his own father was not that dumb?

So he was essentially the smartest idiot?

He refused to listen to Zong Jinghao. "Of course I'm not dumb! Why don't we have a bet?"

Zong Jinghao nodded, very much interested in his suggestion. "What do you want to bet on?"

"I wanna bet that you'll never win Mommy's heart back!" Lin Xichen said, raising his chin. The words you're not that dumb had angered him completely.

He would make sure that Zong Jinghao failed!

He was such an arrogant man!

Zong Jinghao pursed his lips together and went silent. After a while, he spoke again, "Are you sure you want your mommy to be with that handicapped guy?"

"At least he's only crippled physically, not emotionally," Lin Xichen argued.

Zong Jinghao didn't know how to respond to that.

Was Lin Xichen implying that he was crippled emotionally?

"Son..."

“I’m tired,” Lin Xichen said, clearly unwilling to listen to him any further.

In order to prevent Zong Jinghao from saying anything else, Lin Xichen burrowed into his blankets and closed his eyes, pretending to fall asleep.

The only two people that had ever made him feel helpless were Lin Xinyan and Lin Xichen.

“I know you’re not asleep yet. Besides, believe it or not, when I got divorce from your mom, I didn’t know she was pregnant.”

That was not the whole truth – he just didn’t know that she was pregnant with his child.

But he couldn’t tell him.

Letting everyone know that they had a child out of wedlock would ruin Lin Xinyan and the child’s reputation forever.

“You’re just giving me excuses! If you’re going to marry her, then take responsibility for her! Why did you marry her in the first place if you don’t even like her then you abandon her later?” Lin Xichen yelled, confessing all his thoughts. “I hate it when you do that. Mommy always told me to be a responsible man who never lies or hurts others. What about your actions?”

Zong Jinghao didn’t know how to answer at all.

Could he tell him that he married Lin Xinyan in exchange for some things?

Could he even tell his son that he and his sister were born before his parents were got married?

Wouldn’t that become a huge blow to the little boy?

Zong Jinghao pulled Lin Xichen's blanket up further. "It's cold outside. Remember to stay warm."

Lin Xichen flipped to the other side in a fit of anger, refusing to meet his eyes.

Zong Jinghao sighed and pulled his blanket to cover his exposed back. "If you don't want to fall sick before your mommy comes back, then cover yourself properly."

Lin Xichen was reluctant to, yet he didn't resist any further.

Zong Jinghao managed to hit his weak spot.

He didn't want his mommy to worry about him so he stayed put under his blanket.

Three days passed.

Lin Xinyan was in the middle of practicing her weaving skills when the old man suddenly called out to her. "Come with me."

"Where are we going?" Lin Xinyan asked, still absorbed in her work. She was starting to get the hang of tea silk weaving, so she didn't want to leave just yet.

"Just come with me," the old man said refusing to explain further. He stepped out of the house after that.

Lin Xinyan suddenly remembered that his sister was going to come, and she immediately threw everything down and jumped out of her seat to follow the old man.

There was a door in the back yard leading to the outside world, and it opened to reveal a meandering and uneven road. Vines that lined the path threatened to trip them at every step, but they soon arrived at the main road without much trouble.

The main road, however, was just a concrete road that was nowhere as wide as the tarmac road in the city.

Lin Xinyan was most shocked to see a shiny black Rolls-Royce Phantom parked at the back of the humble wooden house, something which she had not seen since she came here.

She looked over in the old man's direction. "Is this yours?"

The old man shook his head. "No, it belongs to my sister. Let's get on."

Lin Xinyan felt apprehensive, but she had decided to follow him anyway.

The car began to move the moment they got on, passing through the narrow concrete path that went deeper and deeper into the mountains. Although winter was coming, there were plenty of evergreens in the forest that blocked out the sunlight. The further they went, the cooler it got.

Their journey lasted for half an hour before they finally pulled over at their destination.

There was a huge, unique and grand courtyard residence before them.

It was a completely different sight from the tiny wooden house they were in just half an hour ago.

Lin Xinyan alighted from the car and looked up at the residence. "Where is this place?"

The old man stood behind her with his hands behind his back as he gazed at the residence as well. "The Cheng family house."

"Cheng?" Lin Xinyan said. She had been calling him "Master" the whole time, and she didn't even know what his surname was.

“That’s right. My name is Cheng Yuwen, and my sister is Cheng Yuxiu.”

Boom!

Lin Xinyan could swear that her head exploded at that moment.

Although she had her suspicions, she still couldn’t help but feel shocked by this news.

Yuxiu? Cheng Yuxiu?

Were they the same person?

If they were, then what other secrets could she be hiding?

“Follow me. Let’s not keep her waiting.”

Cheng Yuwen stepped into the house, and Lin Xinyan followed suit after she recovered from her shock.

# Stealing Your Heart Chapter 207

The floor was covered in marble tiles, yet Lin Xinyan felt as though she was walking through cotton, making her feel insecure. She didn't know what was in store for her.

The more she anticipated it, the more anxious she got.

She didn't know if good news or bad news were waiting for me.

Their footsteps seemed to echo through the large courtyard.

Every echo sent ripples through her heart.

The door was red in color with intricate carvings on it, and there was a woman standing in front of a table with her back facing the door. She put her palms together, as though she was praying.

When they got to the door, Cheng Yuwen patted Lin Xinyan's shoulder to tell her to stop moving. Lin Xinyan understood what he meant and nodded.

Cheng Yuwen lifted his foot over the doorstep and walked into the house.

"You still dare to come and see me?" The woman yelled, clearly angered.

Lin Xinyan shivered. That was definitely Yuxiu's voice.

Her hands balled into fists by her sides.

Who in the world was she?

A million questions circled around in her mind, yet no one could answer them.

Cheng Yuwen stood behind her and looked at the table in silence. The memorials of the Cheng family ancestors were lined up neatly on it.

“I don’t want our family art and traditions to die just like that...”

“You’re stupid!” Cheng Yuxiu yelled, turning around. “We made a promise...”

She noticed Lin Xinyan standing at the door and cut herself off.

Her voice began to shake as she spoke again. “W-why are you here?”

She looked at Cheng Yuwen again. “You’re saying that she’s your student?”

Her face paled bit by bit and her breath quickened, making her whole body trembled, as though she was going to collapse any moment.

“That’s right,” Cheng Yuwen said, oblivious to her anger. “You can’t tell your secret to your son or your daughter-in-law, yet you gave Lin Xinyan our family heirloom. Doesn’t that mean she has the right to learn the art of tea silk weaving? I’m sure you don’t want that skill to vanish from the face of the earth?”

Lin Xinyan raised her hand and looked at the jade bangle on her hand. Didn’t it belong to the Zongs?

Didn’t Cheng Yuxiu say that she received the bangle from her mother-in-law?

Since when did it belong to the Cheng’s’?

Cheng Yuxiu’s beautiful features were tainted with anger. “Don’t you know that you’re going to ruin her life if you do this?”

“I know, but I can’t just sit by and watch the Cheng’s’ disappear from the world without a trace.”

Cheng Yuwen held on fast to his beliefs. Stepping forward, he put his hands on his sister’s shoulders. “I’m old, and I don’t have much time left. I don’t wish for anything, but I don’t want to see the downfall of the Cheng’s’.”

Cheng Yuxiu clenched her fists. “Even so, you shouldn’t have kept me in the dark while you do whatever you want!”

Cheng Yuwen turned around. “If I told you first, you wouldn’t have agreed. Since when did you ever care about the Cheng family? The only people you care about are your husband and your son.”

He got angrier as he spoke. “You don’t care about the Cheng’s’ anymore! Your world only revolves around the Zong’s now!” He began to shout at her.

Cheng Yuxiu closed her eyes and forced herself to stay calm.

When Cheng Yuwen called her to tell her about his new student, she was furious. However, little did she expect the student to be Lin Xinyan.

“Please don’t get mad. We can’t reverse this anymore,” Cheng Yuwen said, sighing. “I’m the only person who understands your pain all these years. Isn’t this an opportunity from the heavens? We make fabric, and your daughter-in-law makes clothes. Such is fate, isn’t it?”

Cheng Yuxiu didn’t know how to answer to that.

It made sense, despite the oath they had taken.

If her secret got exposed, the aftermath would be devastating.

“I believe you have a lot to say to your daughter-in-law? I’ve prepped the west wing, so both of you can stay there tonight. If you need me, I’ll be in the front yard,” he said, before walking out. When he passed Lin Xinyan on the way, he put his hand on her shoulder. “Whatever you want to know, you may ask her.”

He turned around to look at his sister. “You’ve got yourself a pretty good daughter-in-law. She’s got the looks and is a fast learner too. Her kids look just like Jinghao. I know you can’t reveal who you really are, but I can assure you that you won’t have any regrets.”

Cheng Yuwen sighed lightly, as though he didn’t know what to make of his past.

Lin Xinyan found out about a lot of things from their conversation, though there were still a lot of details that she didn’t quite figure out.

She suddenly had a barrage of questions to ask Cheng Yuxiu.

The moment she opened her mouth Cheng Yuxiu cut her off, visibly fatigued from this sudden shock.

“Give me a minute.”

Cheng Yuxiu’s body swayed from side to side, looking as though she was going to fall over any moment.

Lin Xinyan walked over and gave her a shoulder to lean on. “I’ll help you to the west wing.”

Cheng Yuwen said that the west wing was ready for them to move in, so she would definitely be able to take a rest there.

Cheng Yuxiu was really tired, and she held on to Lin Xinyan’s arm as they walked into the west wing from the front yard.

The moment she opened the door, Lin Xinyan got a huge shock. The room looked like it belonged to a young girl, with pink and pastel themed furniture and walls. The white bed was lined with a frilly pink curtain, with a round dressing table sitting next to it. The closet was filled with cute dolls that girls would like.

It seemed as though someone had put a lot of effort into decorating this room.

Although it was clean, it was clear that it had not seen any inhabitant for a while.

Cheng Yuxiu was just as shocked as she was, though her shock turned to sadness. "This used to be my room, decorated by my father. He meant to remind me to respect the family and never forget the things he had done for me."

Essentially, he was telling her to keep the art of tea silk weaving alive no matter what.

That was something passed down from generation to generation.

She belonged to the Cheng's so it was her duty to keep the skill alive.

Lin Xinyan led her to the bed and put a pillow behind her bed to make it more comfortable.

Cheng Yuxiu held on to Lin Xinyan's hand as she sat down on the bed.

Lin Xinyan sat down with her as well.

Cheng Yuxiu looked at her while grasping her hand with her own. "I'm sure you have a lot to ask me?"

Lin Xinyan nodded immediately. "Are you Zong Jinghao's birth mother?" She started.

That was a speculation she got from the conversation between Cheng Yuwen and Cheng Yuxiu, though she couldn't confirm if it was true.

Cheng Yuxiu looked at her for a long while, as though she was debating with herself. Finally, she nodded and said, "Yes."

Lin Xinyan took in a deep breath. What kind of past did she have that she won't even tell her son about?

She can't even face him?

As a mother herself, she knew how painful Cheng Yuxiu must have felt.

"Can you tell me what's going on here?" Lin Xinyan asked, gesturing at the jade bangle on her wrist. She proceeded to tell her about Bai Yinning as well. "When I got into trouble, it was this guy called Bai Yinning who saved me.

He recognized this bangle and thought I was your daughter, and that's why he chose to save me. He told me that he just wanted to adhere to his adopted father's will. His name was Bai Hongfei, and I'm sure you know him as well?"

# Stealing Your Heart Chapter 208

Lin Xinyan was just making sure that Bai Yinning hadn't been lying.

Cheng Yuxiu's face went deathly pale again the moment she heard Lin Xinyan's question. She stared straight at Lin Xinyan, feeling as though she had been dropped into an icy pond that froze her from head to toe.

She knew Bai Hongfei?

"You're not comfortable talking about it?"

Lin Xinyan noticed that she had hesitations.

Cheng Yuxiu immediately denied it. "No."

Cheng Yuwen had left her with no other choice.

"How did you end up in trouble?" Cheng Yuxiu asked as she was concerned.

"You don't have to worry about that, Zong Jinghao managed to settle it for me, and I'm fine now. I just want to know more about you. Did Cheng Yuwen have other motives in getting me to learn tea silk weaving?"

Lin Xinyan felt like there was a huge scheme involving her that she had no idea about.

Cheng Yuxiu closed her eyes and made a quick decision.

It's not like she could do anything to change the situation anyway.

However, she still feared that it would bring trouble to Lin Xinyan. Her cold and clammy hands clasped Lin Xinyan's hands. "You're a good girl."

Her eyes were red and her voice was trembling. "I can tell you everything, but you need to promise me something."

Since she was the birth mother of Zong Jinghao, then she would definitely want the best for her son. Now that Lin Xinyan had given her two grandchildren, she would most certainly be fond of Lin Xinyan. After all, she had given the family heirloom to Lin Xinyan, which was a sign that she won't do any harm no matter what.

Lin Xinyan nodded. "Say it."

"I need you to keep what I have to tell you to yourself. Don't tell anyone about it, including Jinghao."

Lin Xinyan lowered her eyelids. The request didn't come as a surprise to her. If she didn't mind Zong Jinghao to know about what she was going to say, then she wouldn't have gone such lengths to conceal them.

She was just confused as to why she wouldn't even talk to her own son.

The world was full of pain, birth and death, old age and sickness, love and betrayal. However, none of those would compare to not being able to talk to one's love ones even if they were standing right before you.

Lin Xinyan felt the urge to ask her what was preventing her from talking to her son.

However, she couldn't bring herself to do it. She figured that there must be something holding her back.

Lin Xinyan raised her head and answered, "Yes, I promise."

Cheng Yuxiu didn't seem relieved, instead looking more troubled than before. She didn't want to drag Lin Xinyan into this mess, yet things were getting out of her control.

Involving Lin Xinyan would do her no good.

Cheng Yuxiu went silent for a few moments, unable to muster the courage to speak up.

Lin Xinyan waited patiently.

After a few more minutes, Cheng Yuxiu finally opened her mouth. "My family name is Cheng, and my full name is Cheng Yuxiu. I didn't dare use my full name after marrying Zong Qifeng, so I just went by Yuxiu...I didn't even dare to talk about the fact that Jinghao was my child. To the public, he's the son of the Young Mistress of the Wen family, Wen Xian, and Zong Qifeng, while I'm just a surrogate."

"I was 20 that year, and my father suddenly died of heart disease. My family used to run a factory..."

She looked up at Lin Xinyan before continuing, "We made tea silk, but we didn't produce much, since our materials were rather unique. We received a large order shortly before my father died, so when he passed and my brother took over but the order was never completed. The client asked for compensation, and according to the contract, we had to give five times the price of the products for breach of contract. To make things worse, the previous few batches were problematic as well, so we suddenly have to compensate several clients at once."

"In addition to the original cost, the compensation would make it a huge sum of money."

“After some investigation, it was revealed that some workers had mixed up the order of the steps in making tea silk, which resulted in a drop of quality in our products which ruined our reputation forever.”

She talked about how she was forced to find Bai Hongfei, who was her first love. The two families had made plans for their marriage already.

All she wanted was to seek comfort from her boyfriend. However, when she arrived at their residence, all she saw was Mrs. Bai, while Bai Hongfei was nowhere in sight.

“Hongfei went overseas for work, so he won’t be back anytime soon,” Mrs. Bai had told her with an impatient look on her face. Her usual smile was nowhere to be seen.

“Cheng Yuxiu, aren’t you asking for too much? You haven’t even become part of our family yet, and you’re already thinking about taking our money?”

Mrs. Bai’s words caught Cheng Yuxiu off guard completely. Mrs. Bai had been very kind to her, yet when her father passed away, Mrs. Bai’s attitude towards her changed immediately. She was no longer the loveable and gentle Mrs. Bai that Cheng Yuxiu knew.

“I just want Hongfei’s help for just once. I’ll return the favor when I can,” Cheng Yuxiu said, standing in the yard.

It had been the peak of summer, and the blazing afternoon sun bathed her in searing heat.

Cheng Yuxiu was sweating all over from the heat, yet Mrs. Bai refused to let her in. “How are you going to return the favor? Your family had already paid out a huge sum of money, so what are you going to do without your father? It’s not that we can’t help you, though. If you give us your tea silk weaving business, then maybe I can consider giving you the money.”

That was something Cheng Yuxiu had never expected. Mrs. Bai was eyeing their family business.

At that moment, she learned that people could be two-faced, and they could change in a second. It could catch one off guard and make one realize how foolish one had been, trusting someone thoroughly when they just wanted to take advantage of you.

“What if I said no?” Cheng Yuxiu asked. The tea silk weaving technology had been passed down from generation to generation within the Cheng family, and only the children of the Cheng’s’ could learn the skill.

How could she just give up this prized possession of her family so easily? She would never be able to get it back.

She couldn’t just let the skill die off at her generation.

Mrs. Bai huffed. “Suit yourself. You can forget about your marriage with Hongfei too. From today onwards, the Bai’s’ will not have anything to do with your family anymore!”

Mrs. Bai’s decision made it clear to Cheng Yuxiu that she only allowed her son to date her in order to get hold of the Cheng’s’ tea silk weaving technology. Now that the Cheng’s’ were facing their biggest crisis and Cheng Yuxiu refused to give up their technology, Mrs. Bai’s true colors revealed.

However, Cheng Yuxiu had loved Bai Hongfei with all her heart.

“Only Hongfei can break off our engagement,” Cheng Yuxiu said. Her heart felt like it was getting ripped open from the inside, yet she refused to cry in front of Mrs. Bai.

Mrs. Bai scoffed. “Fine then! It looks like you’re asking for trouble!”

Soon, the verdict came, and it crushed her completely.

The Bai's' unilaterally announced the cancellation of the wedding, which sent yet another blow to the struggling Cheng's'. When the clients heard about it, they immediately ran out of patience and started to chase the Cheng's' for the money they owed, threatening to auction their house and stole their technology.

When Cheng Yuxiu was at the brink of desperation, a woman approached her.

# Stealing Your Heart Chapter 209

That woman was Wen Xian.

She was upfront with her request. "I can give you the money you need, but I need something from you as well."

Cheng Yuxiu was shocked, yet she couldn't help but think that Wen Xian must be crazy. They've never met or had any kind of connections, yet money was the first thing this woman promised. Cheng Yuxiu figured that Wen Xian was just another person coming to poke fun at her current situation, so she tried to chase her away immediately. "I don't know you. Please leave."

Wen Xian didn't get mad, but instead requested for the person who accompanied her there to give Cheng Yuxiu her name card. "If you ever need me, come and see me."

After that, she left without a word.

Shortly after she left, a group of people stormed her house and took Cheng Yuwen away, threatening to send him to jail if Cheng Yuxiu didn't pay them in three days.

When her father was around, Cheng Yuxiu never had to worry about money, and neither did she have many friends besides Bai Hongfei.

However, he had disappeared without a trace when she needed him the most.

Her world collapsed on her overnight.

Left with no other choice, she called Wen Xian's number on the third night.

The first thing she said when the call went through was, "I can help you, but I need the money first."

Wen Xian immediately put a huge sum into her bank account, which saved Cheng Yuwen from being thrown in jail and pacified the clients.

After that, Wen Xian came to visit them again.

"What do you want from me?" Cheng Yuxiu asked.

Wen Xian didn't answer, instead she gave her a picture of Zong Qifeng. "Do you think he's handsome?"

When Cheng Yuxiu saw the man in the photo, she was immediately drawn to his good look. He had deep-set eyes, a well-chiseled face, a suit-clad body...he was coming out of his car in the picture, which looked like it was taken in secret.

Wen Xian smiled. "This is my husband, and I got someone to take this in secret."

Cheng Yuxiu struggled to understand her motives. "Why are you showing me your husband's photo?"

Wen Xian looked at her for a long while before saying, "I want you to become his mistress."

Cheng Yuxiu felt like she just got struck by lightning, and she stayed rooted to the ground, unable to come back to her senses.

Did she hear that right? Be her husband's mistress?

That must be the biggest joke she had ever heard in her life.

However, Wen Xian was very calm about it. "That's right, I want you to become his mistress. In fact, I want you to bear his children."

“Are you infertile?” Lin Xinyan asked, frowning. Which woman would willingly find a mistress for her husband?

Wasn't that crazy?

Lin Xinyan struggled to understand as well.

“That was what I thought. She just wanted to find a mistress for her husband because of that. However, when Jinghao was seven, she got pregnant. By the time he turned eight, she had already given birth.”

Doesn't that mean that Zong Jinghao had a sibling?

“So what happened to the kid?” Lin Xinyan asked.

“I don't know. I've never met the child. I never met her again prior to her death, and neither do I know where the child went,” Cheng Yuxiu confessed.

Right after Wen Xian passed away, Zong Qifeng took in Cheng Yuxiu as his legitimate wife.

Cheng Yuxiu had no choice but to follow Wen Xian's plan since she took the money from her.

The biggest reason for that was due to Bai Hongfei's disappearance.

After the downfall of the Cheng's', the man who said that he loved her and wanted to live his life with her disappeared the moment she ran into trouble.

She was hopeless, and hence agreed to leave with Wen Xian.

After they got to B City, Wen Xian gave her a house and her own maids.

Wen Xian came to check on her frequently too, making sure that she was living comfortably.

She was a genuinely nice person.

The only thing Cheng Yuxiu couldn't figure out was why Wen Xian had chosen to help her.

"What made you so interested in me? That was a huge sum of money, and your husband is a successful man and..."

"You're worth it," Wen Xian said, cutting her off. "I've considered many women, yet none of them were as pretty or resilient as you."

She had met several women that day and was on her way back home in disappointment when she saw Cheng Yuxiu coming out of the Bai family residence. The sunlight had been scorching that day, and her face was completely red and sweaty.

"That's Ms. Cheng from the Cheng family, the one that makes tea silk," her driver said upon noticing her lingering gaze on Cheng Yuxiu.

"The one that had problems with the fabric they made and got themselves into huge debt?" Wen Xian asked.

The driver nodded. "That's right. She seems to have a marriage pact with the Young Master of the Bai family, but it seems that it has gone down the drain now."

Even the driver could tell that Cheng Yuxiu didn't manage to get the pity of the Bai family, let alone the intelligent Wen Xian. She could tell at first glance that Cheng Yuxiu got turned away when she came looking for the Bai's'.

She could see the utter despair in Cheng Yuxiu's eyes.

Despite that, she still stood tall.

That's one tenacious woman.

As such, she picked Yuxiu's most vulnerable moment to approach her to offer her financial aid.

Because of that, she caught Cheng Yuxiu by surprise.

She couldn't understand why this woman chose her, and she had the same questions Lin Xinyan had. "Why are you looking for someone to bear your husband's children? Are you unable to have kids yourself?"

Wen Xian didn't answer her questions. "I'll get someone to pick you up tonight," she simply said.

She left after that.

That only made Cheng Yuxiu fret even more as she was trying to understand what Wen Xian meant by that.

She collapsed onto the floor, feeling as though she could disintegrate into pieces at that very moment.

She was like a soulless, lonely puppet that was abandoned by the world.

Her maid helped her up. "Ma'am said that you need to bathe and change."

She went through the whole process without registering what was going on, and she arrived at the doorstep of the Zong family while still in a state of stupor. She finally came back to her senses when Wen Xian appeared before her.

Wen Xian stood before the sofa in the living room. "Second floor, first room in the right. Don't turn on the light after you lie down."

Cheng Yuxiu felt humiliated, and her hands trembled inside her sleeves. She couldn't even feel the pain of her fingernails digging into her palms.

Wen Xian could see her reluctance.

"You promised me. I hope you will honor your promise and not let me down. Don't make me regret this," Wen Xian said, before leaving the room.

Cheng Yuxiu was left alone in the house.

It was hot, yet she felt chilly all over.

It was as though someone had picked a hole in her heart, making every breath prickle with pain.

Her legs felt like they were made of lead, and every step she took required much effort.

After arriving on the second floor, she opened the door to darkness. Without turning on the light, she strained her eyes and followed the streaks of moonlight to the big, comfortable bed. There was a sweet aroma lingering in the air.

The room looked like something a lover had prepared for a night to remember.

However, she couldn't help but feel insulted at the sight of that. Her lover disappeared when she needed his comfort the most.

On the other hand, she had ended up in this unfamiliar room, waiting for a man whose wife found him a mistress.

How much more insulting could this be?

This is unbelievable.

Wen Xian stood outside the mansion and watched as Cheng Yuxiu ascended the stairs and disappeared into the room. She took out her phone and called Zong Qifeng.

“When are you coming back?”

Zong Qifeng wasn't expecting a call from his wife the moment he got out of a meeting. Standing in the corridor and looking at the sky outside, he asked, “What's going on?”

Wen Xian hummed lightly and said, “I'm waiting for you in the room. You know that I get embarrassed easily, so don't turn on the lights when you come in.”

It was obviously an invitation.

# Stealing Your Heart Chapter 210

Zong Qifeng's expression didn't change, but his eyes began to lose its spark.

He married Wen Xian according to their families' wishes, despite having no feelings for her. It's been a year since they got married, yet they treated each other like acquaintances and steered clear of intimacy.

They slept separately even on the night of their wedding, since Wen Xian said that she was scared.

Zong Qifeng knew the real reason perfectly well, she's in love with someone else.

He didn't love her initially, but he had to admit that Wen Xian was a good woman. She was kind and gentle. He couldn't help but start getting interested in her, though he hid his feelings away.

He knew that she already loved someone else and that her gentle demeanor was just a mask for her strong personality. She would do anything to please the person she loved.

Wouldn't that make anyone fall for her?

It sounds funny, but he had never forced her into doing things she didn't want to.

In the eyes of the public, they were a perfect match for each other, and many people envied them.

However, no one knew that there is no substance in their relationship.

As to his wife's request, he knew that the person waiting in the room might not be Wen Xian herself...

He went home anyway.

Knowing that the person inside the room was not his legitimate wife, he still pushed the door open.

Cheng Yuxiu burrowed further into the sheets and trembled violently the moment she heard the door open.

Zong Qifeng watched as the mound in the sheets shook, his eyes squinting a little.

He didn't know whether he should be happy or sad.

In the era of monogamy, where the sensitivity, paranoia, and mysophobia of women became increasingly apparent.

His wife found a woman for him willingly.

Closing the door, he strode over to the bed.

Cheng Yuxiu shivered as she heard the door close.

She held on tightly to the blanket she used to wrap herself in, praying that he wouldn't come nearer.

Zong Qifeng stood by the bed and looked at the body hidden inside the sheets. He knew that it wasn't Wen Xian, but he still called out, "Wen Xian."

Cheng Yuxiu began to cry as she screamed internally, "I'm Cheng Yuxiu! I'm not your wife! I'm not Wen Xian!"

She couldn't bring herself to vocalize it.

She agreed to this, and she regretted it wholly. She had been acting rashly, and even though she saved the family and her brother, she had ruined her own life.

Zong Qifeng could tell how terrified the woman in the blankets must be, but he didn't consider leaving. No matter how this woman looked or how smart she was, he's getting his way with her tonight.

Unbuttoning his shirt one by one, he rasped, "Since you've agreed to this, why are you acting so defeated?"

Cheng Yuxiu froze. What did he mean by that?

Did he know that the person under the sheets was not his wife?

"You took her money and agreed to her conditions, so don't feel embarrassed. All this was voluntary," he said. Shouldn't he be the one feeling embarrassed?

Cheng Yuxiu tossed the blankets aside. "You..."

Before she could say another word, he shoved her back onto the bed and ripped off her clothes.

Cheng Yuxiu struggled against his grip. "I'm not your wife! I'm not..."

The man didn't want to hear that at all. Pressing her head down and refusing to meet her gaze or even hear her voice, he covered her face with a blanket and said, "There. Neither of us will feel embarrassed this way."

That night, she screamed herself hoarse.

When she dated Bai Hongfei, they stayed away from intimacy. He had asked for it a couple of times, but she pacified him with kisses, promising a good time on their wedding night.

Little did she know that she would present herself to a man she saw on a photograph and barely recognized.

When the sky brightened up just a bit, the man got up and started to put on his clothes, his back facing her. "We're done for now."

Wen Xian did this out of regret. Women...

Since she wanted some closure, then he might as well give it to her.

This would calm her down anyway.

Cheng Yuxiu stayed hidden inside the blankets, her hair wet with sweat and tears. "Don't you love your wife?"

"I like her."

Zong Qifeng liked his wife, but as for love...

He didn't see a difference between the two.

"Then why...you love your wife, but you did it with another woman...aren't you hurting her?"

Cheng Yuxiu couldn't help but wonder if both of them were maniacs.

A man who loved his wife willingly got into bed with another woman.

On the other hand, the woman had willingly found someone to sleep with her husband.

Zong Qifeng scoffed. "How did you know that I'm not making her happy?"

Cheng Yuxiu felt confused.

How would a wife be happy with her husband sleeping with someone else?

What kind of couple was that?

"After you get up, change the sheets and clean the room up. She doesn't like her room to be messy."

He left after that.

Yuxiu sat on the bed by herself as she watched the tall figure disappeared through the door. She could tell that he cared about his wife from his words.

Why would he agree to this then?

She couldn't figure out why.

She dragged her fatigued body out of bed and yanked the sheets off the bed to replace them with clean ones from the cupboard, before opening the windows to let in some fresh air. By the time she had finished, the sky had brightened up completely.

Rays of sunlight shone into the room and illuminated every corner of it, making it look prim and proper. It was as though the darkness and chaos last night never happened.

Downstairs.

Zong Qifeng saw the woman sitting on the sofa. "Are you happy now?" He asked coldly.

Wen Xian felt regretful. "I'm sorry."

Zong Qifeng gave her a look and said, "I don't need that."

After that, he left.

Before he could step out of the front door, Wen Xian called out to him. "She's different from the others. You'll fall in love with her for sure."

Zong Qifeng laughed. "As long as you're fine with it, I can fall for her right now."

Looking back at the woman standing in the light and the regret in her eyes, he froze for a moment and swallowed the unforgiving words he was about to say. "You found her for me just because you felt that you owed me something. Now that I have had her, do you feel relieved?"

Wen Xian looked at him, swaying slightly on her feet. "I will not be with Ziyi so long as you haven't found someone you love."

That was her promise to him.

That had no choice but to marry each other as per their families' wishes, but she already had a lover before Zong Qifeng so she could never love him.

The only thing she could do was to find a better woman for him.

She had seen countless woman over the years, yet only Cheng Yuxiu seemed fitting for this man.

"If you had met me first, would you have loved me?" Zong Qifeng asked.

He had never felt so powerless before.

Neither had he stooped so low in his life.

Wen Xian gave him a long look before answering, "Yes."

Zong Qifeng turned around and took a step forward before stopping. "If you managed to find me a woman I loved, I will let you go."