

Stealing Your Heart Chapter 271

The atmosphere was quiet for a moment.

“I do.”

There seemed to be no suspense at all to that answer. Su Zhan said it out so easily.

It seemed everyone had expected this answer so there was not something they waited for with bated breath.

“Ms. Qin, do you take Mr. Su as your lawful wedded husband, to have and to hold, from this day forward, for better or for worse, for richer or for poorer, in sickness and in health, to love and cherish until death do you part?”

All eyes were focused on Qin Ya. It was her answer that everyone was still a little uncertain about.

Lin Xinyan seemed very nervous too. Her hands were clenched involuntarily. Zong Jinghao held her hand in his palm and kneaded it lightly. He did not even look at the two people who were about to get married on the stage. To him, there was no one who could attract his attention like she did.

Every line on Su Zhan's face was tense. He was afraid she would suddenly change her mind.

Time stood still.

The old lady in the congregation was so anxious that she waved to Qin Ya, hurrying her to agree quickly.

Su Zhan was rather worried. He turned to look her and at exactly the same Qin Ya turned, too. Their eyes met. Su Zhan, who was anxious, gradually calmed down as he looked into her serene eyes.

He held Qin Ya's hand and vowed a promise that was so much more than a wedding vow, "I will indeed treat you well, forever."

The corner of her lips turned upwards, her eyes turned into crescents with barely visible sparks of light in them and she said, "I do."

The host picked up the microphone again and continued, "Marriage is the end of singlehood, the celebration of romance and the beginning of happiness. On this special joyous day, I wish you two newlyweds happy loving moments hand in hand, encouraging moments in facing life's unknowns with each other and sweet, happy moments of growing old together!"

Clap! Clap!

In the congregation, the old lady was overwhelmed with emotion and she clapped her hands. In slow motion, the air was filled with colored ribbons falling from above to the sound of her handclapping.

It was beautiful and romantic like a shower of rainbows.

"The groom may embrace and kiss the bride."

Su Zhan lifted Qin Ya's veil. Before Qin Ya was ready, he bent down over her and kissed her. Qin Ya's eyes widened and she was stunned for a long time.

"So shy." Lin Ruixi covered her eyes, peeking through a gap between her fingers. She kept repeating 'so shy' as she kept watching. Zong Jinghao glanced at her little daughter and deliberately covered the gap between her fingers.

The moment Lin Ruixi noticed her peep hole was covered, she turned and glared at Zong Jinghao, "Papa is bad, you don't let me watch Su Zhan and Qin Ya play kissing."

Zong Jinghao hugged her in his arms, "Don't look at evil, don't listen to evil, understand?"

The little girl did not understand. She blinked her eyes and asked, "What does that mean?"

"It means we mustn't look at things that we are not allowed to and we mustn't listen to things we aren't permitted to." Close by, Lin Xichen replied slowly.

Lin Xichen shook his head helplessly at his younger sister's innocence and ignorance, saying, "Mummy should send you to school. You don't know anything."

This was the point. Lin Xichen and Lin Ruixi were both five years old. Lin Xichen entered the AC Academy based on his own strength while Lin Ruixi did not go to school.

In China, children this age were studying in kindergarten.

Zong Jinghao was considering sending them both to a kindergarten the following year to experience school life. He did not wish to force them to study hard but just to experience this part of growing up.

It was not that Lin Xinyan wished to keep them away from school. She did not worry about Lin Xichen whose intelligence was way above kindergarten level. She searched for a suitable school back when they were in country A but he did not want to go because he found it too childish for him.

Later, it was discovered that he had a talent for numbers. So, he took the AC test and was accepted into the academy. He was the youngest student in the academy.

As for her daughter, she did not have high expectations. When she was born, she was very tiny. As long as she had a normal stress-free childhood and grew up healthy, it was all that her heart desired.

In fact, she advocated Western education. The children were not taught formal subjects before elementary school, instead they were given lots of play time and encouraged to explore and be curious about learning.

“Xi, let’s go to the bridal chamber and ask the bride for wedding candy.” Shen Peichuan came over wearing his suit. Other than his uniform, he was always casually dressed. He looked pretty good in a suit this very first time.

At the word ‘candy,’ Lin Ruixi started clamoring, “I want to go, Uncle Shen, take me too.”

“Alright.” Shen Peichuan took her from Zong Jinghao’s arms and announced, “I will take them upstairs.”

Zong Jinghao instructed, “Do mind yourself- don’t use improper language in front of the children.”

Shen Peichuan acknowledged that and then brought the two children upstairs.

No matter what, it was Su Zhan’s wedding night. It had always been an age old traditional practice to tease the newlyweds. He would not be forgiven if he did not go and tease them.

Zong Jinghao stood up and said, “Let’s go for a walk.”

Lin Xinyan had not been sleeping well for the past few days and she wanted to go back and rest. “I don’t feel like going,” she replied.

Zong Jinghao placed her jacket around her, saying, “Just accompany me.”

Lin Xinyan stared at Zong Jinghao. How does this man find time for walks?

“What is it do you want?” Lin Xinyan did not think that it was as simple as a walk.

“You will know when the time comes. Just follow me.” Zong Jinghao was holding her hand. Once this man makes a decision, you can’t say no. You’ve got to go along.

Once outside, the wind was rather strong. Zong Jinghao wrapped her in a coat. It was a long road outside the hotel. Traffic was scarce. In fact, it seemed remote.

If it was not for the hotel here, the road probably would not have existed.

Lin Xinyan looked around and found that there were pine trees all around. Even though it was winter, they were still green.

Lin Xinyan could not help asking, “What on earth do you want, bringing me to such a remote place?”

Zong Jinghao deliberately kept quiet to rouse her curiosity.

Such was human nature: when interested, they got more and more curious, wanting to know more. Lin Xinyan was no exception. She wanted to know what tricks Zong Jinghao had up his sleeve.

She pretended to be angry and stopped in her tracks. “If you don’t tell me, I won’t go.”

Zong Jinghao leaned over, his lips pressed against her face, “Are you sure you won’t go?”

Perhaps it was because he was too close, Lin Xinyan felt hot. Yet, in her ears she heard the whistling of the cold strong winter wind. She said calmly, “I’m sure.”

Zong Jinghao glanced around. The pine trees in this forest were very dense. If anyone chooses this as a hiding place, they should be able to hide well, is that not so?

“I’m leaving.” Lin Xinyan pushed him away. Before she could move a step, someone had held her by her waist. She had been traumatized before and was haunted by this sudden action. Her face turned pale. Zong Jinghao sensed her fear and he whispered in her ear. “It’s just me.”

She only felt a little relieved when she heard the familiar voice. She felt only a warm hand wrapped around her waist, like a flexible and powerful python, firmly entangling her. Their two bodies were immediately pressed closer together.

In this ‘cold desolate countryside,’ Lin Xinyan gently pushed him away, saying, “It’s cold here...”

What she meant to say was, “Let’s not do it here.”

“You won’t feel cold if I hold you in my arms.”

With those words, he had her whole person wrapped up inside his coat.

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Lin Xinyan looked up. Zong Jinghao was bending over her and his body was pressing down on top of her. In the next instant, his lips were upon her mouth.

Even on this windy winter's day, Lin Xinyan did not feel cold. Her whole body felt as if roasted by a hot fire. He used a lot of strength and while most of the coat covered her body, only her head was exposed to the cold. Lin Xinyan seemed to understand a little bit of his reason for bring her to this remote place.

“Do you want to attract He Rui...”

His kiss suddenly deepened, preventing her from speaking aloud.

He sucked at her tongue and took it in his mouth. It felt painful as he kissed her so savagely. Lin Xinyan could not help but yelp. It came out as a moan.

Perhaps her voice aroused him for Lin Xinyan obviously felt his body's reaction.

Lin Xinyan tried to push him away but the more she pushed, the tighter Zong Jinghao hugged her.

She was held so tightly that she could hardly breathe.

Deep in the woods, there was a pair of eyes watching them, red and bloodthirsty.

He Ruize's hand grasped onto a tree trunk, as if squeezing Zong Jinghao's neck. He used all his strength and might to break it before letting go.

There was no pain worse than looking at the woman you love lying in the arms of another man, and both of them so in love.

He was angry and resentful.

Was his company for so many years' worth less than the love of a man who hurt her?

If it were not for the voice reasoning in his mind telling him that rushing out now would not win Lin Xinyan back, he would definitely have rushed over and dragged Lin Xinyan out of Zong Jinghao's arms.

Lin Xinyan belonged to him!

Zong Jinghao was tireless, going on and on. Lin Xinyan got angry and bit his exploring tongue. His eyebrows shot up as the smell of blood filled his senses for an instant. He withdrew his mouth from her lips and there followed a thread of saliva mixed with blood.

A gust of wind snapped the thread and Lin Xinyan's mouth felt chilly. Zong Jinghao licked his lips and swallowed the salty taste. Then he reached out to wipe the wetness remaining on the corners of her lips. With a low raspy voice he asked, "Are you so cruel to me?"

Lin Xinyan turned her head, saying nothing.

Zong Jinghao wrapped her in his arms again, saying, "Come on, let's go back."

His overcoat was on her. He only had a thin shirt on. Lin Xinyan took off her clothes and put them on his body, "I have a down jacket. I don't feel cold."

Zong Jinghao hugged her close, sharing one coat between two people.

Back at the hotel, the two went upstairs and they heard noises still coming from Su Zhan's room. The door was not closed and from the crack, they saw Lin Xichen holding a piece of candy tied with a string in his hand. He was swinging it near Su Zhan's mouth.

“Uncle Su, if you can’t catch it with your mouth, Aunt Qin must hold me to sleep tonight.”

Su Zhan was speechless.

This child from whoever’s family, can someone please take him away? Can you leave the newlyweds alone?

Su Zhan tried a few times but failed to catch the candy in his mouth.

“Change it to something else.”

Lin Xichen seemed reasonable, nodding his head, “Sure, if you can’t catch it, Aunt Qin will hold me and my sister and sleep with us.”

Su Zhan could not find his tongue.

You’re being a bully. Isn’t that what you are doing?

“I said change the game a little, not the punishment,” Su Zhan suggested.

Lin Xichen was still being nice. He asked, “How do you want to play?”

Su Zhan smiled and looked at Lin Xichen, “You keep your hand still.”

This time, Lin Xichen had no reply. If I don’t move, you’ll easily catch it. Where’s the fun?

Su Zhan glared at Shen Peichuan who was sitting nearby watching them. This was his idea.

Shen Peichuan shrugged and laughed slyly. “Tease the groom, tease the bride, Otherwise, they can’t unite. After the teasing, they’ll always be loving; closer too, their younger siblings.”

Su Zhan replied, "Tsk, what type of logic is that?"

Shen Peichuan laughed aloud.

Lin Xichen got down from bed, saying, "Oh, how stupid."

Su Zhan kept silent.

He was about to yell 'why don't you try it?!' when he saw Lin Xichen taking the candy and eating it himself. There was now an apple tied to the string. He said kindly, "I'm giving you something bigger. It's easier to bite."

Su Zhan went over and stroked his head, "Xi is really a nice person."

Lin Xichen laughed and climbed onto the bed again, standing there. He swung the apple right in front of Su Zhan. "Uncle Su, if you can't bite it this time, I'll punish you to... wash Aunt Qin Ya's feet."

Qin Ya who was playing with Lin Ruixi nearby heard Lin Xichen. She turned red with embarrassment.

Su Zhan cast her a glance and laughed in agreement, "Come on then."

The result was pathetic. The moment he bit, Lin Xichen moved his hand and he missed. The apple bounced against his face a few times. He just couldn't get his teeth into it. The apple skin was smooth and slippery. He could touch it with his mouth but not sink his teeth into it.

"Kid, you tricked me." Su Zhan realized that changing from candy to apple was not out of kindness.

"Go and get a basin of water for foot washing," Lin Xichen ordered like a big lord.

“Washing my own wife’s feet is nothing to be ashamed of,” Su Zhan consoled himself. Then he went to the bathroom to fetch warm water.

Quite quickly, Su Zhan carried a basin of warm water into the room. He put it down by the bedside and called to Qin Ya, “My little wife, come and let me wash your feet.”

Qin Ya pretended she did not hear him. With so many people around, she felt shy.

Lin Xichen pulled her, saying, “Aunt Qin Ya, please come.”

Lin Ruixi wanted to join in the fun and so, she helped her brother to pull Qin Ya.

Qin Ya could refuse an adult but not too little children. Obediently she sat on the bed. She was still wearing high heels. Su Zhan held her feet and took them off. Lin Xichen covered his mouth to stifle his giggles.

“Aunt Qin Ya, I am your guardian angel and I will protect you. If Uncle Su bullies you, you can tell me. Then, I will avenge you.”

Inexplicably, Lin Xichen’s words brought tears into Qin Ya’s eyes. No one had ever promised to protect her. Lin Xichen was the first.

As she felt touched, warmth filled her heart.

She sniffed, stroked Lin Xichen’s little head and said, “Thank you, Xi.”

“Don’t mention it, mommy said we are one family.” Lin Xichen took some candy and stuffed them into his sister’s pocket. “This is Aunt Qin Ya’s wedding candy. We must have more.”

Having kept the candy properly, he held his sister's hand, "We are leaving." Passing by Shen Peichuan on his way out, he said, "Uncle Shen, you should leave, too."

Shen Peichuan had thought that this kid would continue to torture Su Zhan for some time. He was surprised that the kid would let him off so fast.

He got up from his chair, "Xi, the opportunity to torment him only comes this one time, are you sure you want to let him off just like this?"

"For Aunt Qin Ya's sake, I let him off. In future, if he bullies Aunt Qin Ya, I'll punish him."

Su Zhan placed Qin Ya's foot in the warm water. At the same time, he lifted his head, "Did you bribe the kid? He's so nice to you."

Qin Ya did not reply him.

When Qin Ya was with Lin Xinyan, she got to know the two kids. Their bond strengthened as they spent time together over a long period.

Su Zhan put her other foot into the warm water, promising, "From now on, I'll treat you well."

Qin Ya brushed her face, "You have to keep your word."

Su Zhan washed her feet in earnest. She was fair. Her feet too were fair, and they were small.

Qin Ya found it ticklish and shrank back. Su Zhan held them in the basin, "Soak a little. It feels nice."

When Lin Xichen and his sister came out of the room, they found their parents, Lin Xinyan and Zong Jinghao, standing at the doorway.

Lin Ruixi rushed over and hugged Lin Xinyan, saying, “Mommy, there’s a lot of candy in my pocket. Let me give you one.”

She took out one, removed the wrapping and gave it to Lin Xinyan. She bent down to her level and placed the candy into her mouth.

It was really sweet.

Shen Peichuan was the last to come out. He closed the door behind him.

When Su Zhan came back after pouring away the foot washing water, he saw that the door was closed. He went to lock it to be sure.

Turning around, he saw Qin Ya standing right there.

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“What are you doing?”

Qin Ya was still wearing her wedding gown. She looked extraordinarily beautiful today. At this moment, her face was wrinkled up in a frown.

Su Zhan spoke the truth. Besides, she had seen it too. “Just locking the door.”

“Why are you locking the door?” Qin Ya raised her voice a little. She walked over to open it but Su Zhan held her back. “What are you doing? This is our wedding night. Do you want me to spend this night alone? I’m telling you, there’s no way!”

“You... Oh!”

Before Qin Ya could finish speaking, she was carried up by Su Zhan. Qin Ya punched and kicked but Su Zhan didn’t care. He threw her onto the big soft bed and climbed on top of her. As he undressed her, he said, “Tonight, you must be with me, or else I’ll be the laughing stock.”

Qin Ya was not a little girl without experience. Seeing Su Zhan’s gestures, she knew what he wanted to do only too well and that was why she was uneasy.

She moved a little, “Su Zhan, don’t you be too excited.”

She was not conservative. Instead, she was simply not prepared. The truth was that the last time it happened between them, they both had too much to drink and so, neither of them felt any embarrassment.

It was different now. Both of them were very sober.

Though she was fond of him, they had not been intimate.

Su Zhan laughed, "Don't you worry. I'll be gentle."

"Su Zhan, let me prepare myself." Qin Ya rolled over and tried to crawl away. Su Zhan caught her by the ankle and wrapped her legs around his waist. He positioned his body on top of her, "We are husband and wife, what is there to think about?"

"Su... mmm..."

Qin Ya's words were buried in Su Zhan's kiss.

Outside, Shen Peichuan stroked Lin Xichen's head and said, "Xi, you are too kind today. Su Zhan did not suffer enough. You should torment him more so that he will appreciate what he has."

Lin Xichen looked up at Shen Peichuan, "Are you jealous?"

Shen Peichuan kept quiet.

Then he raised his eyebrows, "Why should I be jealous?"

"Because you are the only one who has no wife."

Shen Peichuan was now speechless.

"Naughty boy, you dare make fun of me." Shen Peichuan made as if to pull his ears but Lin Xichen was too fast for him. He ran off swiftly.

Lin Xinyan was about to take her daughter back to her room when she met the old lady coming upstairs. Seeing Lin Ruixi, her eyes narrowed and she said, "This little girl looks so beautiful, just like her mother."

Because someone praised her, Lin Ruixi smiled happily and greeted the old lady, "Grandma, how are you?"

Lin Xinyan hurriedly corrected her daughter. She squatted down and said to her, "I can call her grandma, but you have to call her great grandma."

Lin Ruixi seemed to understand and clarified, "I have to call Mommy's grandmother 'great grandma,' right?"

Lin Xinyan nodded, "Yes."

Lin Ruixi turned her head and looked at the old lady, her words were sweet like honey, "Great grandma, how are you?"

"Ah." The old lady's heart was melted by the little girl. Holding her hand, she asked, "Ruixi, will you invite me into your room?"

She was getting older. Although she did not need to do anything for the wedding, she still worried about it a lot. Just after dealing with the scene, she was tired and wanted to rest. Nevertheless, in this unfamiliar place, she wanted to find someone to talk to. Everyone was very busy. She saw the cute little girl and wanted to stay with her for a while.

The older a person got, the more afraid of being alone she felt.

"Yes," Lin Ruixi replied without thinking. She led the old lady into her room, followed by Lin Xinyan. It was not known where Lin Xichen had gone with Shen Peichuan to play. Zong Jinghao wanted to spend more time with Lin Xinyan so he came in, too.

As Lin Xinyan poured some water for the old lady, she asked, "Today was tiring, wasn't it?"

The old lady smiled happily thinking it was worth being tired as Su Zhan's wedding was a success. "I'm getting old and useless," she said.

“Grandma is healthy, not old,” Lin Xinyan replied, placing the cup in front of the old lady.

The old lady held Lin Xinyan’s hand, saying, “I was told that you are close to Qin Ya. Is that so?”

Lin Xinyan nodded her head honestly, “We have known each other for a few years. We are like family now.”

The old lady nodded her head. “Su Zhan is not a bad boy. He has been hurt before. After that, for a long time, he felt unmotivated. Sometimes, there was a woman but he was not serious. This time, he really got married. I’m so happy. I like this Qin Ya. She is so kind. I hope Su Zhan will not stray again but will live a good life with her. After a year or so, give birth to a baby girl like little Ruixi. That is all I want.”

Lin Xinyan sensed that the old lady meant more than the words she said. She just took it at face value that the old lady was emotional. “They will be fine and they will have kids. When that time comes, grandma, you’ll be kept really busy.”

The old lady laughed, “May it be as you say.”

Zong Jinghao sat nearby, checking the financial news on his mobile. He was not interested in the topic so he did not contribute to the conversation.

The old lady asked Lin Ruixi, “How old are you, Ruixi?”

“I’m five. After the new year, I’ll be six,” the little girl replied truthfully.

The old lady laughed, “Time passes so swiftly,” she said.

Previously there was no news at all and now here’s this 5-year-old.

Lin Xinyan cuddled up on a sofa nearby, watching them converse.

Lin Ruixi had a lot to say, asking the old lady a lot of strange and unusual questions like, “Great grandma, what is the meaning of getting married?”

The old lady explained patiently, “Getting married is when a man and a woman form their own family. This is called a marriage.”

The little girl’s eyes rolled, “Then, great grandma, have you been married before?”

The old lady replied smilingly, “Yes, of course.”

“Whom did you marry?” the little girl asked.

“Of course, I was married to Su Zhan’s grandfather.”

“Can I get married when I grow up?”

The moment the little girl asked this question, Zong Jinghao who was bent over his mobile phone lifted his head and looked at her daughter. His gaze was dark. The thought of his daughter marrying someone someday had never occurred to him because she was so young.

He believed no one was good enough for her. He would always keep her as his daughter.

Lin Xinyan’s eyelids felt heavy. Finally, she was asleep, not even knowing that she slept on the sofa. Vaguely, she could hear her daughter’s voice asking some strange questions.

She had no idea how long she slept, only that when she awoke, Lin Ruixi and the old lady were not around.

“You’re awake?” Zong Jinghao brought a cup of water to her.

The heater was turned on. It was warm but the atmosphere was dry and her throat felt parched. She took the water and drank a few sips. Her throat felt much better. "How long did I sleep?"

He lowered his head, looked at the time and replied, "Two hours."

Lin Xinyan put down her cup, rubbed her eyes and sat up. Thinking about how he took her out, she asked, "You brought me outside to lure He Ruize out of hiding, right? But he's not stupid. He won't jump out just like that."

Zong Jinghao sat down on the sofa and smoothed out her long hair that was messed up sleeping on the sofa. He replied, "I want to infuriate him."

It was not coincidence when Lin Xinyan met He Ruize in the mall. It was only possible for him to catch her alone if he was observing her every movement. He wanted to abduct her again.

Therefore, this showed that he was constantly monitoring Lin Xinyan.

He Ruize would do anything to abduct Lin Xinyan because he liked her.

And so, he had purposely let He Ruize watch Lin Xinyan be intimate with him in order to make him furious.

Then He Ruize would become impatient to snatch Lin Xinyan away.

If Lin Xinyan appeared to be alone at this moment, would he strike?

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Very quickly, Lin Xinyan understood Zong Jinghao's intentions.

"Would the next step be me going out alone to lure him out?"

"No need for that."

He would never let Lin Xinyan take this risk even if he was confident he could get He Ruize with this one shot. No matter how, he could not let Lin Xinyan be the bait.

"I'll find someone to stand in for you."

"You think He Ruize is stupid?" Lin Xinyan interrupted him. "We have known each other too long. He knows me too well. Even if you can find someone who looks like me, he might not be fooled."

She could have no peace of mind if He Ruize was not caught. He was like a time bomb and it was unknown when he would blow up.

For her own safety and that of her two kids, she wanted to resolve this problem as soon as possible.

"Just let me do it." She looked at Zong Jinghao solemnly. She knew what he was worried about. She was willing to trust him, believing that he could protect her.

Seeing him hesitate, Lin Xinyan said deliberately, "Is it because you lack confidence in yourself?"

Zong Jinghao gazed at her for a while. Softly he said, "Don't agitate me. No matter how foolproof our plans, there is always the risk of something unexpected. I cannot put you at risk."

Lin Xinyan cuddled up in his embrace. "I have faith in you. His existence distresses me."

Zong Jinghao leaned backwards. His face was hidden in shadows and his facial expression could not be seen. Lin Xinyan was silent, quietly lying on his chest, letting him digest the implications of this matter.

After some time, he spoke suddenly, "Go back to sleep."

For the past two days, she hardly slept. That was why she could fall asleep on the sofa just now. Besides, she did not sleep for long. Lin Xinyan knew that he was going out to discuss the matter with Shen Peichuan and so she laid down obediently.

Zong Jinghao put a blanket over her, saying, "I'll be back soon."

"Yeah." Lin Xinyan did not feel sleepy at all. Nevertheless, to give Zong Jinghao a peace of mind, she closed her eyes and pretended to sleep.

Zong Jinghao waited for her to fall asleep before getting up and leaving the room. As soon as he left, Lin Xinyan who had fallen asleep opened her eyes again. She was tired but she couldn't sleep after learning about Zong Jinghao's plan.

Wrapped in a blanket, she got up and walked to the window. Through the window, she could feel the biting cold wind outside.

Whoosh, whoosh. The wind swayed the branches of the trees.

Knock knock...

Someone was knocking on the door. Lin Xinyan collected herself and spoke gently, "Come in."

The door was pushed open. Qin Ya stood there, hesitant and unsure for a moment what to say.

I am sure I had something to say to her when I made my way here.

Lin Xinyan came over, "Do come inside. Don't stand there."

Qin Ya felt a bit shy. Do all newly married women feel such awkward emotions?

Lin Xinyan poured some water for her and sat opposite her on the sofa. She did not have any experiences to share.

"My marriage is a mess. I cannot share any experiences with you. I can tell you this- if we have come to this point of walking side by side as partners in life, then it is destined. Treasure each other well."

Qin Ya lowered her head and softly replied, "Mm..."

"I would like to address you as an elder sister like before." Su Zhan and Zong Jinghao were like brothers. He addressed Lin Xinyan as his 'sister-in-law.' Hence his new wife Qin Ya was expected to do the same. Nonetheless, she did not want to.

She wanted to be with Lin Xinyan like how they used to be.

Lin Xinyan laughed, "Of course, you may."

She thought it did not matter how they addressed each other, as long as they were the same persons. Their friendship would not change. What names they used for each other was unimportant.

Just at this moment, the old lady came in bringing with her Lin Xichen and Lin Ruixi. Seeing Qin Ya there, the old lady smiled wider. "Ya is also here."

Qin Ya stood up hurriedly, "Grandma."

The old lady waved her hands, "Sit, sit." In her eyes, Qin Ya was perfect in every way.

Lin Xichen rolled onto the bed and studied his Rubik's Cube. Lin Ruixi threw herself into Lin Xinyan's arms. It was unclear if she was sleepy or tired. She laid lazily in her arms.

The old lady sat down beside Qin Ya, holding her hand and she spoke, "Ya, from now on, we are one family. If Su Zhan bullies you, you must tell me."

Qin Ya pursed her lips and lowered her head a little as she was shy then replied, "He doesn't bully me."

The old lady was glad. Perhaps she was in a good mood and so she looked bright and alert. She patted Qin Ya hand and said emotionally, "I feel like I am dreaming."

She was prepared to be sad. She had thought that Su Zhan was lying to her like before each time he told her he would marry at the end of the year.

She never imagined this time it would turn out to be real.

"I'm getting old. I hope you and Su Zhan will always be happy together. Can you promise me something?" The old lady suddenly became solemn.

"Please tell me," Qin Ya said.

"No matter what happens in future, please do not leave him. Look after him well for me. Can you promise?"

Qin Ya thought the old lady's request was very strange but she could not pinpoint where or how. In order to give grandma her peace of mind, Qin Ya replied solemnly, "I promise you."

The old lady was overjoyed. Hearing this from Qin Ya, her mind was at rest.

In the evening, Lin Xinyan left the hotel alone. The weather since December had not been warm and the north wind was chilly at night.

The wind on one's face was like knives and it felt as painful as cuts.

Lin Xinyan pulled her down jacket tighter around her.

The New Year was round the corner. Zong Jinghao wanted to capture He Ruize as soon as possible and then return to B City. This was the first year Lin Xinyan came back and so, he wanted the family to enjoy a peaceful reunion without any disruption.

This was Lin Xinyan's desire too. If the uncertainty was not dealt with, she simply could not have a peace of mind.

To trap He Ruize, Lin Xinyan pretended to quarrel with Zong Jinghao. She came out at night alone, sitting by the flower pond.

To make it realistic enough to convince He Ruize, Qin Ya came out to persuade her, "Ms. Lin, all couples quarrel but President Zong is a good man. Please forgive him for the sake of your two children. Let's go back inside. It's so cold here."

Lin Xinyan covered her face and refused to talk.

Qin Ya continued, "Both the children are waiting for you. Let's go back."

Lin Xinyan lowered her head, "I want to be left alone. You go back inside. Take care of the two kids for me."

"But I'm worried if you are out here alone." Qin Ya pulled her, "Come inside with me."

"I don't want to see him. You go inside. Leave me alone for a while. I need to think."

After a few fruitless attempts at persuading her, Qin Ya had no choice but to leave her there.

She kept looking back at her, looking really concerned and worried.

Entering the hotel, she did not go back to her room. Instead, she went to meet Su Zhan who was with Zong Jinghao. The two men were in a secret room surveilling everything outside.

Seeing Qin Ya entering the room, Su Zhan got up and came over to her, "You go upstairs. Grandma, Xichen and Ruixi are there."

Qin Ya was worried. "Can this really lure He Ruize to come out of hiding?"

"As long as he is still obsessed with sister-in-law, he is sure to come out. If not this time, then the next. He will come out sooner or later." Su Zhan was sure that He Ruize was suffering from paranoia or else he would not be so persistent.

Qin Ya was worried, "Will he be a threat to the children's safety?"

Su Zhan caressed her face, "Don't worry. Shen Peichuan is upstairs keeping watch."

As for Shen Peichuan, Qin Ya had faith in his ability. Her work here was done and she had better leave instead of being a nuisance.

Qin Ya went upstairs and Su Zhan went back to the room. Zong Jinghao had not left his place by the window. In fact, he did not even change his posture. This went on for three hours. Lin Xinyan sat in the wintry wind for three hours. There was no sign of He Ruize.

“Sis-in-law has been freezing out there for three hours. Should she come back and continue tomorrow?”

With every passing second, the tension on Zong Jinghao’s face increased. As Lin Xinyan battled the cold outside, his heart ached more than anyone else. Yet, he was a sensible logical reasoning being.

Even if He Ruize was watching Lin Xinyan from a hidden position, he might not show up. It’s because there was no way he could confirm if Lin Xinyan really did quarrel with him.

If she sat there longer, it would confirm Lin Xinyan really felt bad. If he did not go out to comfort her, He Ruize would be convinced that there was a quarrel.

The moment He Ruize was certain that Lin Xinyan had really quarreled with him, He Ruize would certainly come out from hiding.

Another two hours passed. Lin Xinyan’s legs were numb and her hands felt frozen.

At exactly the moment when she felt that He Ruize would not show up, a little girl popped up in front of her.

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Lin Xinyan lifted her head and the little girl came into sight. She wore a red cotton jacket and her face was pink with cold.

“Aunt, what are you doing sitting here?”

Lin Xinyan looked at the little girl and then at the surroundings. There were no adults in sight. Her gaze returned to the little girl. “I don’t feel happy, so I am here. Why are you here and where are your folks?”

“My mother is there.” She pointed to the skewers stall not far away.

Lin Xinyan looked in the direction she was pointing. There was a barbecue stall by the roadside. A woman was there, wearing seasoned-looking cotton-padded clothes and an apron, helping guests with kebabs.

“I’m here to help my mother.” The little girl looked well-behaved. Lin Xinyan stroked her hair, saying, “You are a good girl.”

Perhaps, being a mother herself, she let her guard down around the little girl.

“Do you want to eat skewered meat? I’ll ask my mother to sell you at a lower price.”

Lin Xinyan didn’t like this type of food. Nonetheless, she took out some cash and gave it to the little girl, “I don’t want to eat but I’m giving you some money to buy food you like.”

The little girl blinked, seeing so much money. She did not dare to accept it. “Aunt, why are you giving me money?”

She looked at the little girl and through her, she saw herself in the past. When she was in country A with Zhuang Zijin, life was hard. Just like her, she stayed up late at night, braving the cold wind just to make some money to buy food.

So the little girl aroused her compassion.

“When I see you, I remember how it was when I was a little girl like you with my mother.”

The little girl blinked and asked, “Aunt, you sold kebabs too when you were little?”

Lin Xinyan shook her head, “No, but I was working for someone, helping to skewer and barbecue meat.”

The little girl smiled, showing a row of small white teeth. She took the money from Lin Xinyan and said, “I’ll get the kebabs for you.”

The little girl ran towards the barbecue stall. As Lin Xinyan watched her departing figure, her gaze turned gentle.

She thought, after going through hard times, things would get better.

“I’ll go and get sis-in-law back in here,” Su Zhan could not bear it any longer. In this cold wintry night, sitting out there for hours, she could fall sick.

Zong Jinghao did not reply.

“Doesn’t your heart ache?” Su Zhan glared at him as if he couldn’t believe what he was seeing.

Doesn’t he love Lin Xinyan very deeply? How could he be so hard-hearted now?

“Tell me, why did that little girl just show up?”

Never once did Zong Jinghao's gaze leave the scene.

Su Zhan barely gave it a thought. He said, "It's just a child. She's curious seeing sis-in-law sitting there all alone for so long so she ran over to chat with her."

Zong Jinghao turned around and gave Su Zhan a look, "The child knows her well."

"What connection is there..." Speaking mid-sentence, he understood what Zong Jinghao meant. This little girl might have something to do with He Ruize.

"Sis-in-law is very kind." Su Zhan said because he saw Lin Xinyan giving the little girl some money.

Zong Jinghao kept silent. He looked thoughtful. When Lin Xinyan gave the money to the little girl, she looked as if she was remembering something.

He thought, for sure this little girl must have jolted her memory somehow.

After half an hour, the little girl came running back to Lin Xinyan with some skewers in her hands, "Aunt, this is for you."

Lin Xinyan looked at the steaming meat. She had been sitting in the cold for some hours. Indeed, she wanted to take a bite. So she took them, picked a skewer and ate. It had the fragrance of charcoal, not the oily smell of deep-fried food.

"Thank you," Lin Xinyan said, smiling, "It's yummy."

The little girl held her arm, "You gave me so much money; my mother wants to thank you. She cannot leave the stall. Would you come with me?"

"You tell your mother, don't worry about it..."

“Then I’ll give the money back to you.” Speaking, the little girl took out from her pocket the money Lin Xinyan had given to her.

Lin Xinyan caught her hand, “I have given it to you. I will not take it back. Your mother can use this money to buy you a new cotton coat. It will be very warm so when you come out with her to the stall next time, you won’t feel cold.”

“No, I cannot simply accept your money. If I accept it, you need to accept my mother’s word of thanks.”

The little girl was persistent. Lin Xinyan could not decline so she agreed. At this time of the night, presumably, He Ruize would not show up.

At this late hour, there were still customers. The little girl’s mother was still busy. Seeing the little girl bringing Lin Xinyan, her mother rubbed her hands on her apron and said, “You gave my daughter a lot of money.”

Lin Xinyan waved the skewers in her hand and replied, “Money for the barbecued meat.”

“But the few skewers of meat do not cost so much. You are so kind. No wonder that man likes you so much. He insisted that my daughter bring you here.” The woman wore her hair in a pony tail. She looked like a decent person.

Lin Xinyan was puzzled and so she asked, “What man?”

“It’s me.” One of the men sitting at the stall and eating some barbecued meat stood up and turned around. Lin Xinyan saw his face clearly.

He Ruize?

Instantly, she retreated guardedly.

“Aunt, this uncle says he likes you very much. I like you too.” The little girl spoke innocently.

Lin Xinyan bent down and looked at the little girl’s pure innocent face. She clenched her fists. He was making use of even a little child.

“What has become of you?” Lin Xinyan rebuked him.

“This was all your fault.” He Ruize thought he was smart, “You quarreled with Zong Jinghao? I have already told you. Someone who hurt you can never love you wholeheartedly. I am the only one who loves you with all my heart and soul.”

He patted his chest and grinned as he spoke looking rather ferocious.

Everything became clearer to Lin Xinyan. He Ruize was worried that this could be a setup so he used the little girl to remind her of her past based on his knowledge of her history. He knew that she would certainly lower her guard and follow the little girl to the barbecue stall.

“Look, don’t I understand you well? It took me just a little effort to get you here.” He Ruize gloated, proud of how well he knew her. He was very pleased with himself. “I am the only one who understands you and truly loves you...”

“Is that so?”

Suddenly, there was a rush of activity in the darkness. Zong Jinghao walked over in a black suit and overcoat together with a group of bodyguards. A bright flickering light lit his face.

His presence was like a huge net that caught the attention of everyone’s attention. However, his gaze was only focused on Lin Xinyan to whom he rushed and hugged in his arms.

He glanced at He Ruize’s stunned face and he sneered, “You have finally shown up?”

He Ruize looked around and discovered that he had been surrounded. His countenance turned dark and gloomy. "You guys set me up?"

Only then did He Ruize realize he had fallen into a trap.

Su Zhan dug his hands into his pockets and said, "If troubles come upon us, we have to counter it. But, if you create trouble for yourself, you deserve the consequences then. He Ruize, there is no escape for you today."

Suddenly, He Ruize laughed maniacally.

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Su Zhan frowned, "What are you laughing at?"

"Do you really think you have won? You think you have caught me?" He Ruize laughed more and more hysterically.

Su Zhan's brows became knotted more and more tightly. What is the meaning of this?

Zong Jinghao held Lin Xinyan ice-cold hands and embraced her even tighter as his eyes narrowed.

"What other tricks do you have now? Even if you borrow a pair of wings, you cannot fly away." As Su Zhan looked at He Ruize's demented behavior, he turned pale.

"I cannot fly away but can you?" As he spoke, he unzipped himself.

Instantly, Su Zhan knew what he meant. This maniac had explosives strapped to his chest.

The moment he showed the explosives, there was yelling everywhere. The lady who was selling kebabs wrapped her daughter in her arms and hid under the table.

He laughed as he looked at Zong Jinghao, "Which one of you dare come and take me?"

Zong Jinghao pushed Lin Xinyan behind his back quietly to shield her, "What do you want?"

As he spoke, the bodyguard behind He Ruize approached him quietly with the intention to take him down in one move.

He Ruize opened his arms, "Give me Yan and let me take her away. Otherwise, we will all die here together."

Zong Jinghao deliberately engaged him in a conversation so that the bodyguard would have a chance to get at him.

"What if I don't agree?"

"I've already said we will all die together. No one can escape!" He Ruize leaned backward, "Yan, you really want to watch so many people die because of you?"

Lin Xinyan turned away not wanting to look at him but then, her eyes fell upon the mother and daughter hiding under the table. She glanced around as she clenched her fist.

They were both so innocent and were stuck in this dangerous situation because of her.

Lin Xinyan wanted to call out to them to run away as it was useless hiding under that table. However, she was afraid to get He Ruize's attention.

"Yan, please come with me. I am the one who truly adores you and loves you. Only I will die for you, come with me." He stretched his hands out to Lin Xinyan.

The bodyguard near He Ruize accidentally knocked a chair and made a noise. As He Ruize turned around and saw the bodyguard sneaking towards him, his face turned grey for an instant. After being discovered by him, the bodyguard chose to pounce fast and tried to catch him. .

He Ruize kicked down a chair into the bodyguard's path to block him.

“Mother, mother.” The little girl was so frightened that she ran into her mother’s arms. He Ruize turned to the girl. Lin Xinyan saw that and yelled, “Stop him quickly.”

The bodyguard rushed forward but he was not fast enough. He Ruize pushed the table over and caught the girl. The mother would not let go, “Let go of my daughter,” she screamed.

“Give her to me.” He Ruize roared while the woman screamed, “Please let go of my daughter, let go of my daughter!”

The little girl was grabbed so hard that it was painful. She started to cry, “Mother, mother...”

Lin Xinyan wanted to help the mother snatch the child but he Ruize had gone berserk and will definitely hurt her.

As she started to make a move, she was stopped by Zong Jinghao, “Let me do it.”

He Ruize used brutal strength to pull the child from her mother’s arms. He wanted to use her to threaten Lin Xinyan. When he turned around, he saw Zong Jinghao, “You...”

Zong Jinghao caught He Ruize by his wrist with a firm grip. Feeling the pain, he loosened his grip of the little girl and Zong Jinghao snatched her into his arms. Annoyed, He Ruize’s inherent nature was triggered and he felt for the bomb trying to detonate it. Zong Jinghao gave him a kick which sent him flying.

Clash!

Tables and chairs clashed to the floor.

He Ruize reacted quickly so he got up and tried to run away.

Seeing that, the bodyguards ran after him.

“Woo...” The little girl cried in Zong Jinghao’s arms. He looked down and saw that the little girl was pale with fear. Her cold and reddened little hands gripped his collar tightly for she was afraid of being snatched away.

“Qingqing, Qingqing.” The woman rushed to hug her daughter and Zong Jinghao handed the little girl over to her.

She wrapped her daughter in her arms tightly while she kissed the crying girl as she tried to soothe her, “Don’t be afraid. It’s okay now. It’s okay, I am here.”

“Thank you.” Holding her daughter, the woman bowed at Zong Jinghao. If not for him, the girl might have been blown to death.

She could not have guessed that He Ruize was a lunatic. No normal human would strap explosives to his body like that.

“He came here to eat kebabs and said he had a quarrel with his girlfriend. Then, he asked my daughter to bring this young lady over. Who would know...” The woman looked at Lin Xinyan with eyes reddened and filled with tears, “I got you into danger.”

The woman understood why Lin Xinyan gave money to her daughter and was willing to eat the skewered barbecued food. It was just so that she would not feel embarrassed for taking her money. She was a kind woman but she and her daughter had got her into danger unknowingly.

As far as Lin Xinyan was concerned, the mother and daughter had done nothing wrong. They were just being kind and had been used by He Ruize.

“It’s late. You’d better hurry home...”

“Oh!”

Lin Xinyan was still speaking with the woman when they heard a scream from afar. She turned around at the same time as Zong Jinghao and they saw He Ruize taking an old lady hostage.

“What happened!” Su Zhan hurried over, “How did He Ruize get hold of her?”

The bodyguards explained to him, “We were chasing him and he ran this way. The old lady came out right at that time and they bumped into each other. He does not know who she is but just take her as a hostage.”

The old lady was scared senseless. Seeing Su Zhan, she screamed, “Su Zhan.”

She had no idea who He Ruize was, nor did anyone tell her about tonight’s plans. They just put her in a room with the children. Lin Ruixi kept pestering Shen Peichuan to look for Lin Xinyan so the old lady came to see if she can find the child’s mother and also look out for Su Zhan. Su Zhan and Qin Ya were newly-married so he should not be out so late. Shen Peichuan did not notice she had gone out.

When she got downstairs, the old lady saw Su Zhan and Lin Xinyan outside. On the way out to go to them, she was captured and held hostage by He Ruize who rushed to her out of a sudden.

“You know Su Zhan?” He Ruize laughed hideously.

The old lady did not realize the implications of the question so she replied naturally, “He’s my grandson, that’s all.”

“Haha.” He Ruize laughed aloud. Looking at Su Zhan and Zong Jinghao alternately, he taunted, “So you guys don’t want to let me go?”

“You are a bastard!” Su Zhan was about to rush forward, Zong Jinghao held him back, “Don’t act impulsively.”

Su Zhan was so furious his chest heaved vigorously, "If you dare to even touch my grandma, I'll cut you into pieces and feed you to the dogs."

"In order to do that, you have to capture me first." Knowing that the hostage in his hands was Su Zhan's grandma, he felt he had the upper hand and they would not dare to do anything impetuous.

"It's possible to save this old lady," his gaze turned to Lin Xinyan, "I want you to come over and take her place."

"Bah, don't even think about it!" Su Zhan found He Ruize totally despicable.

He Ruize pinched the old lady's hand violently forcing the old lady to cry out in pain.

Su Zhan cursed him irritably, "F**** your ancestors!"

"I agree to your terms. I'll go over now but you have to let go of the old lady." Lin Xinyan spoke suddenly. Zong Jinghao was in a difficult position. There was nothing he could say. Their glances carried immense nonverbal hints and messages as Lin Xinyan smiled gently, "I have faith in you."

As in faith in your ability to save me.

With that, Lin Xinyan walked towards He Ruize.

Su Zhan panicked. He called out Lin Xinyan's name. "He's sick. He only came here for you. You will be walking straight into his trap."

Lin Xinyan seemed not to have heard his as her steps were steady without any faltering.

Su Zhan turned around and looked at Zong Jinghao, "You would really let her go?"

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Zong Jinghao did not respond. Su Zhan got panicked for he wanted to save the old lady and didn't want to put Lin Xinyan in danger. This He Ruize was haunting them like a ghost that would not go away just for the purpose of getting Lin Xinyan. If she went, could she even make it back?

Moreover He Ruize's body was strapped with explosives.

If the one held hostage was some random stranger, Lin Xinyan would, perhaps, hesitate. However, this was Su Zhan's grandma, the only relative of her husband's buddy. She could not bear to let this old lady get into any harm because of her.

He Ruize laughed, a gurgling sound came from his chest. He gloated and insulted her, "Yan, I have told you that I am the only one who loves you. Only I will go all out for you. Open your eyes and look around. Does Zong Jinghao even care about your safety?"

"I am coming over. Please let the old lady go." Lin Xinyan showed no emotions and she did not seem to hear anything He Ruize said.

Looking at Lin Xinyan's calm countenance, He Ruize totally lost it. He screamed, "Are you still not seeing it? Does he care that we die together and become a ghost couple?"

"Lunatic!" Su Zhan was so furious that he gritted his teeth. "It is possible that he will really do that. He is strapped with explosives. Obviously he had thought of committing suicide."

Still, Zong Jinghao did not respond. He was very silent like a very patient cheetah, waiting for the opportunity to kill the prey with one strike.

Lin Xinyan continued to negotiate with him, "I am the one you want and this is just between us. We should resolve this. If you hold an old woman as a hostage, you will only make me hate you even more!"

He Ruize turned bloodshot eyes on her, "What did you say?!"

He could not believe his ears nor could he suppress the loss he felt within his soul. "You hate me? Hahaha... You actually hate me?" His smile disappeared suddenly, revealing a contorted face. "I was so stupid and always trying to please you. You are nice to Zong Jinghao only because he slept with you, isn't that right? Do you really think you love him? Unfortunately, you don't. You just do it for the sake of the two children. I am the one you love. If I had ignored your refusal and slept with you then, we would have been together by now. It was all because I have spoiled you with my love."

The word 'lunatic' was insufficient to describe He Ruize at this point. He was deranged and horrifying. Even his logic and way of thinking was unlike normal humans.

Lin Xinyan's hands which were hanging by her sides were clenched tight into fists. "I am already here. Let the old lady go."

He Ruize looked down at the old lady. She was rather old and was shivering all over, unable to speak after going through the fright of her life.

Su Zhan was walking in circles anxiously. "Damn, he's a psychiatrist. When a psychiatrist goes crazy, it's more terrifying than a layman."

"He Ruize, what on earth do you want!" Lin Xinyan was getting worried. She felt that the old lady was on the verge of collapsing.

She was really too old to go through this trauma.

“Give me a car.” Nobody wants to die. Neither did he. The explosives on his body were to prevent the others from attacking him. He would only detonate them only when there was no way out for him.

Now, he had hostages that were important to them and so he had the opportunity to escape.

“Give it to him,” Su Zhan said. And then he looked at Zong Jinghao who kept quiet as a sign of approval.

Soon a bodyguard drove a car over. He was about to pass him the key and attempt to save the old lady but He Ruize was not stupid. He Ruize warned him sternly, “Don’t come any closer.”

The bodyguard said, “How do I send the key if I don’t go closer?”

“Give it to Yan,” he said, grabbing the old lady’s throat, he shot a warning look at the bodyguard.

The bodyguard hesitated. It was Lin Xinyan who went and got the key.

“You, get in and drive the car. Don’t try to escape or I’ll kill this old creature,” He Ruize threatened.

Lin Xinyan glanced at him. Then, she turned around,] and got into the car then started it. He Ruize dragged the old lady into the car and sat in the back seat. He looked at Lin Xinyan and told her, “Head south.”

The old lady was in his hands so Lin Xinyan had to do as instructed.

He Ruize felt that Lin Xinyan was driving slowly on purpose. Hence, he slapped the old lady hard that she fainted without yelling or making any sound.

Nevertheless, Lin Xinyan heard the sound of slapping. She turned around and saw He Ruize's evil expression as well as the bruise on the old lady's face.

Lin Xinyan was absolutely furious. She did not expect He Ruize to reach such a state of madness to even abuse an elderly lady.

He Ruize looked at Lin Xinyan menacingly, "I have warned you not to try to escape or I'll kill this old thing. Drive faster now."

Lin Xinyan bite her lip and pressed hard on the accelerator.

The moment Lin Xinyan stepped on the accelerator, the car shot off like an arrow from a bow, leaving a trail of exhaust fume in the air.

"Turn right," He Ruize instructed.

Lin Xinyan sensed his intentions to get onto the highway. If they got onto the highway, it would be difficult to control him and the highway was prone to car accidents too.

She spoke calmly to He Ruize, "You just want me. Let the old lady get off the car. She is just a burden to you, hindering your escape. Take me as a hostage. It's the same anyway."

He Ruize would not listen and he said coldly, "Just drive."

"Am I not your target? I've already agreed to go with you. Why do you still want to hold the old lady hostage? You can see that she's unconscious. Aren't you worried you will face a lawsuit if she dies?"

"Even if I am not responsible for her death, will Zong Jinghao let me off?"

That was true. They would not let him off easily once they capture him.

“Why don’t you say something?” He Ruize sneered.

“You are not letting her off?” Lin Xinyan’s voice became cold too. Since he would not negotiate, she could only fight back. “There is a steep slope in front. Let’s all die together.”

“Are you crazy?” He Ruize’s eyes widened.

“Yes, I am. You drove me crazy.” Lin Xinyan was strangely calm. As she was approaching the slope, she grabbed the steering wheel tight, “Today, let us bring to a conclusion all the grievances between us.”

With that, she turned the steering wheel –

“Wait!”

Lin Xinyan was waiting for his response.

Screech ...

The friction of tires rubbing against the side of the road was making a screeching sound painful for the ears. Long brake marks were left on the ground showing a vehicle had halted suddenly.

He Ruize broke out in a cold sweat, “I’ll just drop her off now.”

Even without the old lady, he still had Lin Xinyan as a bargaining chip.

He pushed the car door open. In order to prevent Lin Xinyan from escaping, he untied his belt and buckled her hands with it, and held the other end in his hands. Then, he pushed the old lady out of the car with his leg. Lin Xinyan was irked by his evil actions. She opened the car door and got down. Then she kicked the door close with her leg. The belt was caught in the door. He Ruize was furious and he roared, “Get in quickly.!”

Lin Xinyan did not respond. Thus, He Ruize opened the car door and jumped down. Grabbing Lin Xinyan by her throat and asked her, "Do you wish to die?"

In the dim light, Lin Xinyan saw someone approaching.

She curled her lips and smiled. Speaking through her gritted teeth, she replied, "If I die, you will not live."

The strong wind blew her words away.

Still, He Ruize heard what she said.

"Hahaha..." He burst into a burst of maniacal laughter, "I won't let you die. I want you to be by my side always. Even if you die, you will have to be a ghost who belongs to me."

Bang!

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With a muffled bang, He Ruize's eyes widened as he turned around slowly. He could see a tall figure with his coat like he was rooted to the ground. He remained prideful and arrogant standing against the cold blasts and there was a gun in his hand.

He Ruize's eyes opened wider and wider. He looked even more ferocious. The corners of his mouth twitched as he spoke, "You..."

Unable to stand, he collapsed and fell in a kneeling position.

Lin Xinyan watched him fall right before her eyes.

A sigh of relief gushed out of her lungs and her body swayed in the wind. Soon, she came back to her senses and she unbuckled the belt around her hands and went to the old lady lying on the ground immediately and called out, "Grandma."

Holding the old lady in her arms, Lin Xinyan checked for her breath and found that she was still breathing.

"Grandma," Su Zhan rushed over. Lin Xinyan summoned the last bit of her strength, "Send grandma to the hospital quickly."

Su Zhan cast a glance at her and hurriedly carried the old lady into the car. He shouted at the bodyguard, "Hurry up!" as he was worried about his grandmother's condition

Pressing one hand against the ground, Lin Xinyan tried to push herself to her feet. Suddenly someone grabbed her other wrist. A pair of shiny leather shoes came into her view. Her gaze moved upwards and she could see a pair of long slender legs and then, a distinctive angular face.

With a firm and gentle pull, Zong Jinghao lifted Lin Xinyan up. In the next instant, she was held in his warm strong chest.

She lifted her head and the strong wind pulled at her long hair in every direction.

Zong Jinghao brushed aside the hair from her forehead and pushed it behind her ears.

She smiled for she was finally safe. "We are safe now. Thank god you arrived right on time."

Her words did not relieve Zong Jinghao's tensed expression but rather he seemed more stressed. He embraced her hard, squeezing her body against his.

She could sense his somber mood vaguely. She wanted to ask him but she saw two bodyguards carrying He Ruize before throwing him into the car.

Lin Xinyan had never seen Zong Jinghao so violent before so she did not ask him why he had a gun. Instead, she asked him a question in a low voice on something she was more concerned about, "Will he die?"

He Ruize had done wrong, no doubt. He should be punished by the law. It would be a costly mistake if Zong Jinghao were to take the law into his own hands.

If He Ruize died, he too would have broken the law.

"I don't know." He was not sure. When he saw He Ruize grabbing her throat; he lost his usual sense of reason. He had always been a rational person.

Lin Xinyan sighed, wondering how the old lady was doing.

"Let's go back. I feel cold," she said, clinging to him.

Zong Jinghao bundled her into his coat as they walked towards the car. The bodyguard opened the door for them with respect. Then, he got in and sat inside while holding Lin Xinyan in his arms.

The car door closed.

All the way, they were silent as they had much to think about.

Lin Xinyan had not fully recovered from the frightening episode while Zong Jinghao was still asking himself, what if he came one moment late? Would she...

Soon they were back at the hotel. Qin Ya had gone to the hospital, she should be waiting for news at the hospital since she was Su Zhan's wife. The old lady's condition was still not known.

"It was my fault. I was careless." Shen Peichuan said, gloomily.

If he had watched the old lady, this would not have happened.

Indeed, he did not feel they were in danger. How much of a ruckus could He Ruize create? It was truly unexpected that he would strap himself with explosives which led to a series of events later.

"We didn't see that coming," Lin Xinyan tried to comfort him.

"Both kids are in the room, I'll go and take care of He Ruize." Shen Peichuan was about to leave when he seemed to remember something. He looked at Zong Jinghao and asked, "Where's my gun?"

Shen Peichuan always carried one.

Lin Xinyan understood now where Zong Jinghao got the gun from. It was Shen Peichuan's.

As the gun was registered, he would be answerable if he were to lose it.

Zong Jinghao took out the gun and returned it to him. Then he went past him and went into his room.

Zong Jinghao looked troubled so Shen Peichuan wanted to ask what went wrong.

Lin Xinyan held him back, shook her head and said, "He is not in a good mood. Why don't go and do your best to save him."

Shen Peichuan nodded his head.

Lin Xinyan turned around and entered the room. She took off her down jacket and hung it on a hanger. Zong Jinghao's did not take off his coat but he hugged Lin Ruixi straightaway. Lin Xinyan came over and told him, "Take off the coat."

It was warm inside the house He would feel hot if he continued to wear the coat. He put down his daughter, shook his shoulders and the coat slid down. Lin Xinyan took it with both hands. Then she walked over to the hanger and hung it up.

"Papa, where did you go?" Lin Ruixi hugged his neck and ask him sweetly.

Zong Jinghao pinched her tiny nose and replied, "Papa had to go and do some work."

The little girl lay on his shoulders with her small face buried there. Then, she said, "I thought you were going out on a date with Mommy. Can you take me with you next time you go out? It's boring to stay in the room every day. When can we go back?"

Zong Jinghao rubbed her back, replying, "We have to wait a little longer."

Actually, they could return the moment they were done with He Ruize, .

However, the old lady was now in the hospital and her condition was still unknown. So, they could not leave now.

“Papa, can you play with me?” She pouted, “I miss grandma.” (She was referring to Lin Xinyan’s mother.)

Zong Jinghao kissed her on her forehead and agreed, “Okay. I’ll spend more time with you in the future.”

The little girl was overjoyed that she giggled as she planted a big wet kiss on his cheek, leaving saliva all over his face.

He finally smiled after seeing how happy she was.

At the hospital.

The old lady had been sent into the examination room while Su Zhan anxiously paced the corridor outside.

Qin Ya felt dizzy watching him walking up and down. She knew he was anxious, but this was not going to do his grandma any good. She walked up to him and held his hand, “Don’t worry too much. Grandma is going to be fine.”

Su Zhan spoke through his gritted teeth, “That bastard. I’m going to kill him...”

Qin Ya instantly covered his mouth. This was a public place with many people around. If anyone heard his words, they would think that he was a gangster.

“I know you’re upset...”

“How could I not be upset?” Su Zhan raised his voice. After that, he realized he was too emotional and he should not be shouting at Qin Ya. “I’m sorry. I’m too anxious.”

He turned around and sat down on the bench, covering his face with his hands, “She’s all the family that I have. She matters a lot to me.”

Qin Ya came over to him and embraced him. “Yes, I know.”

He put his arms around her, then buried his face on her tummy. She was standing while he was seated so their positions fitted. In a low tremulous voice, he spoke, “My parents passed away early and she brought me up single-handedly. It’s my fault...”

Qin Ya stroked his head, “You are not to blame. Nobody could have predicted that. It came unexpected.”

Su Zhan embraced her in silence.

With that, the surrounding quietened down.

After a while, the door of the examination room opened and a nurse walked out with the medical report sheet in her hand. She asked, “Are the patient’s family members here?”

Su Zhan stood up from the bench and hurried over. Qin Ya followed him and they held each other’s hands tight as they were afraid of any bad news.

“How is my grandma?”

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When he heard the question, Su Zhan's grip on Qin Ya's hand grew even tighter. He was scared about getting bad news.

It was rather painful for Qin Ya, but she didn't make a sound, since it was pretty obvious that Su Zhan was very nervous.

"The patient fainted due to shock, so she's not in mortal danger. Old age might have weakened her. There were some scratches on her that we've already patched up, so there's no need to worry."

Su Zhan was jittery with relief, and he didn't know how to describe how he was feeling at that moment. Holding Qin Ya's face, he clamped his lips down onto hers and smiled like a child. "My grandma is fine."

Qin Ya had never seen him acting like that.

"Don't rejoice just yet. She's getting on in her years, which means that you should make sure that she doesn't get emotional too often," the nurse said, cutting him off coldly.

Su Zhan realized how rude he had been, and he coughed lightly to mask his embarrassment before making a sound of affirmation.

The nurse looked up at him with a disapproving look. "The elderly shouldn't be experiencing anxiety so often. At this age, they can pass on easily if they get a shock, so as the younger ones, you should treat her with care."

Su Zhan nodded profusely. "Yes, I understand."

“Wait here, please. She will be out soon,” the nurse said, before turning around and leaving.

Su Zhan managed to calm down and wait by the door. Soon, the door opened, and his grandmother came out on a gurney. She was wide awake, she stretched out her hand upon seeing her grandson. Su Zhan immediately bent down and stroked her forehead. It was then that he noticed a red slap mark on her face.

He hadn't noticed it when he rushed her to the hospital because he was too anxious.

His face darkened immediately. That bastard He Ruize!

He put two and two together, and realized that the nurse might have assumed that he had been abusing his grandmother; hence, giving him the cold treatment.

He kissed the back of his grandmother's hand. “Everything's fine. I'm here for you.”

“Who was that guy?” She asked, realizing that her grandson might know the person who assaulted her.

“Just some crazy guy. The police has taken him away, so you don't have to worry about it. Get some rest,” Su Zhan replied gently.

Qin Ya helped the medical personnel pushed Su Zhan's grandmother into a ward. She didn't need to stay, but they had decided to keep her there for one night just for observation.

Su Zhan carried his grandmother onto the bed after they arrived, while Qin Ya helped to push the gurney out of the room. “Thanks for your help,” she told the medical personnel.

“It's our job,” they replied, smiling.

Qin Ya closed the door and turned around.

“Come here, Ya,” the old lady said while gesturing for her to come closer.

She took Qin Ya’s hand and placed it into Su Zhan’s hand. “The only thing Su Zhan did right in his life was to marry you,” she said.

Qin Ya looked down in slight embarrassment.

Su Zhan grasped Qin Ya’s hand tightly. “Grandma, have you forgotten about your grandson?”

“You’re only good at annoying me,” his grandma pretended to be angry.

Su Zhan immediately gave in. “I’ll make sure I treat you better from now on.”

He had to make sure his grandmother was happy, since the nurse had told him to protect her from all forms of emotional distress.

“I’m hungry,” his grandmother said suddenly.

“I’ll go and get some food for you,” Su Zhan said, standing up. “What do you want to eat?”

His grandmother gave him a look, yet Su Zhan did not catch what she was hinting. “Why are your eyes twitching. Does something hurt?”

The old lady was speechless.

She rolled her mind’s eye. Why is this kid so dense? She thought.

Qin Ya understood what she meant. “I’ll go. What would you like to eat?” She asked, knowing full well that his grandmother just wanted to her to leave the room.

“Some porridge would be good,” Su Zhan’s grandmother said.

“Anything else?” Qin Ya asked.

“That’s all,” the old lady said, waving her hand.

“Alright, I’ll go down to the food stalls now. Su Zhan, take care of Grandma.”

Su Zhan finally understood what his grandmother meant when Qin Ya got to the door. He gave his grandmother a look and walked out with Qin Ya. “My grandmother is not feeling well and might want to have a word with me. I hope you don’t mind.”

Qin Ya smiled. She could tell that Su Zhan was really close to his grandmother.

“I won’t. You should go back. Do you want any food? I’ll get some for you too,” Qin Ya said. She figured that Su Zhan would be very hungry after a whole night of scurrying around.

“I want some spring rolls,” Su Zhan told her honestly.

Qin Ya nodded.

“Go back. Grandma might get impatient,” Qin Ya said, waving her hand and leaving the scene.

Su Zhan watched as she left, a small smile crept onto his lips.

She could read the room really well.

Su Zhan turned around and walked into the room, closing the door behind him.

He walked to the side of the bed and sat down. "Why do you need to send her away just to talk to me? You're lucky she's the easy going type who won't get mad because of this."

The old lady smiled. "Are you defending your wife now?"

"Of course not!" Su Zhan hurriedly said. "I can't just forget about how you raised me just because I have a wife."

His grandmother sighed. "I'm getting old."

"No you're not," Su Zhan said, scooting closer to her.

That made his grandmother laugh, but her smile was soon replaced by a serious expression. "I think Qin Ya's a good girl. She's understanding and good-looking. You'd better treat her well."

"I know that. You've said it a million times," Su Zhan reminded her.

His grandmother sighed. "I would never forget how I raised you singlehandedly after your parents were gone..."

Su Zhan's whole aura changed the moment the topic of his parents was brought up.

"You shouldn't blame you mom..."

"Why shouldn't I?!" Su Zhan yelled with his eyes turning red. He would never forgive her for what she had done even after so many years.

Qin Ya realized that she had forgotten to bring her phone and wallet, so she returned to the ward to ask Su Zhan for some money. Because of that, she ran head first into their conversation.

“I would still have a father if not for her, am I not right? She’s just doing it for her own benefit!” Su Zhan said as he got more and more agitated by the second. He told himself that he shouldn’t get so worked up about this, since it was all in the past, but the bout of anger within him refused to subdue.

His grandmother’s eyes were shining with tears, and she began to tremble as she held on to Su Zhan’s hand. “It’s all my fault, I shouldn’t have brought up the past.”

“What has it got to do with you?” Su Zhan asked with a bitter smile. He could only blame fate for giving him a mother who had easy virtue that made him lose his father.

Qin Ya was shocked. What were they talking about?

Su Zhan’s parents?

She figured that it would be pretty rude to keep eavesdropping so she knocked on the door.

Su Zhan took a deep breath to calm himself down, before standing up to open the door.

The door opened and Qin Ya was standing there. “You’re back so fast?” Su Zhan asked.

However, her hands were empty.

He couldn’t help but frown at her.

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Qin Ya shuffled her feet. “Um, I...”

“Did you hear us talking?” Su Zhan asked, his face darkening. He didn’t want anyone else to know about his past.

Qin Ya wanted to argue that she didn’t mean to eavesdrop, but Su Zhan’s face made her cower in fear. “What were y’all talking about? Did Grandma send me away just to talk about me?”

Su Zhan’s expression softened for a second. “Yeah. She told me to be nice to you. Also, where’s the food?”

“I left in a hurry, so I didn’t bring any money,” Qin Ya said, avoiding his gaze. She began to regret telling that lie.

However, to Su Zhan, it looked like she was just being embarrassed. He smiled and pulled out his wallet from his pocket. “Here.”

Qin Ya looked up at him. “Just give me a hundred and not the whole wallet.”

Su Zhan stuffed his wallet into her hand. “We’re husband and wife, everything of mine is yours too.”

Qin Ya looked at him, her fingers curling around the wallet.

Su Zhan laughed. “You’re moved by that? I haven’t even given you my fortune yet. You’re so easy to bribe.”

Qin Ya glared at him. “I’m going to buy food now.”

“Alright.”

Su Zhan watched her leave once more before going back into the room. His phone rang suddenly, and Shen Peichuan’s name was displayed on the screen. He answered the call, and before Shen Peichuan could say anything, he asked, “Is that bastard dead yet?”

“I don’t think he’ll die. He’s going through surgery now. How’s your grandmother?” Shen Peichuan asked. He probably called to ask about Su Zhan’s grandmother’s condition anyway.

Su Zhan pulled a chair over and sat down. “She’s fine. It’s just a few scratches. The doctor says that she can go home tomorrow.”

“Alright,” Shen Peichuan said, but didn’t hang up.

“Just say it. Why are you being so hesitant?”

“Um...well, Xinyan asked me to call you,” Shen Peichuan said, figuring that he should come clean with Su Zhan. “She felt guilty about this, so she told me to give you a call to find out how your grandmother’s doing.”

Su Zhan knew that all this had nothing to do with Lin Xinyan.

His grandmother’s appearance was a surprise, and so was the kidnapping. After all, Lin Xinyan almost got into deep trouble herself trying to save his grandmother.

“She’s not in the wrong. I know that.”

“Alright. I’ll go and visit after I’m done with this...”

“It’s fine. Everyone’s been really busy last night. You should get some sleep before we go home tomorrow. Also, you’ve been away from work for some time, so you should probably go back and clear things up too.”

Shen Peichuan gave a sound of approval and hung up.

Su Zhan put his phone back into his pocket. His grandmother looked over and asked, “Who was it?”

“Shen Peichuan. He called to ask how you’re doing, and I told him that you’re fine,” Su Zhan said, pulling her blankets up to her chin. “Let bygones be bygones. Don’t tell Qin Ya about my parents.”

“She’s not a stranger,” his grandmother said. She didn’t see a need to keep Qin Ya in the dark.

“I don’t want to feel embarrassed,” Su Zhan said, his face darkening.

That happened every time his past was brought up.

His grandmother didn’t see it as anything embarrassing, since it wasn’t his fault anyway. “Hm? Are you planning to hide this from her forever? She’s your wife, and she’s going to spend the rest of her life with you. You have to trust her even if she doesn’t trust you. Do you know what has the biggest cause of breaking a marriage? A lack of trust.”

She may be old, but her mind was sound and her wisdom aplenty.

“Maybe later, when I’m ready,” Su Zhan said, ready to drop the matter. “You must be tired. Get some rest.”

His grandmother wasn’t going to drop it so easily. “You’re married! Why wouldn’t you be ready? Are you still thinking about that Liu Feifei?”

“No. Why are you bringing her up?” Su Zhan said, and he couldn’t help but wonder if something was gravely wrong with his grandmother. First his parents, now his first love – what’s going on with her?

“Grandma, are you feeling alright? If something hurts, let me call the doctor now...”

Piak!

“Are you putting a curse on me or something?” His grandmother said while she gave his body a light slap.

Su Zhan’s voice turned into a whisper. “Then why are you talking about the past all of a sudden?”

“I’m worried about you!” His grandmother stressed.

Su Zhan pulled the blanket further upwards. “I’m an adult, and I know what I’m doing. If you want to make me happy, then take care of yourself.”

His grandmother sighed and said, “If you’re sure about your love for Qin Ya, then don’t ever change your mind, no matter what happens or who you meet in the future.”

“I know. Just don’t worry,” Su Zhan didn’t take it to heart.

She’s just a chatty old lady.

After a while, Qin Ya returned with the food, which she set on the table. “I’m not familiar with this place, so I took some time to look around.”

She returned Su Zhan’s wallet to him. “Here, your wallet.”

“Just hang on to it,” Su Zhan said, stuffing two spring rolls into his mouth and swallowing them after chewing for a couple of seconds. He took a huge gulp of water to wash them down. “Can you stay here with Grandma? I need to run some errands.”

“Sure,” said Qin Ya.

After Su Zhan took his leave, Qin Ya adjusted the bed so that Su Zhan’s grandmother got in a sitting position, before sitting down and picking up the bowl of porridge to feed to her. “Come Grandma, have some porridge.”

The old lady smiled and opened her mouth obediently.

She could feed herself, but she just wanted to be pampered by Qin Ya.

Qin Ya made sure that the porridge had cooled down before she started feeding Su Zhan’s grandma.

Slowly, the bowl of millet porridge was emptied, and Qin Ya took a piece of tissue paper to wipe the old lady’s mouth. Su Zhan’s grandmother lay still and enjoyed being fussed over by her grandson’s wife.

“Why did Su Zhan go out?” Su Zhan’s grandmother asked.

“I’m not sure,” Qin Ya said as she cleared the table.

“You’re not going to ask him?” The old lady asked tentatively.

Qin Ya didn’t catch what she really meant by that question. She threw the plastic bowl into the dustbin and said, “He said that he had some errands to run, no? He knows what he’s doing, so you don’t have to worry.”

Qin Ya had thought that she was just being worried about Su Zhan, and she walked over to lower the bed again. "I'll be right here if you need me. Get some rest, Grandma."

Su Zhan's grandmother was indeed exhausted, but she was more satisfied with Qin Ya's attitude.

Qin Ya clearly trusted Su Zhan when she didn't bother to ask him about his whereabouts.

On the other hand, Su Zhan obviously had his reservations about Qin Ya.

Su Zhan's grandmother sighed.

Meanwhile, Su Zhan called Shen Peichuan again after exiting the room.

Shen Peichuan picked up in a flash.

"Where are you?"

"The hospital." Shen Peichuan was puzzled. Didn't he say that he was waiting for He Ruize to get out of surgery?

"I'm asking you which hospital. I'm going there to see you," Su Zhan said. Now that he had his hands free, he was going to find He Ruize and seek revenge for what he had done.